

God's Great Story

We believe that there has existed eternally a Triune God, one in essence, three in persons – Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. The only way we know about this God is because he revealed himself to mankind through his Word and through the person of Jesus.

God is the creator of time and space and in the first book of his revelation, he makes it known that he spoke all things into existence from nothing and that everything he created was good. During his creative acts, God created one creature to bear, more fully, his image, including his ability to reason and contemplate and understand existence. This image bearer was humankind, of which God made first the man, Adam, and then the woman, Eve. Their relationship of authority and submission – man to God and woman to man – was good and each thrived in the role in which they were created. At the end of all his creative endeavors, God declared everything he had made, and the order in which he created all things to live and operate, “very good.”

We believe that humankind sinned and rebelled against God's good authority when the woman believed the lie about God's goodness and the man willfully disobeyed God's command. This willful rebellion is also known as The Fall of humankind. This rebellion was instigated by an enemy of God, the serpent Satan, who twists and perverts God's Word leading humankind to rebellion against God. The result of our original parents' rebellion was the destruction of the beautiful picture of authority and submission between humankind and God. Both man and woman began to resent their submission and abuse or abandon their God given authority. This rebellion (sin) brought death to humankind and placed a gap between God who is Holy and all humans because of our sinfulness. From generation to generation this sin is passed down in our very nature so we are naturally rebellious to God from birth and naturally seek our own independence and authority instead of living under God's good care and kingship.

This sinful rebellion of humankind allowed God to reveal his great plan to redeem the sinful hearts of men and to eventually restore his creation. God's first act following our original parents' rebellion was to kill an innocent animal to cover over their nakedness and shame.

God then began forming for himself a people he would call His own. From this people he would bring a deliverer who would rescue people from their rebellion and captivity to sin and death. Throughout the Old Testament, God

continued to reveal himself through his Word and deeds holding faithful to the covenant he established with his people.

After years of being a covenant breaking people, the nation of Israel was splintered and had fallen into captivity. Eventually God was silent for a number of years while the people wondered when this deliverer might come and fulfill the promises God had made to his people.

Finally, in a small, completely unassuming way, God entered His creation through the person of Jesus, the second person of the Trinity. Jesus never ceased being God and yet he became fully man. Immanuel – God with us. Every aspect of Jesus fulfilled what had been prophesied about him throughout God’s revelation in the Old Testament. His birth, His life, His death and His resurrection were in perfect harmony with what had been revealed. Jesus lived perfectly obedient to God the Father, fulfilling the law and covenant that mankind had broken.

Jesus began His work of ministry around his 30th year performing miracles foreshadowing restoration and reconciliation. he would bring the dead to life, heal the sick and the blind, and his first miracle was to paint a picture of the celebration of our future hope in God’s restored kingdom by turning water into wine.

Jesus preached the Gospel (Good News) that salvation and reconciliation came only through him and was not contingent on man’s goodness or wickedness. Jesus announced that he was the one who would restore God’s kingdom and re-create our hearts to what they were intended to be. Not only that, but Jesus would be the one to bring about complete restoration of all of God’s creation.

In His third year of ministry, Jesus was falsely accused of blasphemy, arrested and tried in a completely faulty trial. He was sentenced to death. What was revealed through this was NOT man’s plan to rid their world of Jesus, but God’s plan of redemption necessitating the blood of innocence on behalf of the guilty. Jesus willfully went to the cross bearing the sin of mankind. He was brutally beaten and killed as a substitute for sinful man.

On the third day, following His crucifixion, Jesus was raised from the dead. He was raised in a glorified physical body that could be touched and seen and he even ate with His disciples. Hundreds of people bore witness to Jesus’ physical resurrection.

Jesus then established a New Covenant with his people as their great High Priest. No longer would man need to sacrifice animals, the ultimate payment

had been made. Jesus established a new community of people who were being inwardly made new by His death and resurrection and they were called the Church. He commanded his church to continue His ministry to declare the Gospel (Good News), training disciples and baptizing the disciples in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. He commanded these disciples to love each other in a way that others would look and be amazed and could only surmise that something amazing was inside them.

Jesus commanded that His church celebrate and remember His person and work in two specific ways – baptism, the conscious identifying with Jesus’ death, burial and resurrection as a recognition of God’s gracious covenant with his people and as a celebration of that covenant being brought to light in the heart and mind of a follower; and Communion, the celebration of the body and blood of Jesus poured out for sinners for the forgiveness of their sins.

Jesus spoke in the Gospels of eternity and of preparing a place for his people. His words divided that eternity into two realities – one with him and one separated from him. All people justly deserve to remain separated from God living in our will to try to be our own God. However, through Christ, some people have been made new and have been given the fullness of LIFE.