

## In the Beginning: Creation in Crisis

### Introduction:

- I. The beginning of the Bible holds critical information for understanding the remainder of its story.
  - A. If we miss important information, we can easily minimize details about the story that should be monumental.
    1. I recently read an explanatory note in a Bible that explained what our being created in the image of God means.
      - a. It briefly mentioned the fact that God is Spirit, and that we possess an immortal spirit (which is an inaccurate pairing of terms), but then emphasized things like our ability to think, feel, decide, grow spiritually, and love God.
      - b. All of those are true, but not overly important to the events that are about to take place in Genesis 3.
    2. Our having been created in the image of God is one of two reasons we have this Bible that we possess.
  - B. If we de-emphasize information, we will end up perverting the story to become something it should not be.
    1. The same explanatory note I just pointed out, went on to discuss man's love for God and hating unrighteousness.
    2. It said, "The fall reversed this. Man was still a person with the capacity for good, but his spirit was altered by sin so much that he now generally runs away from God and loves evil more than righteousness."
    3. This is Calvinism, and presents sinful desires as a genetic defect caused by the original fall of man. That is error.
- II. The story of the garden becomes a very critical point for our understanding the rest of the Bible.
  - A. Unfortunately, many people have a very unhealthy view of it.
  - B. If we go beyond what I've just pointed out, and take the details of creation and the garden as myth, or allegory, we minimize critical information about us in God's plan.
- III. Let's study the beginning, and learn how its details are so important, so we may understand who we are, and what God has planned. This will help us understand the second coming, and its events.

### Body:

- I. **Is the Old Testament, and Especially the Creation Account Factual?...**
  - A. It isn't uncommon to find people claiming to believe the Bible, but turning around and saying Genesis 1 is myth, or allegory.
    1. If you claim to believe something, you do not go on to explain it away.
    2. This way of "believing the Bible" would allow someone to say, "I believe Homer's *The Iliad* and *The Odyssey*," and actually mean it in the same way.
  - B. As we shall see, if creation did not take place the way Genesis presents it, then there is no reason for the remainder of Scripture, including the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus.
  - C. If you believe Jesus, then you will firmly believe that Genesis is a factual record of events:
    1. **Mt 11:23f** *"And you, Capernaum, who are exalted to heaven, will be brought down to Hades; for if the mighty works which were done in you had been done in Sodom, it would have remained until this day. But I say to you that it shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom in the day of judgment than for you."*
    2. **Mt 12:40** *"For as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of the great fish, so will the Son of Man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth."*
    3. **Mt 19:4** *"And He answered and said to them, 'Have you not read that He who made them at the beginning "made them male and female,"'"*
- II. **Three Things That Set the Stage for the Rest of the Bible...**
  - A. **The nature God gave us at creation:**
    1. **Gen 1:26f** *"Then God said, 'Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness; and let them rule over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the sky and over the cattle and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth.' <sup>27</sup> And God created man in His own image, in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them."*
    2. People usually just read this from the standpoint of our *potential* to live forever.
      - a. That is incorrect. This statement is explaining our existence as one that **will not** end.
        - (1) The Jehovah's Witnesses have it wrong. They believe it will end, and then we get recreated at the resurrection.
        - (2) The Seventh Day Adventist has it wrong. They believe we will only exist eternally if we go to heaven.
      - b. This is not a potential to exist forever, because potential implies the possibility that we may not attain.
      - c. Being created in the image of God means **we will** exist forever.

3. Ancient people were not ignorant on this subject. We will deal with this subject in far more detail **on Thursday**.
    - a. **Heb 11:17ff** *“By faith Abraham, when he was tested, offered up Isaac; and he who had received the promises was offering up his only begotten son; <sup>18</sup> it was he to whom it was said, ‘In Isaac your descendants shall be called.’ <sup>19</sup> He considered that God is able to raise men even from the dead; from which he also received him back as a type.”*
    - b. Abraham knew that God would be true to His promise.
      - (1) If His command jeopardized that promise, Abraham knew God must still have a way to make it work.
      - (2) We see no hesitation on Abraham’s part in **Gen 22**. He went without delay to carry out his obedience.
  4. As I said, we shall study this carefully **on Thursday** — the day when God will raise **all the dead**, and all will receive according to God’s divine judgment.
  5. That brings us to God’s commands, and justice...
- B. God’s commands, and divine justice:**
1. Human philosophy often blends with religion to create what sounds good to human ears.
    - a. Islam teaches that God forgives without an atoning sacrifice. The Muslim just asks for forgiveness and Allah gives it.
    - b. Seventh Day Adventists teach that God punishes, but not eternally. God just burns up the spirit created in the image of God so it no longer exists.
  2. Sin and soul are far more significant in God’s estimation.
    - a. **Rom 6:23** *“For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.”*
      - (1) A wage is a debt that is owed (I know of no employee who would disagree with that).
        - (a) In this case, it is not physical death, but spiritual separation from God.
        - (b) This verse contrasts “eternal life” with “death.” Since the life is eternal, so also is the death (**v23**).
        - (c) **Eccl 12:7** *“then the dust will return to the earth as it was, and the spirit will return to God who gave it.”*
        - (d) The return to God is for Him to bring us into judgment: *“Rejoice, young man, during your childhood, and let your heart be pleasant during the days of young manhood. And follow the impulses of your heart and the desires of your eyes. Yet know that God will bring you to judgment for all these things.” (Eccl 11:9)*
      - b. If the wage of sin is death, then God must pay it. He does not have an option, because He is a just God.
      - c. Since we are created in the image of God, our spirits cannot cease to exist.
        - (1) If God extinguishes our spirits because of sin, he has changed the rules.
        - (2) If God does not pay the debt of sin, then He is unjust (*read Rom 3:25f*).
- C. The Eternal Tragedy.**
1. The Bible isn’t just a history lesson. It is written because of a problem that God had to fix, and we need to know about it.
  2. **Genesis 3** isn’t just an unfortunate event. It isn’t even just a tragedy. **It is an eternal tragedy.**
  3. Sin separates us from God (**Isa 59:1f**).
    - a. Those who refuse to see the consequences of that state don’t mind.
    - b. However, God is all that is good, joyful, and wholesome. To not be with God in eternity will be torturous agony.
  4. When man and woman sinned in the Garden, all of human history was instantly destined to become a free fall to eternal destruction.
- III. What God Did About It...**
- A. For any who doubt that the situation was really as dire as I have described, I offer one Bible passage:
  - B. **Rom 5:8f** *“But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. <sup>9</sup> Much more then, having now been justified by His blood, we shall be saved from the wrath of God through Him.”*
    1. If it really wasn’t so bad, why did Jesus endure torture before, and while on the cross. He did it to save us.
    2. The blood of Jesus, sacrificed so long ago, is our only hope.
    3. It was the way God paid the debt of death our sins demanded, to provide a way to eternal life.

## Conclusion:

- I. Every human in this room will exist for an eternity.
  - A. However, sin threatens us with **eternal** torture – an agony beyond mortal words.
  - B. That makes this subject incredibly important. It is far more important than any other subject on earth.
- II. God has only one remedy, and that remedy is found in Jesus Christ.
  - A. A remedy like that is of greater value than anything on earth.
  - B. That makes the study of this week far more important than anything else we could possibly do.