



Episode 2: God is Rejected

Genesis 3–11

Key Verse:

“And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and hers; he will crush your head, and you will strike his heel.” Genesis 3:15

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Imagine that you’re waiting for a table at your favorite restaurant. You’re leaned up against the wall trying to ignore the rumbling in your stomach when a woman walks up to you and says “Te amo’ is Spanish for ‘I love you.’ It’s ‘Je t’aime’ in French.”

You start to say, “I’m sorry, what?” but the restaurant pager in your hand starts buzzing and when you look back up, she’s gone.

Over dinner, you and your family try and figure out what the woman meant. Maybe she mistook you for someone she recently had a conversation with about how to correctly translate “I love you.” Maybe she’s a foreign language teacher trying to spread positivity and cultural awareness. Maybe she’s a spy passing along a secret message!

None of the explanations you come up with explain this strange encounter. There is obviously a story around her statement that you don’t know. You need to know the context. You can decode the words she used, but you can’t understand the full meaning of her message without knowing how it fits into a larger story.

The same logic applies to our understanding of the Bible. Context is everything. When we consider how the individual parts of the Bible fit into its big story, we get a much fuller understanding of their meaning. So, in this series, we’re taking ten weeks to connect the Bible’s big dots from Genesis to Revelation. We’re looking at the Bible’s overarching narrative that tells us what God has done for humanity, and we’ll discover that Jesus is at the center of it all. Our prayer is that this journey through God’s word will grow our understanding of the Bible, deepen our love for God, and strengthen our faith!

Day 1

Last week we started at the very beginning (a very good place to start). In Genesis 1 and 2, we discovered an amazing Creator who designed a beautiful world. He created man and woman in his own image and granted the first humans the authority to reign over his creation, harnessing its potential, and creating order. As the giver of life, he gave humanity the charge to multiply and fill the earth with more and more life.

What's more, he chose to make his home with his special creation, offering them his care and guidance. But God also gives them a choice. Genesis 2 tells us that in the garden of Eden, God plants the tree of the knowledge of good and evil and warns Adam not to eat of it because the tree is deadly (2:16-17).

This week we'll start off in Genesis 3 and see whether or not the man and woman obey God's warning (spoiler alert; they don't). As we move through the week, we'll look at a couple of stories from Genesis that show just how bad things get, before discovering a glimmer of hope that points to Jesus.

As you read Genesis 3, think about why Adam and Eve were tempted and notice the consequences of their actions.

Read the Word

Genesis 3:1–24 (NIV)

¹ Now the serpent was more crafty than any of the wild animals the Lord God had made. He said to the woman, "Did God really say, 'You must not eat from any tree in the garden?'"

² The woman said to the serpent, "We may eat fruit from the trees in the garden, ³ but God did say, 'You must not eat fruit from the tree that is in the middle of the garden, and you must not touch it, or you will die.'"

⁴ "You will not certainly die," the serpent said to the woman. ⁵ "For God knows that when you eat from it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil."

⁶ When the woman saw that the fruit of the tree was good for food and pleasing to the eye, and also desirable for gaining wisdom, she took some and ate it. She also gave some to her husband, who was with her, and he ate it. ⁷ Then the eyes of both of them were opened, and they realized they were naked; so they sewed fig leaves together and made coverings for themselves.

8 Then the man and his wife heard the sound of the Lord God as he was walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and they hid from the Lord God among the trees of the garden. 9 But the Lord God called to the man, "Where are you?"

10 He answered, "I heard you in the garden, and I was afraid because I was naked; so I hid."

11 And he said, "Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten from the tree that I commanded you not to eat from?"

12 The man said, "The woman you put here with me—she gave me some fruit from the tree, and I ate it."

13 Then the Lord God said to the woman, "What is this you have done?"

The woman said, "The serpent deceived me, and I ate."

14 So the Lord God said to the serpent, "Because you have done this, "Cursed are you above all livestock and all wild animals! You will crawl on your belly and you will eat dust all the days of your life. 15 And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and hers; he will crush your head, and you will strike his heel."

16 To the woman he said, "I will make your pains in childbearing very severe; with painful labor you will give birth to children. Your desire will be for your husband, and he will rule over you."

17 To Adam he said, "Because you listened to your wife and ate fruit from the tree about which I commanded you, 'You must not eat from it,' "Cursed is the ground because of you; through painful toil you will eat food from it all the days of your life. 18 It will produce thorns and thistles for you, and you will eat the plants of the field. 19 By the sweat of your brow you will eat your food until you return to the ground, since from it you were taken; for dust you are and to dust you will return."

20 Adam named his wife Eve, because she would become the mother of all the living.

21 The Lord God made garments of skin for Adam and his wife and clothed them. 22 And the Lord God said, "The man has now become like one of us, knowing good and evil. He must not be allowed to reach out his hand and take also from the tree of life and eat, and live forever." 23 So the Lord God banished him from the Garden of Eden to work the ground from which he had been taken. 24 After he drove the man out, he placed on the east side of the Garden of Eden cherubim and a flaming sword flashing back and forth to guard the way to the tree of life.

- How did the serpent tempt Adam and Eve?

- What are the consequences of their choice?

Reflect

The voice that tempts the woman is one we've all heard. It's the voice that questions God's goodness, wonders if he can be trusted, and accuses him of holding out on us. Humanity was perfectly loved and cared for by their Creator. He'd given them everything they needed, including meaningful purpose. They could trust him to guide them. With every act of creation, he demonstrated his goodness. There was no need for them to know of evil.

Yet the serpent, the enemy of God who wants to destroy his creation, tempts the woman with the choice to live independently from God and the ability to decide what is good and what is evil. He deceives her with the promise of being "like God," a cruel irony since she'd been created in his image. Nevertheless, the temptation proves strong enough that she breaks the one prohibition God gave. Her husband chooses to do the same.

Prior to this act, we can imagine the couple smiling whenever they heard their Creator approach. Their relationship with him would have brought them such joy! But now, they are guilty, ashamed, and afraid. They hide from the one who gave them life and his love.

The blame game starts immediately. The Lord asks a simple yes or no question, but the man tries to shift the blame to the woman, and even to God himself. "The woman you put here with me — she gave me some fruit from the tree, and I ate it." (3:12). In turn, the woman blames the serpent. It's all so frustratingly familiar, isn't it? Hiding from God because we're guilty and afraid. Blaming others for our choices.

God announces the consequences of the couple's rebellion. The purposes for which they'd been created — to cultivate the creation and to multiply and fill it — become arduous and agonizing. Work becomes back-breaking toil, childbearing become a painful struggle, and even their relationship suffers.

But there's even more bad news. In a pattern we'll see again and again, exile is a consequence of sin. Adam and Eve are banished from the garden and must leave the home they enjoyed with God. They rejected God in order to rule on their own terms, and they're getting what they thought they wanted.

To one extent or another, we've all done the same thing. We've followed in our ancestor's footsteps and rejected God's care and guidance. So, how's that working out for us? We live in a fallen world where our relationships are tainted by suspicion, selfishness, fear, and sometimes even violence. The creation that had been perfectly suited to us often works against us. We struggle and fight and endure loss and hardship. No matter how hard we try, humanity can't manufacture the perfection of our first home. Genesis 3 paints a bleak picture.

It's getting ahead a little bit in our story, but we can be comforted with the knowledge that the picture will get brighter. God did not give up on humanity. As we'll see, he did not abandon us. And one day he will bring us all the way home.

Pray

If it's helpful, use the following to begin your own prayer time with God.

Father, I admit that I often make the same choice as my ancient ancestors. I choose to go my own way. I reject your love and guidance. Forgive me. Draw me to you. Teach me the way you want me to go and empower me to follow you.

Day 2

The first act of human rebellion had immediate consequences for the first family of human beings. They are banished from the garden and their lives become immeasurably harder now that sin has entered the world. The narrator of Genesis moves quickly from describing the immediate aftermath of their rebellion to giving us stories that illustrate how universal the repercussions are.

In Genesis 4–11, we see how the contagion of sin and death grows, but we also learn that God did not abandon humanity. The story in Genesis 4 involves a rivalry between Adam and Eve's children for God's favor. When Cain becomes jealous of his brother, the Lord is there to instruct him. He says, *"If you do what is right, will you not be accepted? But if you do not do what is right, sin is crouching at your door; it desires to have you, but you must rule over it"* (Genesis 4:7).

In spite of God's warning, Cain murders his brother, and the Lord banishes him from the land, giving us another example of sin leading to exile. We see once again that the choice to reject the ways of God results in estrangement from God and others.

As the human population grows and time passes, things get worse and worse, until we arrive at Genesis 6.

Read the Word

Genesis 6:5–22 (NIV)

⁵ The Lord saw how great the wickedness of the human race had become on the earth, and that every inclination of the thoughts of the human heart was only evil all the time. ⁶ The Lord regretted that he had made human beings on the earth, and his heart was deeply troubled. ⁷ So the Lord said, "I will wipe from the face of the earth the human race I have created—and with them the animals, the birds and the creatures that move along the ground—for I regret that I have made them." ⁸ But Noah found favor in the eyes of the Lord.

⁹ This is the account of Noah and his family.

Noah was a righteous man, blameless among the people of his time, and he walked faithfully with God. ¹⁰ Noah had three sons: Shem, Ham and Japheth.

¹¹ Now the earth was corrupt in God's sight and was full of violence. ¹² God saw how corrupt the earth had become, for all the people on earth had corrupted their ways. ¹³ So God said to Noah, "I am going to put an end to all people, for the earth is filled with violence because of them. I am surely going to destroy both them and the earth. ¹⁴ So make yourself an ark of cypress wood; make rooms in it and coat it with pitch inside and out. ¹⁵ This is how you are to build it: The ark is to be three hundred cubits long, fifty cubits wide and thirty cubits high. ¹⁶ Make a roof for it, leaving below the roof an opening one cubit high all around. Put a door in the side of the ark and make lower, middle and upper decks. ¹⁷ I am going to bring floodwaters on the earth to destroy all life under the heavens, every creature that has the breath of life in it. Everything on earth will perish. ¹⁸ But I will establish my covenant with you, and you will enter the ark—you and your sons and your wife and your sons' wives with you. ¹⁹ You are to bring into the ark two of all living creatures, male and female, to keep them alive with you. ²⁰ Two of every kind of bird, of every kind of animal and of every kind of creature that moves along the ground will come to you to be kept alive. ²¹ You are to take every kind of food that is to be eaten and store it away as food for you and for them."

²² Noah did everything just as God commanded him.

- What is God's response to human wickedness?
- How does he show that he hasn't given up on humanity?

Reflect

The Creator wanted to spare his creation from evil. But now, as he looks across the world, it is all he sees.

Having watched wickedness increase and spread, God decides to wash the earth of this evil race of people with a flood. Yet, he does not wipe humanity out completely. He chooses one family with whom he will make a fresh start. Against the odds, Noah had walked faithfully with God. He was truly counter-cultural in his righteousness. In another theme we will see over and over in our story, God preserves a faithful remnant, this time represented by Noah and his family.

Noah's family, and the plants and animals that they saved survive the flood. They step out of the ark onto dry ground, and God makes a covenant, not only with Noah and his descendants, but the whole creation. He will never again destroy the earth with water and designates the rainbow as a sign of this promise (Genesis 9:11).

God reissues humanity's original commission to Noah and his family. They, and all the living things that survived, are to multiply and once again fill the earth, and he also gives Noah special dominion over all the animals of the earth (Genesis 9:1–3). God hasn't given up on humanity.

Centuries later, the apostle Peter will describe the flood as a baptism, where the world dies, but rises again (1 Peter 3:18–22). Yet as we'll see, the pattern of rebellion and sin was not broken, at least not yet. But one day, it will be.

Pray

If it's helpful, use the following to begin your own prayer time with God.

Father, I rejoice in your mercy and your desire to protect and save, but I know that you are a God of justice who must judge evil and violence. Thank you for the mercy that you've shown me. Help me understand the destructive power of sin so that I avoid it.

Day 3

Last week, our story started on such a high note, didn't it? A loving Creator, a beautiful garden, and a joyful couple ready to fulfill God's purposes for their lives. Yet, we knew it wouldn't last. The descent comes swiftly in the story of Genesis, leading to God's judgment through a flood. What lessons we should learn? Apart from the Creator human beings simply cannot flourish. Selfishness, deceit, exploitation, anger, and violence will grow and spread apart from God's mercy and grace. And yet, God doesn't give up on humanity. He remains faithful to his promises.

After the flood, God once again gives the commission to multiply and fill the earth. And immediately in Genesis 10, we see that the world is being replenished with people. Seventy nations of the new world are listed. Yet, in Genesis 11, we see the same sad pattern being repeated. Humanity will reject their Creator and try and seize power for themselves.

Read the Word

Genesis 11:1–9 (NIV)

¹ Now the whole world had one language and a common speech. ² As people moved eastward, they found a plain in Shinar and settled there.

³ They said to each other, "Come, let's make bricks and bake them thoroughly." They used brick instead of stone, and tar for mortar. ⁴ Then they said, "Come, let us build ourselves a city, with a tower that reaches to the heavens, so that we

may make a name for ourselves; otherwise we will be scattered over the face of the whole earth.”

⁵ But the Lord came down to see the city and the tower the people were building. ⁶ The Lord said, “If as one people speaking the same language they have begun to do this, then nothing they plan to do will be impossible for them. ⁷ Come, let us go down and confuse their language so they will not understand each other.”

⁸ So the Lord scattered them from there over all the earth, and they stopped building the city. ⁹ That is why it was called Babel—because there the Lord confused the language of the whole world. From there the Lord scattered them over the face of the whole earth.

- What were the people trying to do?
- What is God’s response? Why do you think he had a problem with what they were doing?

Reflect

The people come together on the plains of Shinar to embark on a massive project. Once again, we have another example of humans trying to be like God. They want to build a tower that will not only make them famous but will connect heaven and earth.

In the Garden of Eden, heaven and earth intersected because God’s presence bridged the divide. Now, in the east, where the first humans had traveled after being banished from the garden, people will try to span that chasm on their own. Instead of spreading out and filling the earth the way they’d been commanded, they want a God’s-eye view from the top for themselves.

Of course, the narrator of Genesis makes it clear that the Lord had to come *down* to see this tower that is supposed to reach to the sky. Of course, it wouldn’t have mattered how high they’d made it; it could never reach heaven.

God sees what they are trying to do, and he scatters the people and confuses their language. They want to make a name for themselves, but the name they receive is “babel” which means confusion. A human project executed in rebellion against God can’t be allowed to succeed. People need their Creator. He knows what’s best for those he designed and gave life. Yet, people then and now act as if that couldn’t possibly be true.

Humanity hasn’t given up trying to exalt itself and find a way up and into the transcendent. Man-made religions and philosophies fail, and ultimately so will science and technology. We can’t get to God on our own, and we certainly can’t be like God on our own.

Later on in our story, a man will have a dream of another structure that reaches up into heaven and connects it to earth. It’s a ladder, and on it, angels ascend and descend. Even later

in our story, we'll discover who that ladder represents. It's Jesus. He'll be the one who bridges the divide between heaven and earth and brings us into the presence of God. Through him we will be able to shed sin's corruption and fully and completely bear the image and likeness of God.

Pray

If it's helpful, use the following to begin your own prayer time with God.

Father, I know that I can be as guilty as those at Babel. I can try to glorify myself over you and make a name for myself through my human accomplishments. Convict me of my pride and forgive me. Remind me that I am completely loved by you, and that by living my life for you, I will be satisfied. Thank you for coming down and rescuing me. I look forward with great hope to the day when you will make all things right.

Day 4

On Thursdays we get to focus on Jesus, and after this episode of the story, I'm ready to discover him in the bleak reality of Genesis 3–11. How about you?

Last week we saw that as the eternal Son and second person of the Trinity, Jesus was present at creation. In him, through him, and for him all things were made (Colossians 1:16).

This week we'll see that Jesus is also the promise. At the moment that God was pronouncing the consequences for Adam and Eve's rebellion, he also announces his promise to redeem them.

Read the Word

Genesis 3:14–15 (NIV)

¹⁴ So the Lord God said to the serpent, "Because you have done this,

*"Cursed are you above all livestock
and all wild animals!
You will crawl on your belly
and you will eat dust
all the days of your life.*

¹⁵ And I will put enmity
between you and the woman,
and between your offspring and hers;
he will crush your head, and you will strike his heel."

- Where in these verses do you see Christ promised?

Reflect

There is a part of the Bible that most of us skip over — the genealogies. We come to a chapter like Genesis 5, and we skim right over the list of who fathered whom. But family lines were important to the Jewish people, and the promise of Genesis 3:15 might at least partially explain why. In tracing the offspring of Eve through the ages, they were looking for the one who would fulfill God's promised redemption.

On that very dark day, when the first humans realize how far they've fallen, and just how severe the consequences of their sin are, the Creator gives them a glimmer of hope. One day, an offspring of the woman will crush the head of the serpent.

The Bible describes the serpent in many ways. He's the enemy of God who taunts and tempts, the evil one who seeks to kill, devour, and destroy, the accuser who seeks to disqualify every human from God's favor, the Great Dragon of Revelation who will wage war against God and his people. Right here in Genesis 3:15 we learn that one who brings so much suffering to humanity will one day be put down.

Jesus Christ, the eternal Son and the offspring of Eve will come, and he will defeat Satan. At the cross where the Savior dies, the Serpent will think he has won. But the ultimate victory belongs to Jesus who defeats sin and death by taking on the sins of the world and is resurrected to new life to reign and rule forever.

No matter what you're going through in your life right now, no matter how hard it is, take heart. There is no suspense as to how the story will end. Jesus, the promised one will be victorious. As believers, we can claim that victory over the serpent right now. We don't have to live as if he has the upper hand, because he doesn't. We can rest in the strength of the hero of the story and draw courage from him.

Pray

If it's helpful, use the following to begin your own prayer time with God.

Father, I can't express how grateful I am for Jesus. Sometimes I feel so defeated by sin – my sin and the sins of others. But I am not defeated. Jesus is victorious and because I am in Christ, I am victorious too. Help me live that truth right now. I don't have to give into temptation, or let sin destroy my life. Satan can't accuse me because I am forgiven. I know how the story ends. Empower me to live in light of that future.

Day 5

Happy Friday! Today we'll put the pieces of this week's part of story together and reflect on our key verse. We'll review last week's key verse as well, so we can continue to build our knowledge. We'll also think about our place in God's story and invite the Spirit to use God's Word to grow our faith.

The Story

Episode 1: God Creates

- **Key Verse: "So God created mankind in his own image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them." Genesis 1:27**
- **Key Passages: Genesis 1–2**
- **Key Figures: Adam and Eve**

Episode 2: God is rejected

In the beginning God created a beautiful world full of life where he would live with his creation. He created a man and a woman and commissioned them to rule this beautiful world on his behalf, under his care and guidance. But he gave them a choice, and this choice comes in the form of a tree.

In the garden God planted "the tree of the knowledge of good and evil" and warned Adam and Eve not to eat any of its fruit. With their Creator to rely on, why would they need such knowledge? They were living in God's good world with the Creator of all goodness right there with them. They could trust in *his* knowledge of good and evil.

But a voice comes to tempt them. It's a voice all of us have heard, the one that questions whether God is really trustworthy. Maybe he's holding out on us? Isn't it better if we make our own decisions about what's good and what's evil?

In our story this voice comes from the Serpent, God's adversary, who wants to bring death and destruction to God's world. "Take and eat" the Serpent said, and you will be "like God." How could they have been so deceived? They were created in his likeness.

But Eve ate the fruit and so did Adam.

God had warned them that the fruit would kill them. And while physical death is not immediate, its corrupting influence is. And the purposes for which the man and woman were created, to cultivate God's creation and multiply and fill the earth, become difficult and painful. Sin enters the world, so they and everyone who comes after them are suspicious, selfish, stingy, fearful, and sometimes even violent. Relationships are fractured, including

their relationship with God. They hide from him in fear and shame. And they are removed from the garden, God's home, and separated from their loving Creator.

It only takes one generation for it to become obvious how bad things are. Adam and Eve's son kills his own brother. And as the population grows, and time passes, things get even worse, until when God looks out on humanity, his special creation, he sees only wickedness. Looking into the hearts of people he sees precisely what he had wanted to spare them knowledge of — evil. And it breaks his heart.

God decides to wipe the earth of this evil race and make a fresh start with one family, the family of Noah. And after that family survives the great flood, they are re-given rule over creation and the commission to multiply and fill the earth. But it doesn't take long until the same, sad pattern is repeated, and humanity rejects their Creator's care and guidance to seize power for themselves. The people of the earth gather to build a tower that will reach into the heavens so they can be like God.

As we look out on our world today, it's easy to see that humanity is still stuck in that same sad, pattern. But we are not without hope. Because way back at the beginning, even as God is explaining the consequences of Adam and Eve's rebellion, he promises their redemption. One of Eve's offspring will crush the head of the serpent and the rest of the story will show us how.

Key Verse

Meditate on our key verse for the week. Read each phrase slowly and prayerfully. Allow the Spirit to speak to you through God's Word.

*¹⁵ And I will put enmity
between you and the woman,
and between your offspring and hers;
he will crush your head, and you will strike his heel.”
- Genesis 3:15*

Finding your place in God's story

Ask the Spirit to guide you, then consider these questions:

- As you reflect on what you've read this week, what's your biggest takeaway? For example, what did you learn about God as Creator? What about Jesus as the Promise? What did you learn about humanity and our need for God?
- How did you see yourself reflected in the stories we read this week? Has the Spirit convicted you of rebelling against God and his ways? Of trying to make a name for yourself instead of living to glorify God? Confess and receive God's forgiveness. Ask him to empower you to change.

- For what do you want to praise and thank God?
- What requests do you want to bring to your loving Creator?

Tune in Next Week:

God hasn't given up on humanity! Next week we'll see his grand rescue plan begin to unfold through one family to whom God makes some big promises.