

Old Testament Survey: 2

The Good, The Bad and the Ugly

Genesis 1-11

The Good

Genesis 1 has a few recurring words or phrases that are key to the whole of the Old Testament.

- GOD SAID - mentioned 10 times (+ another 5 times God called / saying)
- GOOD - mentioned 6 times
- EVENING & MORNING - mentioned 6 times

These expressions teach us about the way God acts and His treatment of man.

God Said - God's word is a prominent feature of the way God acts. There is power in His word to create, sustain life (Deuteronomy 8.3; Psalm 119.50; Psalm 107.20) and to keep us (Hebrews 1.3).

Good - God is good and everything He does is good and for our good (Psalm 119.68; Psalm 25.8). The created world was good and perfect in every way (Genesis 1.31)

Evening and Morning - God was (and is) very methodical. In creation, first He separated all the different compartments of creation (land, sea, air) and then filled each compartment with life (animals, fish, birds, moon and stars)
God is a God of order. There is no haphazardness with God. He is not the author of confusion but order (1 Corinthians 14.33). We see patterns elsewhere in Scripture e.g. the way Noah was instructed to build the ark (Genesis 6.14-22), Moses given strict pattern for the Tabernacle (Exodus 26.30).

Psalm 37.23; Philippians 1.6

Man has a special place in the plan of God. He was created in the image and likeness of God. Man was given dominion and power over all of creation.

All of God's dealings with mankind are for their benefit and blessing. Man was created to be God's representative on earth, placed to care for the creation and to enjoy fellowship with God.

The Bad

As Genesis begins to unfold we see that God's good creation is tainted with sin. Genesis

3 records the 'fall of man'

“Then the Lord God said, 'Behold, the man has become like one of Us’” Genesis 3.22

What was their sin?

It wasn't so much about the fruit that they had eaten, even though God forbidden them to eat of it. It did have something to do with '*knowing good and evil*'

Genesis 3.3

Man already had the ability to choose between right and wrong. He knew the consequences of disobedience and making wrong choices. After eating the fruit his 'eyes were opened' (v7) and he now saw things that were previously concealed i.e. his nakedness. He now has a new level of moral perception. This sin was a direct rebellion of the created order of authority. Before this sinful act the order was God-man-animals, but now the order had become reversed. The rebellion starts with the animal who prompts man to usurp the place of God.

Genesis 3.5

The essence of their sin is a desire to become like God. Their sin is not necessarily about breaking a rule or some test of obedience, they are trying to take the place of God. They reject God's authority and His plan of what is good and right for them and have rebelled under the guise of “*we know what's best for us*”

It was this very same sin that had satan thrown out of heaven – Isaiah 14.12-14

Most people believe that sin is breaking rules – whereas it is denying the way God has made things, rejecting His authority and trying to put ourselves in the place of God.

Creation is now no longer perfect – man is outside of God's plan and no longer enjoys or has fellowship with Him. Man is driven out of the Garden, the blessed life that he had is now just a memory. Sin has caused a giant wedge to come between God and man, the Creator and the creation.

Man is now engaged in a struggle with nature, with each other and with God. Even at one of life's most beautiful and treasured moments, the birth of a child, there is now pain and anguish.

All because man thought that he knew better than God.

The Ugly

Over the course of the next few chapters we see things getting really ugly. Sin is progressively getting worse, there's:

- Murder
- Incest
- Violence
- Deceit
- Corruption

to name just a few..

Genesis 6.5-6

“Then the LORD saw that the wickedness of man *was* great in the earth, and *that* every intent of the thoughts of his heart *was* only evil continually. And the LORD was sorry that He had made man on the earth, and He was grieved in His heart.”

Even though there is this increase in the level of sin in the world, yet we can still see the signs that God is at work blessing His creation.

In the midst of the judgement of sin by means of a flood, we see the grace of God in action. God finds in Noah a man who is prepared to trust Him; God uses him and saves him and his household. God blesses Noah with very similar words that He spoke to Adam (Genesis 9.1-7).

After the flood things degenerate once again and by the time we reach chapter 11 we see once again that man is trying to ascend into heaven – to be God. Here God steps in to disrupt the plan by confusing their languages.

However, on the whole, here we make an exciting discovery about God. We are seeing God's commitment to His creation. God is faithfully working to reverse the effects of the Fall, even though man is continually and repeatedly unfaithful.

The whole of the Old Testament reveals how God is working towards this