

God's Promise of a Redeemer

Genesis 3:1-19

How many of you here this morning have ever used google maps?

If you have the app on your phone you can type in the address or even the rough location of where you want to go and in seconds it pulls up a map of your destination.

It is possible to change for a two dimensional map to actual pictures.

You can see aerial photographs of the address you are looking for or you can see pictures from the perspective of standing on the street.

Another nice feature is the ability to zoom in and out on the map.

I have found that very helpful to see those different perspectives, to be able to see the up close details as well as being able to see the big picture.

I have found those things very helpful in developing a picture in my mind of how to get from where I am to my destination as well as giving me an idea of what I should expect to see when I get there.

That very same principle is true as we come to God's word. It is good to be able to zoom in on a particular passage or idea and see as many details as we possibly can.

It is incredible how God can use small details to turn on light bulbs of understanding in our minds.

It is also important for us to be able to zoom out and see the bigger picture of who God is and what He has done for us in His Son Jesus Christ.

As we are just a few weeks away from celebrating the events that form the foundation of our hope as Christians I want to take some time and zoom out with the goal of helping us to see the bigger picture of the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

[In order to do that we need to go all the way back to the beginning of our Bibles, to **Genesis 1-3**. In these chapters we are taught about the creation of the universe, the fall of humanity, and God's promise of a redeemer. To really have a good grasp of what the cross and empty tomb of Jesus are all about we need to see and understand this part of the picture. I want to highlight three critically important truths found in these three chapters that we need to understand in order to appreciate the Person and work of the LORD Jesus. The first essential lesson taught in the opening chapters of the bible is that...

Point #1 – Our amazing God made a good creation. (Genesis 1-2)

When the Bible says in Psalm 19:1 that 'the heavens declare the glory of God' it points us to the reality that the existence of the universe is only possible because the LORD is all the scriptures proclaim Him to be.

Look with me at **Genesis 1:1**.

The creation of a universe with a beginning requires a creator who exists before time begins.

A universe with a beginning also means that there was a point and time when nothing in the universe existed.

A universe like that requires a creator who depends on nothing outside of Himself to exist.

It also, requires a creator who can make things from nothing.

The universe as we know it, despite what you might hear in school, on the internet, or on TV, requires an eternal, unchangeable, self-existent, all powerful Creator and that is just for starters.

Each of those attributes is beyond what we can understand and ought to capture our hearts and minds with amazement.

Right from the very first verse of the Bible it is clear that the LORD is infinitely amazing, there is no one else like Him, and He is most worthy of our worship.

As this opening chapter of the bible continues we get a bit deeper of a sense of God's power.

As the LORD brings things into existence and order He does so by the power of His Word.

The phrase 'And God said, let there be...' comes up again and again. Every time the LORD gives a command to bring something into existence out of nothing or to bring order to the earth, His command is obeyed.

That is incredible.

Several times in this chapter the LORD takes note of what has been done.

The repeated phrase is that "God saw".

Every time we see that phrase, every time the LORD takes note of what He has done we see that 'it was good.'

That is repeated until the end of chapter where we read this is **verse 31**.

God looks at the universe that He has made for the display of His glory and He is fully satisfied with it.

That included His creation of human beings which chapter two explains in a bit more detail.

He makes humanity distinct from everything else in that He puts the stamp of His image upon us.

He forms the first man from the dirt, and He breathes life into him.

He forms the first woman from part of the man and brings them together in marriage for the purpose of bearing God's image throughout the earth.

He places them in a Garden called Eden, provides for their every need in abundance without any end in sight, and makes His visible presence known to them on what seems to be a regular basis.

[By the time we get to the end of chapter two the goodness of this creation is crystal clear. It is good because it is a display of Who God is. In order to see the big picture of the Person and Work of Jesus Christ we have to start here with our amazing God Who is worthy of worship and Who made a good creation. Now that raises a big question, "What happened?" While the world we live in is still wondrous and it is still a clear display of the greatness of our God, it has changed from the time the first man and woman lived in Eden. The beginning of Genesis three shows us what happened, it teaches us that...]

**Point #2 – Humanity brought corruption upon creation by breaking God's command.
(Genesis 3:1-6)**

Everything that is wrong with the world today is the result of people refusing to obey the LORD.

In the Garden according to chapter 2:9 along with many other fruit bearing trees the LORD placed the tree of life and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.

When the LORD put Adam in the garden to work it and keep it He commanded him regarding these trees in **2:16-17**.

The man and woman were permitted to eat from the tree of life which would have enabled them to live forever according to 3:22, but they were forbidden to eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil and the consequence for doing so would be death.

It is very important for us to understand something before we look at chapter 3.

We need to understand that the command the LORD gives to the man is **good**.

For many years I asked the question, "Why did God put a tree that could cause death in the Garden?"

What I needed to do was connect the purpose of creation to my question.

It would be impossible for the LORD to make a creation for the purpose of His glory and make that creation contrary to His nature.

Among His many glorious attributes is His justice, and because He is just He must give a command that must be obeyed.

Because that is so, putting the tree in the garden and giving a command about it is a necessary part of making a ‘very good creation.’

If we can see that then we are ready to hear **Genesis 3:1-6**.

We know from the rest of the Bible that the snake here is no ordinary snake.

It is the devil that is speaking through the snake.

When he speaks to the woman he is trying to get her and her husband to doubt the word of God and doubt the goodness of God.

Adam sadly believed the lie, said nothing to protect his wife, and acted against God’s command.

He showed contempt for the authority and the infinite goodness of the LORD and in that moment his heart was corrupted and he could not reverse it.

He tries to hide it, but he cannot escape the just consequences that the LORD had warned him of.

Having to face God’s judgment Adam tries to blame the woman and even the LORD Himself.

When God questions Eve she tries to blame the serpent which again reveals a corruption of the heart.

In the goodness of His nature, God acts in justice.

There will be pain in childbirth, there will be turmoil in the relationship between people, work is going to become difficult, the earth itself will be placed under a curse, and of course death will be experienced by Adam and Eve, and all their children.

[An excellent illustration of this that the bible uses in more than one place is leaven/yeast. It is a great illustration because it seems to start small, but it grows. It only takes a relatively tiny amount of yeast to effect and entire lump of dough.]

We might be tempted to see this single act of disobedience and think, “Isn’t the LORD over reacting?”

It is just one sin after all. That kind of thinking fails to grasp the nature of disobedience.

There is no such thing as a small rebellion against an infinitely glorious God.

We also need to understand that the smallest amount of corruption effects the entirety of the person.

Try some time to get the yeast out of a lump of dough with which it has been mixed.

It is far easier to remove yeast from dough than it is to remove the corruption of sin out of the heart.

[That is why the world is the way it is today. The corruption introduced by Adam and Eve has been passed down to all their children and it has worked its way throughout all of creation. It is a bad situation, but it is not a situation that is without hope. We can see that right here in Genesis three. In the midst of God dispensing justice we also see another attribute of His nature and that is His grace. We see here that though corruption had entered into God's good creation...]

Point #3 – God overcomes the corruption of creation through a redeemer. (Genesis 3:15)

The LORD, in His infinite power and grace, has resolved to make a way for people to live rather than perish in our rebellion.

Having cursed the snake, God says this in Genesis 3:15.

While I believe there was a literal snake in the garden and while we can certainly see the deadliness of many different kinds of snakes in the world today, we can clearly see in this verse that more is intended here than literal snakes biting the heels of people.

The snake in the garden was inhabited by Satan, and we know that the devil has been looking to destroy human beings and particularly people who belong to God throughout the history of the world.

Notice how the second half of this verse boils down to speaking about a particular person.

Look, it says, "He shall bruise [some translations say crush] your head."

[When we were in Togo the security guards would walk around the hospital grounds with a club and if they saw a snake they would hit it over the head and the snake would not survive. That is the kind of blow this passage is talking about.]

God is promising here that a man will be born of a woman and will overcome the devil and his work.

When we look to the cross we see the heel strike.

It looked at first like Satan had prevailed because Jesus had died.

Of course if all Jesus was interested in was destroying the devil, He could have done that without dying.

Jesus died in order to undo the corruption that came into the world through the disobedience of Adam, Eve, and all their children including you and me.

Now if He had stayed dead then the devil would have won and we would have no hope in this broken world.

The heel strike does not leave Jesus in the tomb, the power of Almighty God raised Him from the dead, seated Him upon the throne of heaven to rule over all things until every

enemy including sin, death, the devil and all his angels are placed under the feet of King Jesus.

Because Jesus died in our place we can look to Him to make right what we have broken.

Because He has been raised from the dead we know that faith in His finished work has the power to free us from the curse of death.

Because He is living and reigning in heaven we can trust His promise to return, completely reverse the effects of death for everyone that belongs to Him, remove every trace of human rebellion from the whole of creation, and welcome us into His presence upon a renewed earth forever.

Because Jesus is Who He is, and Has done what He has done, the LORD can graciously and justly give to His people what was lost in Eden.

He will give us the gift of dwelling with Him body and soul forever.

That is a little bit of the big picture of the cross and empty tomb of Christ.

An amazing God Who made a good creation.

A creation corrupted by people breaking the LORD's command, and God overcoming that corruption through the promise of a redeemer.

Do you know the hope of that promise this morning?

If you do, you know the greatest hope possible because our amazing eternal, self-existent, loving, gracious, and good God never changes and never fails to keep His promises.