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AUTHOR: MOSES

AUDIENCE: PEOPLE OF ISRAEL

DATE: 1450–1410 B.C.

SETTING: THE AREA NOW KNOWN AS THE MIDDLE EAST

OT.1

ESSENTIALS OF

Genesis

Genesis (meaning “origin”) outlines the beginnings of human history. Filled with dramatic stories and characters, it’s an easy book to read devotionally. You’ll find God intimately involved in this book. He’s the Creator, director and participating player in the drama of life. As you walk through this book, focus on God’s incredible work of creation, as well as his interaction with each person. Let the stories you read speak to you about his nature. As you read and reflect, you’ll experience the promise, “Come near to God and he will come near to you” (James 4:8).

WHAT TO LOOK FOR IN GENESIS:

- :: GOD’S CREATION OF A PERFECT WORLD
- :: WHO FAILED AND WHY
- :: NOAH’S WILLINGNESS TO TRUST AND OBEY GOD
- :: THE TESTING OF ABRAM’S FAITH
- :: GOD’S PROMISES TO HIS PEOPLE
- :: GOD’S ASSURANCE OF HOPE TO THOSE WHO SUFFER
- :: WHY GOD IS WORTH KNOWING AND TRUSTING

THE BEGINNING

1 In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. ²Now the earth was^a formless and empty, darkness was over the surface of the deep, and the Spirit of God was hovering over the waters.

³And God said, “Let there be light,” and there was light. ⁴God saw that the light was good, and he separated the light from the darkness. ⁵God called the light “day,” and the darkness he called “night.” And there was evening, and there was morning—the first day.

⁶And God said, “Let there be an expanse between the waters to separate water from water.” ⁷So God made the expanse and separated the water

under the expanse from the water above it. And it was so. ⁸God called the expanse “sky.” And there was evening, and there was morning—the second day.

⁹And God said, “Let the water under the sky be gathered to one place, and let dry ground appear.” And it was so. ¹⁰God called the dry ground “land,” and the gathered waters he called “seas.” And God saw that it was good.

¹¹Then God said, “Let the land produce vegetation: seed-bearing plants and trees on the land that bear fruit with seed in it, according to their various kinds.” And it was so. ¹²The land produced vegetation: plants bearing seed according to their kinds and trees bearing fruit with seed

^{a2} Or possibly *became*

TODAY'S BIBLE READING
GENESIS 3:1–15

RECOMMENDED READING
JOHN 1:14–18; 2 TIMOTHY 3:16–4:8; 2 PETER 1:12–21

SHADOW OF A DOUBT

What happens when people act in direct opposition to what they know is right? This activity happens on a number of levels. When a person who's trying hard to lose weight consistently binges on pizza and ice cream, disappointment ensues. When an individual commits a crime, victims suffer and the perpetrator risks jail time. When a husband or wife chooses to engage in an extramarital affair, the marriage is damaged—sometimes beyond repair—and children suffer the consequences. When a CEO decides to overlook or sometimes even encourage accounting inconsistencies, giant corporations fail, high-level indictments follow and investors lose their savings.

What do all of the scenarios outlined above have in common? Every one of these accounts, and countless other failure-filled stories, can trace its origin to the book of Genesis. Today's reading gives us a glimpse of the first failure to follow a direct command from God and the devastating results of that failure. We see the repercussions of this disobedience reflected in the daily news—and, if we're honest, reflected in our own darkened hearts.

At first, Adam and Eve were sure of God's instructions. There was no doubt. They knew exactly what God wanted because they received their marching orders straight from the Creator himself. Still, a simple challenge ("Did God really say . . .?") from the serpent shook Eve's confidence to the core. Once she questioned what she knew to be true, she became vulnerable to Satan's temptation. When she and Adam then acted in violation of God's direct command, sin invaded what had been an unimaginably perfect paradise.

Spiritually speaking, what are you sure of beyond a shadow of a doubt? What do you know to be true? Where does your certainty come from? These are important questions to answer because you face tests every day that can undermine your Biblical marching orders. People may question your mental capacity: "How can an educated person believe in intelligent design when there's so much evidence to support evolution?" Others may accuse you of being narrow-minded: "How you can you say Jesus is the only way to God?" Some may appeal to your sense of freedom: "Doesn't God want you to have any fun?" Still others might attack the source of your trust: "The Bible is full of inconsistencies, and you're choosing to base your life on this book?"

How prepared are you for the assaults that will come your way? Do you have a tight grip on God's truth? Think about this today: How will God's truth impact your actions—from the time you set foot on the floor in the morning to the minute you go to bed tonight?

TO TAKE AWAY

:: WHAT ARE YOUR CORE FAITH BELIEFS—THE SPIRITUAL TRUTHS YOU ARE SURE OF? TAKE A MINUTE AND WRITE DOWN THREE OR FOUR STATEMENTS THAT SUM UP THESE TRUTHS.

:: WHEN WAS THE LAST TIME SOMEONE CHALLENGED YOUR FAITH? HOW DID IT AFFECT YOU?

:: HOW DID YOU RESPOND TO THE CHALLENGE? WHAT WOULD YOU DO DIFFERENTLY NEXT TIME?

RUINED

ADAM

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. GENESIS 3:6

The nights were the hardest for Adam. It was in the quietness of twilight, right before he lay down, that the memories stirred. Most days, he was able to keep himself busy enough. There was much to be done now, and the busyness left little room for remembering.

But sometimes, despite his best efforts, memories of the other place raced through his mind. When he scraped the dusty earth, he sometimes remembered the soil in Eden—green sprouts shooting up from clods that were as warm as blood. Nothing at all like this lifeless soil. Adam often thought back to the sparkling, life-sustaining river in Eden. So great and so wide. So present, and yet so distant.

It was also at night, when he was lying next to his wife, that he felt their distance most acutely. For the first few months they'd run around the same tree, coming up with new and inventive ways to blame each other. Now they just concentrated on what it meant to live and survive in this new place. This place that was not quite like home. This place of wild consequences.

It was at night that regret stalked him like a wild beast. If only he had known. Known the way things would change between him and this woman, his wife. Known how things would change between him and the God who made him, who used to walk with him through the lush forest and speak with him. Known that because of that one bite of fruit, he would one day look down at the face of his dead son Abel—one hand covering the wounds, still wet from the blood that his older son, Cain, had spilled.

If he had known, he would have said something when the serpent offered the fruit. He would have taken the fruit from Eve's hand and thrown it to the ground. He would have led her far away from that tree and that beguiling snake. But instead, he was silent. Instead, he stayed in the clearing, near the tree, waiting for . . . waiting for this? His silence and inaction haunted him.

The two of them had worked hard to convince each other that it wasn't a bad life, this new existence. But there were times when memories of what had been and glimpses of what could have been came to him—and he fully realized what he had lost. He would do anything not to feel that ache any more.

BACK TO THE FUTURE

:: WHAT DAMAGING EFFECTS OF SIN HAVE YOU SEEN IN YOUR LIFE?

:: ADAM TRADED IN PARADISE. IN WHAT WAYS ARE YOU TEMPTED TO TRADE IN WHAT GOD HAS TO OFFER FOR A CHEAP SUBSTITUTE?

:: ONE OF ADAM'S BIGGEST REGRETS WAS HIS INACTIVITY—HE DIDN'T DO ANYTHING TO PREVENT EVE'S ACTIONS. HOW CAN YOU GUARD AGAINST EVIL IN YOUR LIFE AND FIGHT FOR A CLOSER RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD?

THE STORY CONTINUES . . .

FIND THE FULL STORY OF ADAM'S CREATION AND FALL IN GENESIS 1–4.