

# Story #1: Your Design

## *The Three Stories of the Bible*

Genesis 1:26-28: 2:25

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What I am about to share has profoundly changed me. It has changed how I think. It has changed what I feel, and it has changed what I do. The teaching you will hear in this sermon series has altered my understanding of Christianity, my vision of life and my perspective on myself. A great deal of this change has occurred in the last three years.

When you open the Bible, you read all kinds of teaching and you read about all kinds of characters and events. All these accounts and all this teaching really tell just three stories. There are three stories in the Bible. Everything relates to one of these stories. Story one is about *your design*. Story two is about *your death*, and story three is about *your deliverance*. Let's consider story one: *your design*.

Right now, I'm holding a pencil. It's quite a simple instrument. On one end is an eraser connected by a hollow metal cylinder to a wooden shaft. On the other end, a solid lead cylinder is enclosed by the wooden shaft. Together the wood and lead are shaved to a point so that the pencil can be used for writing. Everything about this pencil cries out to me: "design!" It's not that intricate or complex, but it really doesn't look like a product of chance, does it? Scientists don't believe the pencil evolved because their theories allow for human design. However, a single living cell is so much more complicated, so much more intricate and so much more impressive; and orthodox science declares that it came from chance because their theories won't allow for divine design. Years ago, I accepted evolution as an explanation of how God created us. Today, I'm skeptical. Not because of theology but because of methodology. *My problem with the scientific theory of evolution is that it first rules out God by assumption and then visits the data.* That's presumptuous reasoning, and it has always led me into trouble. Did you know that the mathematics of evolution suggest there is a God? The mathematical probability of our world developing by chance is so low that for just about anything it would be called zero. Evolution is hypothesized - not because it is the most likely explanation of such complexity but because, when you rule out God, it is all that is left.

The wondrous complexities of life testify to a wise and powerful designer. Even the fragile balance of life maintained by the earth's exact orbit about the sun, its rotation and its gravity cry out to us. The psalmist was right: **"The heavens declare the glory of God; the skies proclaim the work of his hands."**

Nothing around you suggests an accident. Everything cries "design." The world has a revelation. It tells us its created. *Creation's revelation* is that we are gloriously designed.

Even more impressive is what the Bible says. First, understand that its testimony is unique. While the ancient world believed everything mirrored their own experience (for example, they thought the world came as a result of sex between gods), the Bible declared that the world came from the decrees of a single designer. The Bible's outlook was so radically different from any other of its time, that its viewpoint literally erupted in history. There's no logical explanation for its unique perspective except God.

The Bible goes beyond *creation's revelation*, that we are designed, to speak of *creation's progression*. It tells us that there was a progression to the creator's work and that we human beings are creation's climax. The world was laid out, and then God made us. The Bible speaks of *creation's presentation*. In Genesis 2, God presented creation to Adam. God presented the world to Adam because God made it for him and for us.

Why did God make creation for us? Because we are God's children. In the 5<sup>th</sup> chapter of Genesis, we read that Adam was made in God's likeness and that he himself had Seth, a son in his own image and likeness. "In his image, in his likeness" is family language. When the Bible says that we were made in the image and likeness of God, it's asserting that you and I are as much children of God as Seth was a child of Adam. We were designed to both be and live as children of the Almighty. No wonder Jesus taught us to say, "Our father in heaven." No wonder Paul called God "the father of all." No wonder God is partial to none. The ancients thought the image of God might be an idol or possibly a king, but God said that we are all made in his image.

God didn't make us to be his orphaned children. We were designed to be companions of God. We were made for intimacy. Adam and Eve were naked and felt no shame in God's presence. Like little kids they ran around their heavenly father in innocence. They lived in innocence and enjoyed intimacy with God and each other. They were designed for that, and so were we. God designed us to be close.

As God's children and companions, we were designed to share with God in ruling. We are not puppets, pawns, paupers or peasants. We are royalty. God said, **"Let us make man in our image, in our likeness, and let them rule."** God blessed and commanded his children:

***Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it. Rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air and over every living creature that moves on the ground (Gen 1:28).***

We were made to rule. Maybe you feel ruled. Maybe you feel helpless, but you were made to rule; and the book of Revelation reveals that in Christ you will rule. Jesus' teaching suggests that we children of God possess amazing authority and power over creation. The disciples learned that when you walk with Jesus, you are groomed to rule.

We have an amazing identity as God's children, companions and appointed rulers. Satan challenged that identity when he tempted Jesus in the desert. He said, "If you really are the son of God, then make these rocks bread." Maybe a cheeseburger would have been more tempting to a fasting Jesus, but the issue was identity: "if you are the son of God." Again Satan said, "If you are the son of God, jump and let the angels catch you. Prove your identity, Jesus." Satan wanted to control Jesus's actions through doubt. When Jesus resisted, Satan got downright bold. "Look at this world. If you want it all, I can give it to you. Just worship me." Jesus didn't budge. He stayed firm in his identity, depending on what God said.

There is power in your identity. Understand that the extent of your value is revealed in your *creation* and in Christ's *cross*. You are royalty, a child of the Almighty, worth to God all the trouble, all the heart-ache, all the pain you face and all the pain Christ suffered for you. You are worth all of it to God. Consider also your influence. The extent and nature of your influence on this world depends upon your *faith*. If you don't trust God and live out your identity, you squander the great power you have to make a difference. You were created to make a difference. You were made in God's image! Realize, finally, that your future hinges on your *choices* and no other power. Your choices as royalty will stand for eternity. You can choose or reject God. No matter your age, no matter your health, no matter your past, no matter your condition, your choice is decisive. Choose to believe and act on your identity, the identity you were given in creation, the identity restored to you in the cross. Stand up in this world as a beloved and forgiven child and companion of God. Walk with your Father. He calls to you in Christ.