

# God's Eternal Plan

## Lesson 1: The Beginning

The Bible is composed of 66 individual books, written over a period of around 1,500 years by about 40 different authors. It ranges from books of history to poetry to prophecy to letters and discusses the time from the creation of the world to around the end of the first century A.D. Certainly, the Bible is no ordinary book, as it is the book from God (2 Timothy 3:16-17)! The story of the Bible is the story of God's eternal plan and is the greatest story ever told – the true story about how God saves people (including you) from the greatest enemies we have ever faced. In this lesson, we want to consider the beginning of this eternal plan and Bible story.

**1) In the beginning, God was.** As the Bible opens and begins to discuss the creation of this universe, God already existed (Genesis 1:1). This God is the one who is eternal (always existing and never needing a creator, Revelation 4:8; Genesis 21:33; Psalm 90:2), all-powerful (having no limitation to His power, Genesis 1; 17:1; Revelation 19:6), all-knowing (having nothing He cannot know, Isaiah 46:9-10; Romans 11:33-36), and ever-present (having nothing that escapes His attention anywhere, Proverbs 15:3; Psalm 139:3-12). Three separate Beings possess this nature of being God: The Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. These three have the same nature of being God and are fully united as God (John 1:1-3; Acts 5:3-4; Genesis 1:2, 26-27); yet are separate beings (Matthew 3:16-17; 28:19-20).

**2) In the beginning, God had a plan.** God had a plan to redeem mankind from sin that is eternal in nature. Consider the following passages that speak of this plan (Matthew 25:34; Acts 2:23; 3:18; Romans 16:25; 1 Corinthians 2:7; Ephesians 1:4; 3:8-11; 2 Timothy 1:8-9; 1 Peter 1:18-21). So, even before God created this world or people sinned, God had a plan that would offer eternal salvation through

Jesus! However, this plan was once considered a “mystery,” as it was not fully understood in the Old Testament times as it can be understood today (Genesis 3:15; 12:3; 1 Peter 1:10-12). Today, you should appreciate that you can now know the mystery that has been revealed and that you can partake of (Ephesians 3:3-6)!

**2) God created the heavens and the earth (Genesis 1:1).** Genesis 1 records God's six-day creation of the heavens and the earth, and everything therein. In this, it is important to recognize the special way God created people in His image (as spiritual beings who can worship and serve God and survive physical death, vv. 26-27; John 4:24). After creating the heavens and the earth, God declared everything was “very good” (v. 31). Since God is entirely good and cannot have fellowship with sin (1 John 1:5; Revelation 4:8), this means God created a world that was free from sin. Then, God placed man in the Garden of Eden (a paradise on earth, Genesis 2:8-14) and created the woman for the man (Genesis 2:18-25). At this point, everything was perfect! However, you must pause to consider *why* the all-powerful and eternal God created the heavens and the earth in the way He did and created people in His image and with free will. Consider the following passages: Psalm 19:1; 57:5; 8; Isaiah 43:7; Ecclesiastes 12:13-14; Acts 17:26-27. God did this so that all creation would glorify Him! Particularly, God expects those who have been created in His image to choose to glorify and seek Him!

**3) The fall.** When God created Adam and Eve and placed them in the Garden of Eden, He gave them a law to follow (Genesis 2:15-17). The law and consequence for breaking the law were both plainly identified. However, Satan enters the Bible story in Genesis 3 and works through the serpent to tempt Eve (vv. 1-5). He appealed to the physical desires of the

woman to make breaking the law of God sound like a good idea. Tragically, Eve was deceived by Satan. She looked at the tree differently after the temptation and chose to violate God's law (sin, v. 6). Then, she gave it to her husband, who also sinned. Spiritual death (separation from God) occurred on this day as their relationship with God was changed and physical death and suffering also entered the world at that time (Genesis 3:16-24; 5:5). Finally, God also punished the serpent and Satan (Genesis 3:14-15). This records the first glimpse into God's eternal plan, as it foreshadows all that would be accomplished through Jesus defeating Satan!

**4) The problem of sin.** Genesis goes on to detail how sin spread quickly as people multiplied on this earth (4:6-8; 6:5-8). This has continued today (Romans 3:10-18, 23). But, why is sin such a big deal that God had an eternal plan to deal with it? First, sin is the transgression of God's law, as people violate God's laws (1 John 3:4). Second, since God is entirely holy and pure, sin separates people from God (Isaiah 59:1-2; 1 John 1:5-7). Third, sin results in the punishment of eternal death in Hell fire (Romans 6:23; Revelation 21:8). Fourth, because those who sin deserve to spend eternity in Hell, it follows that people could not do anything to earn their own salvation and were desperately in need of a Savior (Romans 6:23; Ephesians 2:8-9)!

God created the universe, the world, and everything in them in a perfect way. Yet, people chose to sin against God, which brought many consequences. With these foundational points established, the stage is set for the unfolding of God's eternal plan. How would God respond to the problem of sin? In the next lesson, we will see how God used the nation of Israel as a key piece in accomplishing His eternal plan of redemption!

## Thought Questions

(2 Timothy 3:16-17)

**Teaching:** What did you learn from this lesson?

**Rebuking:** What are some ways this lesson challenges you to live differently?

**Correcting:** How does this lesson help you make positive changes for Christ?

**Training & Equipping:** How can you apply this lesson to be trained and equipped in God's service?