

“Introduction and Prologue”

The Biblical Story

Apprentice Track Workshop

Session 1

1) Introductions

[Justin]

- a) Welcome to the Story of Scripture! My name is Justin Franchino and my name is **Ross Skjold** and we’re pastors at Peninsula Grace Church and we’ll also be your guides through the Biblical Story.
- b) This is session 1 of Peninsula Grace Church’s Apprentice Track course on the Story of the Bible. This episode begins an 11 part series in which we’ll cover the entire narrative of Scripture from Genesis to Revelation.

[Ross]

- c) We don’t know when or where you’re listening to or watching this- we’re recording this in 2026- but these episodes are meant to coincide with our Apprentice Track workshops that we offer for those in our church family who are interested in growing as leaders and disciple-makers. That being said, you may be listening to this for a variety of reasons and so whatever brings you to this episode- we’re glad you’re joining us.
- d) At our website, peninsulagrace.org you can find a few other resources to accompany this series. We’ve got fill in the blank handouts and lesson manuscripts that we use when teaching this content in classes here at PGC. You may hear us reference those.

[Justin]

- e) One of the primary aims of this course is to prepare you as a listener to share in your words a summary of the story of Scripture in approximately 15-20 minutes. As apprentice track participants, this will be a required course assignment for you this Fall. So we encourage you to use this audio or video as well as the printed resources in whatever way you see fit to help articulate the biblical story in this assignment.

[Ross]

2) Why are we studying the biblical story?

- a) Understanding the biblical story as a whole is necessary for understanding individual bible passages.
- i) Often we can read the bible in the same way we watch clips of our favorite movies as YouTube reels- just a 10 second snapshot of a highlight or funny part- just like there

is entertainment value in watching a clip out of context- there is some benefit to reading bible stories on their own- Noah's flood, or David and Goliath or Saul on the Road to Damascus- But when we understand how these short reels from the Bible fit into the whole movie- how they connect to the other parts of the plot- we gain further depth of insight.

- ii) In fact, we can't really understand the full significance of any of the shorter stories in the Bible without understanding their place in the broader story.

[Justin]

- b) Understanding the biblical story helps us see ourselves as part of the True Story.
 - i) The grander narrative which stretches from eternity past, to eternity future and encompasses the entire cosmos- it is bigger than the tunnel vision story of our individual pursuits we so often settle for.
 - ii) It is the one true story, more compelling and more based in reality than all the other myths and stories set forth by our culture (materialism, naturalism, paganism, etc.)

[Ross]

- c) Understanding the biblical story helps us more fully delight in and meditate upon the fullness of the gospel.
 - i) Gospel = good news- the good story of what God has done to rescue and restore sinners through Jesus.
 - ii) Wrapping our minds around the true scope of this story helps it sink into and penetrate our heart.
 - iii) In this respect, we hope this course would be not just academic or intellectual but to stir you and encourage you at a heart level.

[Justin]

3) What is the Biblical Story?

The unified story of God redeeming his people through Jesus found in 66 separate books.

- a) **The Unified Story** – For many the bible feels like a collection of random individual stories- stories about men like Abraham, Paul, Moses, and Samson. And then, we think, sprinkled in and around these stories are helpful pieces of sound advice needed for navigating the world. But the actual structure of the Bible is nothing like this. Instead, in giving us Scripture, God crafted a unified narrative with a connected plot running straight through and unifying every word.

- b) First, we have a prologue in the opening chapters of Genesis which set the stage for God's redeeming work. Then we read of God's first steps toward redemption in promising a nation (Act 1, Scene 1). That nation, Israel, is then formed out of slavery in Egypt (Act 1, Scene 2). Then God enables Israel to conquer and settle their promised land (Act 1, Scene 3). Without a king, however, fledging tribes fail to occupy the land and spiral into corruption (Act 1, Scene 4). God unites them into a powerful and prosperous Kingdom (Act 1, Scene 5) which then quickly divides and descends into rebellion, idolatry, and oppression (Act 2, Scene 1). God judges his people by banishing them to exile for 70 years and then brings them back (Act 2, Scene 2). After this, the people continue in a kind of exile as they endure centuries of foreign domination without hearing from God (Act 2, Scene 3). Then, the long-awaited Messiah arrives and inaugurates his new covenant Kingdom (Act 3, Scene 1). After his ascension the message of his death and resurrection spreads across the world forming churches everywhere it goes (Act 3, Scene 2). His people now await the return of the Messiah in which God will restore his people and consummation his reign in their presence (Act 3, Scene 3).

[Ross]

- c) **Of God** – First and foremost this story is the story of God, it is God's self-revelation to us- he has disclosed what he is like in the pages of Scripture because he wants us to know him. So whenever we approach Scripture we come firstly, not to learn about science or about ourselves, or about our world, we come to Scripture to know God. And God has chosen to teach us about himself through an unfolding progressive story that stretches from Genesis to Revelation. In particular we will trace three major theological themes through the story of Scripture:
- i) God's Promise (Covenant)
 - ii) God's Kingship
 - iii) God's Presence

[Justin]

- d) **Redeeming a people** – What does God, the main character of the Biblical Story do? He rescues, restores, and redeems a people for himself. This is the one overarching continual quest that God sets his mind to accomplish. There are twists and turns but throughout the entire narrative God is the unrivaled unhindered king and savior of his people.
- e) **Through Jesus** – From start to finish the whole Bible points to Jesus. The first half of the narrative anticipates and foreshadows his work on the cross while the latter half looks back on his life, death, and resurrection as the confirmation of the consummated kingdom to come.

[Ross]

- f) **Found in 66 separate books.** This narrative is unfolded across the passage of 66 different books written as history, poetry, letters, biography, and works of philosophy. These books are written over a period spanning 1,500 years from authors with unique backgrounds, personalities, and writing styles.

[Justin]

- 4) **The Prologue (Genesis 1-11)** – prologue = words that come before, like every great novel, the bible has an opening that sets the stage for the drama that is about to unfold.
- a) **Historical Context** – what was going on when this prologue was written down in the form we have today?
- i) Historically, the context for Genesis is hundreds of years after the last events described in the book. This portion of the Bible was written by Moses. As Genesis was being written, God was doing something special. He was leading Israel out of slavery, creating a people of his own by which he would reveal himself to the world. And this book provides background for that people, telling them where they came from. So, this is like their origin story- like the legends of Romulus and Remus for Rome or Greek Mythology, or the story of the Revolutionary War and our founding Fathers. And like all good origin stories, Genesis and in particular Genesis 1-11 is meant to give the new nation of Israel their identity as the people of God.
- ii) But more importantly, in giving this book to his people, God wants to re-orient them around the truest foundation of reality. He wants to anchor and ground them in the most basic and fundamental principles of the world as they come out from under the influence of ancient polytheism.

[Ross]

- iii) And this was incredibly crucial because, as you remember, for the past 400 years, the people of Israel had been slaves outside the promised land, under the domination and influence of a pagan nation, Egypt with its pantheon of false God and prevailing worldview that stood in direct contrast to the only God of the universe. For generations, the Israelites would have been inundated by a culture that saw this world as the playground for many gods competing against each other for competing interests. And in order to do well in this polytheistic world, humans needed to figure out how to placate the right god in the right way.
- iv) And these pagan ideas would have been very compelling because Egypt was the global super-power of the day. But God wanted to totally shake his people's influence under this false religion and give them a totally new way of viewing themselves and the world around them.

[Justin]

- b) **Foundational Concepts**

i) **God:** Let's read Genesis 1:1-5. [Ross READ] What's the subject of this first sentence in the Bible? God. The creation account is primarily about God. Only then will we rightly understand what it tells us about ourselves as we consider who we are in reference to the Creator. So what do we learn about God?

- God is **eternal**. Verse 1 does not begin with an explanation of where God came from. This book about beginnings starts with God, who never began.

[Ross]

- Next, we see that God is **self-sufficient**. We see in verse 1 that he made everything out of nothing. God's word is so powerful that even that which does not even exist yet has to obey it! (Isaiah 55:11)

[Justin]

- And we see that God is **sovereign**. What God determines, he speaks, and what he speaks comes to pass.

[Ross]

- God is also revealed as **good**. Seven times in Genesis 1 God looks on what he has made and calls it good. And that's because God is good.

These are all meant to orient the Israelites around their true God, contrasting him to the idols of Egypt. That's some of what we learn about God in this first chapter. And then we come to mankind.

[Justin]

ii) **Humanity:** *Who are We?*

(1) Let's read Genesis 1:26-28. [Ross READ] - Human beings are presented as the 'crowning act' or 'pinnacle' of God's creative activity. And unlike every other creature, they fulfill a unique role in the created order. Let's look at that special relationship and role.

(2) Notice in verse 26 that human beings are said to be created in the image of God. God made everything else 'after their kind' (1:12, 21, 24, 25). Human beings were not created after the pattern of some other creature, but of God himself – in His "image," in His "likeness." There are a lot of hypotheses out there about what it means to image God- called the *Imago Dei*.

(a) But of first importance is to know that being made in the image of God means that we **represent his reign**. Look at God's design for humans, the first thing he tells them is to "have dominion" – that's regal, kingly language. They are to fill the earth and subdue. So just as the whole creation story displays God as unrivaled king over the universe, he now commissions one of his creations-

men and women- to reign alongside him. This language of image bearers exercising dominion is drawn right out of the ancient world Moses and the Israelites were familiar with. When an ancient king would conquer territory, he would erect giant statues of himself, images, to show the surrounding peoples in that conquered territory who was in charge. So, these images were to be like signposts pointing to the real reign of the Emperor. In the same way, God created humanity to show off his own authority, to extend and represent his reign, to spread the blessing of his kingship over all creation. So we exercise dominion and subdue creation- not as greedy lords, but as gracious stewards.

[Ross]

- (b) We also represent his reign by reflecting his character. Humans uniquely have been designed to embody what Theologians call God's communicable attributes. He has given us the ability to exercise goodness, wisdom, holiness, and love all in a way that shows who he is.

[Justin]

- (c) The phrase likeness carries with it an addition connotation- We were made for a relationship with God. We are created to relate to God, as his children. That word 'likeness' is used later on in Genesis to describe a son's relationship to his father. In Genesis 2 we see the intimacy of Adam and Eve's relationship with God as they walked and talked in the garden. "Thou hast formed us for Thyself, and our hearts are restless till they find rest in Thee." - Augustine, Confessions Book 1

[Ross]

- (3) But this idyllic role for mankind was to be under the greater kingship of God. That's why we see an important command in verses 15-17 [READ] If they do eat of it, what will happen? They will "surely die."
- (4) This tree was placed right there in full sight, to remind Adam and Eve that, although they are given great privilege and many freedoms (in fact, freedom to eat of every other tree as much as their hearts desire), they are nonetheless not God. With this tree God is saying something important to Adam and Eve. "I alone have the right to determine what is good and what is evil, what is right and what is wrong in my universe."

[Justin]

- (5) So that's Genesis 1-2 – The perfect beginning, the ideal foundation. A perfect, sovereign, and good God dwelling with his people made in his image. And this is why Genesis 1-2 are such a critical foundation to the rest of the Bible. As we are about to get into, the world doesn't remain in this beautiful state forever. And so these opening 2 chapters describes what the rest of the Bible is getting back to.

Not until Revelation 21 is this fellowship restored, with God's perfect people again in God's place under God's rule. But that is getting way ahead of ourselves.

[Ross]

iii) The Fall and its Effects (Genesis 3) Really you could sum up Genesis 1-11 in two sections. Genesis 1-2 covers God's perfect design. Genesis 3-11 covers the nature of our rebellion and its effects.

But our first parents choose to set themselves up as equals with God, disobeying him and incurring the just wrath of God. But God has already begun a plan to overturn the curse of sin by placing enmity between the seed of the serpent and the seed of the woman.

(1) The sin: deception and idolatry. (Genesis 3:1-7)

- (a) Look at Genes 3:1-5. [READ] What a lie! The serpent of course is the devil (see Revelation 12:9), and he would have us think, "I am like God. I know what's good and what's evil. What's worthy and unworthy of worship. What's weighty and of great consequence and what's not." It's arrogant. It's idolatrous. It's insane.
- (b) But sin didn't work. Both Adam and Eve fall for this lie, and immediately, in verses 7-8, they are not behaving like gods, but like people ashamed of what they've done. They now hide from each other in verse 7, and they hide from God in verse 8. The death that was promised as a consequence in 2:17 has begun.

[Justin]

(2) The Curse: Three Levels of Hostility (Genesis 3:8-24)

- (a) First level: the woman and the serpent. Look at verses 14 and 15, God's words to the serpent. [READ VERSES 14-15] God says that He is putting enmity, that is, "hostility to the point of killing each other," between two parties. There are three levels of enmity here. The first, it says, is enmity between the devil and the woman. What does that mean? Well, it means that Satan and the human race are enemies. It may not sound like such a great plan of redemption to us if the first thing God does is make us enemies to Satan. But...consider the alternative. The alternative would be to be friends with Satan and therefore permanent enemies of God. So God is saying that humanity still belongs to Him. Satan cannot steal away His image-bearing creatures. They still belong to God. So enmity with God's enemy is a good thing.
- (b) The second level of enmity is between the woman's offspring (literally "seed"), and the serpent's offspring (or "seed"). A pronouncement that humanity will be divided into two camps. One is called the "seed of the woman." And that other is called the "seed of the serpent." Of course,

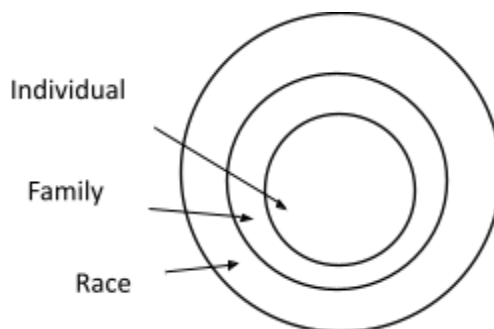
everyone will physically be descendants of the woman Eve (since she is the first mother of everyone). Nonetheless some of those physical offspring of Eve will spiritually be the “seed of the serpent.” That means that they will prove themselves to be the offspring of Satan by not obeying God. Think of 1 John 3:8: “He who does what is sinful is of the devil, because the devil has been sinning from the beginning¹.” (see also John 8:44) Others, though, will seek God. And this verse is saying that these two groups are irreconcilable. (See also John 15:9, 1 John 3:13)

- (c) Now, the third level of enmity is the most crucial. Look again in verse 15. It ends by saying “he will crush your head, and you will strike his heel.” Suddenly God is not talking about a group of people, a line of descendants. Instead, He is speaking about one descendent who will deliver the fatal blow to the devil and end the enmity. Do you see that there? He is using singular pronouns: “he” and “him.” Out of the woman’s seed will arise one man who will crush the head of Satan, thereby ridding the creation of the deceiver that initiated this whole mess. However, this One Seed will not come out of the battle unscathed. His heel will be struck.

- (3) The rest of the Bible now is an outworking of Genesis 3:15

[Ross]

- iv) **Sin’s Spread (Genesis 4-11)** - Well,— the three levels of enmity being played out in history. And as sin spreads, Moses traces its entanglement outward starting with the human heart, and then polluting family relationships, and then out into broader society. (See chart in handout)



- (1) Cain and Abel (Genesis 4)
- (2) “...and then he died.” (Genesis 5)
- (3) The final diagnosis: depravity (Genesis 6:5)

¹ The next verse, 1 John 3:9, contrasts this group with those who are born of God—who have his “seed” in them.

[Justin]

- (4) Recreation and Continued Rebellion
- (a) Noah and the Undoing of Creation (Genesis 6-8)
 - (b) A New Adam and a New Beginning (Genesis 9)
 - (c) The Lesson of the Tower of Babel (Genesis 11): A fresh start and a clean slate could not solve our sin-problem.

[Ross]

v) **Thematic Seeds** – That is where we’ll finish the narrative for this session. As we move through the unified story of God redeeming a people through Jesus in 66 books we’re going to look at it like a story. And like every good story there are major themes, major threads of thoughts and currents of ideas that flow through the narrative binding it together. There are three themes in particular that we’ll return to each week.

(1) **King and Kingdom** – This theme leaps off the pages of Gen. 1-11.

- (a) God is the supreme master of the universe who has effortlessly spoken his beautiful kingdom into existence for his glory and the joy of his subjects. He also empowers men and women to represent his reign.
- (b) We’ll continue to see this theme throughout our narrative. Many people understand this to be the main over riding over-arching theme of all Scripture above the other two we’ll mention. Perhaps the most common way of describing God is as a king, a sovereign Lord or master. The Bible is chalk full of metaphors and allusions to God’s majesty, power, and his gracious fatherly care over his realm.

[Justin]

(2) **The Presence of God** – The Bible’s ideal, “God with us” begins on page 1.

- (a) God is with Adam and Eve in the Garden, but after the fall his people are exiled and their close fellowship is ended.
- (b) From Genesis 4- Revelation 22 we are given the story of God work to restore his presence among his people.

- (c) In Genesis 4-11 we get glimpses of two men who shows us what it is like to enjoy God's presence even under the curse- Enoch and Noah both "walk with God."
- (d) But ultimately these two men are themselves under a curse and so we await a real Immanuel a messiah who will bring God's presence to us in its fullness.

[Ross]

(3) Promise –

- (a) Fundamental to the nature of God is that he is a promise maker and promise keeper God.
- (b) We see this many times in Genesis 1-11. Adam & Eve, Cain, and Noah are all recipients of God's promises.
- (c) But all these promises are introduced in just the prologue. And the Bible is a loooong book. So we're going to feel a tension as we keep reading- can God keep all his promises? Or is our fight against sin and the serpent too great?

[Justin]

- 5) Conclusion –** That is where we'll have to end it for this session. Next time we'll continue the story at Genesis 12 and the Promised Kingdom.