

THE223 Christian Narrative 1 Creation and Fall

Unit 6c Creation and Fall Review

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Welcome to Session 6C of Christian Narrative 1. Today we're going to do a creation and fall review. This is our last session, and as such, I want us to ask some high level questions. What is it that we've been learning about both creation and the fall? So what have we learned? What we've said is that the Bible presents to us a metanarrative that helps us understand who God is, who we are, and how we can responsibly exist in the world in which we live. So we've looked at several high level things. First, we looked at the nature of God. We said that God in himself has both unity and diversity. This began our conversation about God being a Trinitarian God, that he is completely one yet stands in diverse relationship with himself. This led us then to the idea that God eternally exists in three persons: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Each person being fully God, yet we can confess that there still is one God. So we looked at the fact that there is, in fact, three different individuals that each are represented within Scripture as being fully God, and yet the integrity of Scripture still tells us that we have one God. This is our Trinitarian confession. It really is critical to the Christian faith. It's critical to a biblical worldview. It's critical to our understanding of who God is because this is the God who reveals himself to us through Scripture. Then we looked at the idea that the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit are all equal in being, but that they relate to the world and to each other differently. We looked at the economic Trinity here. We looked at the idea that each (the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit) have different roles to play, but that their roles or their relationship between one another is not one where one is more honored than the other or one is more God than the other. They're all equal in being but relate to the world and to each other differently. And so in these three lessons, we looked at the Trinitarian nature of God.

We then turned our attention to God's act of creation. There were several things that we said here. First, we said that it's God alone who creates. You'll remember that we looked at some of those Hebrew words that talk to us about the unique way that, in fact, God did create. We talked about how God spoke things into being, that he spoke things *ex nihilo*. Out of nothing comes everything save God alone. But it is God alone who creates. We then looked at the idea that creation exists because God sustains it. Therefore, creation is wholly dependent on God. Creation, you and I as part of that, we require God's presence in our life to be sustained. We are wholly dependent on who he is. And during that time, we looked at some false ideas of what it means for God to be involved in our relationship. We're not dualists. We're not materialists. We're not pantheists. But rather that we believe that we are dependent on God.

Then finally, we looked at the fact that all that God had created was and continues to be inherently good. We looked at all of the places where God declares his creation to be good, and we recognize that God, as sovereign, has the authority to declare what is good. And so we considered God's act of creation. The first, understanding the God who creates, that the Trinitarian God is involved in everything. He is involved in the acts of creation. And then looking at the unique way in which God created. This then led us to the concept of anthropology. We looked together at how God made mankind unique among his creation. And we said there is both in the Scripture's description of the creation act, also in the real estate given over to the creation of man, the presence and truth that man is the crown of God's creation, that man is unique among God's creation in that he was created differently and for unique purposes. And then we spent two lessons looking at these two aspects that were both pretty close to one another. First, mankind uniquely shares God's likeness. And then second, that man uniquely displays God's likeness. So when we looked at the idea that man uniquely shares God's likeness, we considered what does it really mean inherently for humanity to bear God's likeness? What does that entail? And then when we looked at how do we display God's likeness, we asked, "What does

it look like for us to bear out God's likeness within creation? What does this mean in our context and for our world? How has sin somewhat impacted this?" We talked about those issues.

Then we moved into the idea that the creation of man as male and female shows God's image in humanity exists in harmony, equality, and difference. This was a fun lesson in that this ties back to the nature of God. God is a Trinitarian God. He is both unity and diversity. He exists completely in relationship with himself yet with different roles for each of the different persons of the Trinity. And so what we began to discover was that God reflected this aspect of his nature in the creation of man as male and female. And so we talked about what does it mean to exist in harmony and equality, yet what does it also mean to exist in difference? We looked at these three things and began to discover that the difference between man and woman is equally important as their harmony and equality.

Then we looked at the fact that God ordained that humanity was to carry out specific tasks within creation. These tasks being dominion, stewardship, labor, rest, and marriage. And you'll remember we also talked about the fact that there are some commandments in Scripture, some mandates that are permanent and some that are temporary. We asked, "How is it that we can understand the command to be permanent?" We talked about it being something that reflected the aspect or the nature of God. And so we looked at each one of these five creation mandates and how they reflect something critical about who God is, thus making them permanent. They were established before the presence of sin. Sin impacted some of them to a point but did not do away with any of them. These five mandates are still the purposes that exist for humanity today. We are to be about dominion, stewardship, labor, rest, and marriage because these reflect some of the very nature of who God is. And so we discussed mankind or anthropology, this theological study of man.

Then we turned our attention to hamartiology, right? Here we began to look at the presence of sin in our lives and what it is that sin is, what it has done. And we actually took two different approaches to this. This was subtle. We didn't talk about this directly. But we looked at the narrative of sin coming in through Genesis 3, and we see that this is the first three bullet points that you see in your slide here. We first saw that humanity chose to vandalize God's shalom. We talked about how, because God created everything and created it good, there existed perfect shalom, a relationship that's been unhindered between man and God, between God and creation, between man and creation. This existed, but it was humanity's choice that then vandalized, that destroyed or distorted God's shalom.

We talked about the idea that it was God's holiness which required that he judge humanity. And so we looked at this act of vandalism that was committed by Eve and Adam. We looked at the role of God judging humanity. We looked at how God judged the serpent, and we saw the *proto-evangelium* of the promise of redemption in the midst of sin, because you'll remember in Session 6, we talked about the fact that sin is never really talked about without the hope of redemption, especially in the Scriptures, because when we take it in context, we see that God's redemption is so much more powerful than the tragedy of sin. And we also talked about the impact that sin had on all aspects of humanity, how it turned humanity against God, it turned humanity against himself, it turned humanity against relationships, it turned humanity against creation. It really alienated and impacted all of what humankind stood for. All of the relationships that humankind had were impacted by sin. So those first three sessions in Unit 5 were really designed to look at the narrative of the fall.

And then in Unit 6, we kind of took a little bit more of a systematic look at sin and we considered two points. The first one was the idea of the reality of evil. And we argued that the reality of evil is not in fact

inconsistent with the goodness and the sovereignty of God. We asked some critical questions about Scripture. What should we understand? And we came to the conclusion that, in fact, God does ordain that sin exists. Even though he is not the cause or a sinner himself, he should not be blamed for sin. We looked at him as being the permitter of sin and the mover of events. And so we were amazed, I hope, together about the idea that God can bring great good from horrible tragedy that he himself did not ordain or require to take place. And that because God is holy, because God is sovereign, because God is good, the reality of evil is not in fact inconsistent with his goodness and sovereignty.

Then we also looked at the fact that the first sinful act of humanity introduced sin into the human race. We considered how it was that Adam's sin went on to impact the rest of humanity. We talked about the fact that his original guilt for that sin was his alone, but that the debt and impact of sin in his life transferred down, was imparted down throughout the human race, so that death reigned from Adam all the way up to Moses (to the giving of the law), and that depravity and inability carried through. But we also, again, reminded ourselves of the truth that we never talk about the sinful act without the hope and glory of redemption. So we talked about hamartiology, the theological study of sin.

Now, the name of our course is Christian Narrative. And as we close this review, I want to talk about the first two acts. You'll remember that I said at the beginning of our time together that Christian Narrative has four primary acts. We have creation, we have the fall, we have redemption, and we have consummation or restoration or this fullness that comes. And in this course, Christian Narrative 1, we've only talked about the first two acts of the Christian Narrative. But let me talk to you about those two briefly because God is telling us a story in Scripture and what we cannot miss is this incredible story that is being laid out for us. The Bible is God's revelation, his special revelation to us. And while it can be appreciated for its technical merits, while we can systematically study the various aspects of hamartiology or anthropology or theology proper, we want to see it for what it is: one grand story that God told for us to understand how we've fallen away but how we can be restored back to relationship with the God who has created us.

And so what we discover in the first act of creation is that the first act of God was to create a world, and within this world, to place man, his vice-regent, his crown, to bring about God's will for God's creation. However, in act two, what we discovered was that man chose to vandalize the shalom that God had created by disobeying the command of God and thereby incurring the immediate and eternal judgment of God. It's a hard place to stop, but friends, let's recognize that this is only half the story. There is more to come. And I would encourage you to come back and take Christian Narrative 2 where we're going to discuss all that God does in order to redeem and restore us by talking about redemption and consummation. And we talk about the hope of what is to come. We live in the pain of what is, but we live in the hope of what is to come. So Christian Narrative in two acts, this is what we've covered. Creation, and we've discovered the nature of God. He's a Trinitarian God. He was very involved in creation. He created mankind as the pinnacle of his creation. He created them as morally free agents, but they chose to reject what God has declared good, chose good for themselves, and introduced evil. In so doing, they brought sin to the entire human race. But God is going to do something extraordinary.

Thanks so much for taking the time to join with me in this course. I pray that it's been beneficial for you, that it's been practical for you, that the word of God and the richness of his word have made a real lasting difference in your life. My prayer for you is that you would not just catalog this information away in order to bring it back when someone has a Bible trivia question, but that you would internalize the

word of God and allow it to change the way that you not only think, but the way that you act as well. God's blessing be unto you.