

THE STORYCHANGER

GENESIS 1:26-31

THE FIRST STORY



FIRST BYRON CHRISTIAN REFORMED CHURCH

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INTRODUCTION

Most stories begin with a happy, idyllic, ideal situation. Then a villain appears and ruins everything. The middle of the story, and the majority of it, is about how the hero of the story fights the villain, reverses the ruin, and returns to the original ideal, or an even better ideal.

If that's the usual structure of a story, what will happen if we start reading it halfway through? Without knowing how it began, we won't know what's going on, who's who, what's happened, what's wrong, and where the story is going. We'll be confused, disoriented, and probably give up on the story.

That's where many are at when it comes to the story of the world. As we saw last week, we're living in the middle of the world's story. Most are confused and disoriented because they don't know how the story began. They haven't read chapter one and therefore don't know what's happened, who's who, what's gone wrong, what's going on, or where the story is going. The world is a confusing and disorienting place to them.

That's why we're going to go back to the beginning, to chapter one, to where the story began. In doing so, we'll not just understand God's ideal, and what's going on at the moment, but also where and how God's story is going to end. By understanding the beginning, we'll get a better handle on the middle and the end. And with that clarity and direction we'll, be in a much better position to change our story using God's story.

CONTEXT

God's story begins with the beginning. The first chapter opens with: **"In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth"** (Gen. 1:1). It ends with **"God saw everything that he had made, and behold, it was very good. And there was evening and there was morning, the sixth day"** (1:31). It's a beautiful scene of an ideal world populated with ideal people. Let's take a closer look at both.



What did God's ideal world look like?



1. THE STORY BEGINS WITH AN IDEAL WORLD

God made a bountiful world

When God made everything, he didn't just sprinkle a few samples here and there. He created an abundance of everything. He created an abundance of planets, stars, and galaxies. He made an abundance of animals, fish, and birds. He made an abundance of trees, plants, and herbs. He made an abundance of land, sea, and sky. He made an abundance of materials, chemicals, and crops. The world was full to the brim of the goodness and generosity of God

God made a beautiful world

When God made the world, he didn't just make a functional world, but a beautiful world. It didn't just work well, it awed deeply. Lovely landscapes, pretty petals, fresh flavors, super sights, amazing animals, flying fish, tall trees, and majestic mountains. As such, it revealed the beautiful mind and character behind it all. In God's beautiful world we see God's beautiful wisdom, goodness, sovereignty, power, creativity, and glory.

CHANGE YOUR STORY WITH GOD'S STORY

Praise God for his first story. It's an amazing first scene, isn't it. An ideal world revealing an ideal God. We praise God as the origin of all species, and as the missing link. We join with the whole creation in saying, "Glory, glory, glory!"

Grieve over the ruined story. How different the first scene is to the present scene. Instead of bounty and fulness, we see shortage and emptiness. Instead of beauty and artistry, we see ugliness and disorder. We weep over what's happened. It's a sad scene and should produce a sad soul, because the end result is not just our ruined world but our ruined souls. Don't you hate the villain that spoiled God's beautiful story? We'll meet him next week.

Ask for a changed story. The fact that God's first story was so bountiful and beautiful gives us hope that what God did once, he can do again. Let's take our ruined stories to Jesus the StoryChanger and ask that he would change our stories with his story. He left the bounty and beauty of heaven to suffer emptiness and ugliness so that we can enjoy bounty and beauty again. Ask him to re-write your story so that the ending will be like the beautiful beginning. Take your emptiness and ugliness to Jesus and ask him to fill you and beautify you as only he can.

Hope for a happy ending. Given the ideal beginning of God's story, we can hope with confidence for an ideal ending.

GOD'S FIRST WORLD
FORECASTS GOD'S FINAL WORLD.



What about the first people in God's first world?



2. GOD'S STORY BEGINS WITH AN IDEAL PEOPLE

We were like God

God made humanity in his image. That image was made up of:

- **Oneness:** Two different persons, male and female, equally imaging God in perfect relationship.
- **Knowledge:** They knew everything they needed to know about their Creator and the creation.
- **Holiness:** They had holy hearts, minds, consciences, wills, desires, ambitions, emotions.
- **Authority:** God gave them dominion over the creation and the creatures in it.
- **Work and rest:** Like God, they worked six days and rested one day.

We were with God

God walked with Adam and Eve, and talked with them in ordinary everyday life. Their lives were centered upon and lived around God. They enjoyed perfect, love, trust, and communication. God was with them and they were with God in perfect relationship.

We were for God

They found their deepest satisfaction and fulfillment in living not for themselves or one another, but for God. They dedicated themselves to serving and glorifying God.

CHANGE YOUR STORY WITH GOD'S STORY

Praise God for his first story. Does that not make you yearn for "the good old days?" Ideal people in an ideal world. Praise God for making us like him, with him, and for him. Ask him to give you an idea of the ideal.

Grieve over the ruined story. We are no longer like God, with God, or for God. Instead we are more like the villain, live without God, and are out for ourselves. What a mess we've inherited...and added to. We lament the mess and the meaninglessness. We hate the villain who's still at work in our lives. The more we see the ideal, the more we'll see our idols.

Ask for a changed story. Do you not long to be like God, with God, and for God? Jesus the StoryChanger lived like God, with God, and for God. He died so that we can live like God, with God, and for God. Ask him to change you by grace, to use his story to re-write your story.

Hope for a happy ending. By grace, we can become like God, with God, and for God. But there's so much more to gain and experience at the end of the story. Revelation paints the final chapter of ideal people in an ideal world. That's our hope and longing.

JESUS'S STORY WAS RUINED
SO THAT OURS COULD BE RE-WRITTEN



What 's the next chapter in your story?
Hear God's story > Change your story > Tell the story



CONCLUSION



PRAYER: StoryChanger, thank you for writing such a beautiful first chapter. Use your story to reverse my ruined story and give me hope of a happy ending.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Give examples of when you've come in halfway through a story and how it confused you.
2. Where do you still see the remains of God's beauty and God's bounty in our world?
3. How can you use the story of God's ideal world to change your story?
4. Go through the five parts of God's original image in Adam and Eve (oneness, knowledge, etc.) and describe how different we are today.
5. How can you use the story of God's ideal people to change your story?
6. How does knowing the first short chapter change your view of the last endless chapter?

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THE STORYCHANGER (2)

GENESIS 1

GOD'S FIRST STORY

THIS IS MY STORY
THIS IS MY SONG
PRAISING MY SAVIOR
ALL THE DAY LONG



Unless we know how God's story began, we won't know how to change our story or have hope of a happy ending.

Biblical answer?



The story begins with an ideal world

- A bountiful world
- A beautiful world

GOD'S FIRST WORLD
FORECASTS GOD'S FINAL WORLD

The first people?



My Story

If I should speak then let it be
Of the grace that is greater
than all my sin
Of when justice was served
and where mercy wins
Of the kindness of Jesus
that draws me in
Oh to tell you my story
is to tell of Him



The story begins with an ideal people

- We were like God
- We were with God
- We were for God

JESUS'S STORY WAS RUINED SO
THAT OURS COULD BE RE-WRITTEN

Hear > Change > Tell



Know how God's story began so that your story can have a happier middle and a happy-ever-after ending.

