

Session Three

ESTABLISHING THE CONTEXT OF THE BIBLE'S STORY

Session One described Mobiology as God preparing a people to rule and reign with Him over His new heaven and new earth, in the age to come and for all eternity.

Session Two outlined the key principles that will guide us through God's awe-inspiring story.

In this Session we will establish the all-important **context** of the Bible's story.

A. The Importance of Context

An old Chinese proverb says,
"The longest journey begins with a first step"

Others say, "Yes, but that first step must be taken in the **right direction!**"

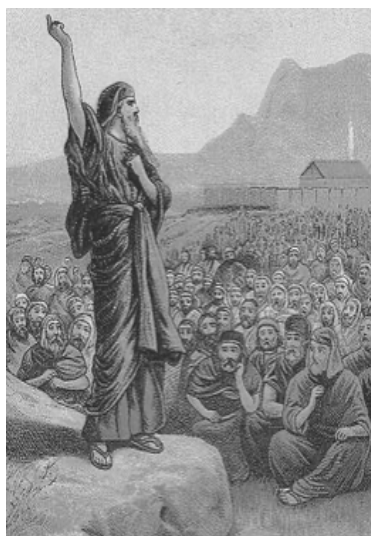


Context touches on one of our principles of interpreting the Bible's story: the Bible was written **for** us, but not **to** us.

Context is key to biblical interpretation.

B. The Genesis Context

Genesis was Written by Moses for the Children of Israel



- He was preparing them to live a life on mission with God.
- They were to focus on fulfilling the Abrahamic Covenant (Ge 12: 2-3¹).
- The Children of Israel had inherited this Covenant and Moses was preparing them for their missional calling.
- This is the context of Genesis, and the entire five books of Moses, known as the 'Pentateuch' or 'Torah.'

¹ Ge 12:2,3 "I will make you into a great nation, and I will bless you; I will make your name great, and you will be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you, and whoever curses you I will curse; and all peoples on earth will be blessed through you."

C. The Purpose of Scripture

All the Books of the Bible were Written to Prepare God's People

- Paul explains this clearly in 2 Timothy 3:16 and 17.

2 Ti 3:16-17 *All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so **that** the servant of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.*

- It was for this missional purpose that Moses wrote God-inspired scripture to the children of Israel.
- All 40 writers of the Bible, from Genesis to Revelation, did the same: to prepare God's people in every generation to live a fruitful life on mission with God.
- Scripture must, therefore, be read from this mobilizing/missional perspective.

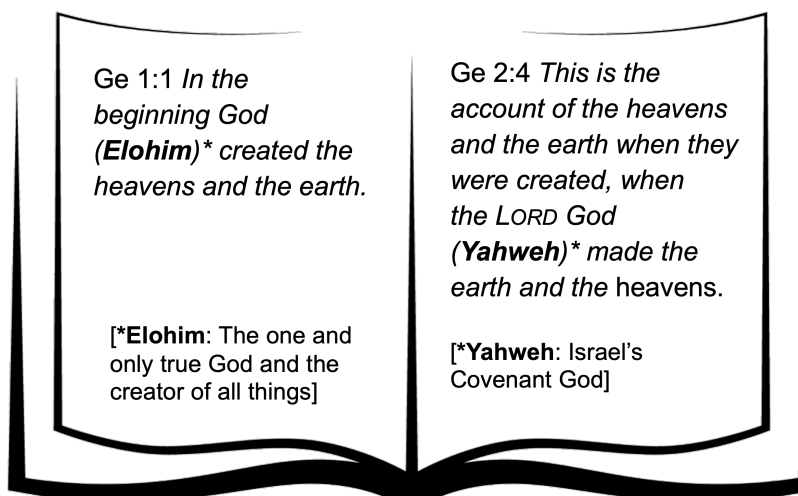
D. Key Lessons from the Bible's Introduction

The Introduction to the Story of the Bible is found in the first two chapters of Genesis. These chapters come before the 'fall' and represent a time when everything was perfect.

What does the Bible's Introduction tell us about God's creation plan and purpose?

There are many lessons, but here we will look at two of foundational importance.

1. Understanding Israel's God



- Moses was saying that Israel's covenant God (Yahweh), the God who called them to live a life on mission with Him, to the nations of the world, was none other than the God who was the creator of all things (Elohim).
- Their God (Yahweh) was not like the inferior territorial gods or demi-gods of the nations around them. He is the God of all gods, and nothing is too hard for Him.
- Jesus prepared His disciples in the same way in Matthew 28:18-20¹.
- This was a confidence boost to the Children of Israel, in the Old Testament and to us in the New Testament. MISSION is not something we do alone. God brings all His authority to bear when we step out in faith.



2. Understanding God's Creation Plan and Purpose

- The days of creation, described by Moses, must be understood in the context of Moses preparing the Children of Israel to live a life on mission with God.
- Man was created on the 6th day, for God's purpose.
- Creation was for God's glory, not for man's glory.

Rev 4:11 (KJV) *You have created all things, and for your pleasure they were created.*

E. The Concept of Rest

- God's rest on the 7th day signifies a new kind of work.
- An invitation for mankind to co-labor with God.
- Man was never to work independent from God but to work interdependently with God in representing His Will and outworking His Will in His physical world.
- God's quest for man to enter His rest lies at the very heart of the Bible's story and is fulfilled in, and through, Christ.

Mt 11:29 *Jesus said, take my yoke upon you and learn of me, for my yoke is easy and my burden is light, and you will find REST.*

¹ Mt 28:18-20 *Then Jesus came to them and said, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age."*



- Mankind's disobedience in the Garden of Eden was a result of man's refusal to enter God's rest, to submit to God and to His Lordship.
 - Man didn't want to work with God; he wanted to work independent of God. He didn't want to be the steward of God's creation; he wanted to be the owner!
- "Don't be like your forefather, Adam," was the lesson Moses was teaching the Children of Israel. For this reason, we find numerous references to God's rest throughout scripture (Ps 95, Book of Hebrews).

Conclusion

Entering God's rest by learning to co-labor with Him, in mission in this life (1 Co 3:9), will result in ruling and reigning. Man's disobedience in the Garden of Eden was a result of man's refusal to enter with Him in the life and age to come, and for all eternity.

Having a people qualified for His rest is what God had in mind before the world began. This is the **context** of the Bible's two-chapter introduction.

If we go to the conclusion of the Story, the last two chapters of Revelation, we see a people qualified for His rest, and for all eternity (Rev 21:9)¹.

¹ Rev 21:9 *One of the seven angels who had the seven bowls full of the seven last plagues came and said to me, "Come, I will show you the bride, the wife of the Lamb."*