The Lost World

Genesis 1-11

I. INTRO
- A. I have been reading the Bible for 25 years or so, but I still remember what it was like as someone who was brand new to the book
    1. All kinds of random stories… Old Testament vs. New Testament… People who lived 756 years… Are these stories true? Myth? Fable?
- B. On any given Sunday, I try to assume we have lots of different people here
    1. Some of you have never read the Bible – don't know where to begin, what to read, or how to make sense of it all
    2. Some of you grew up in church or listening to a grandma tell you stories from the Bible. Maybe you know about Noah and the flood or Daniel in the Lion's Den, but you aren't quite sure WHY those stories are in the Bible
    3. Some of you can crush Sword Drills, where you have to speed find verses in your Bible b/c your parents made you memorize the order
        a) By the way, I still don't have the order of the Minor Prophets down
    4. Some of you only read the same five or six books on repeat b/c you feel comfortable there
- C. The Bible is a big book that needs to be consistently read and re-read
- D. When I was in school for my masters on the Bible, my favorite classes were:
    1. Hermeneutics (how to read the BIble), Context of the Bible, OT/NT Intro
- E. Seeing the big picture of the Bible, called the metanarrative, opened up my eyes
    1. To realize that every verse had a paragraph, had a chapter, had a book, and had a place in the story for a reason was mesmerizing to me
    2. I continue to be amazed at the complexity & unity of the Bible
    3. Few things make my heart excited like seeing a new thread in the tapestry of Scripture come to life
- F. Over the next 6 weeks, we are going to give you an overview of the Old Testament – a survey so to say – in preparation for advent (arrival of Jesus)
- G. My hope is that this gives you a sort of compass to navigate you as you read the Bible, but also a newfound appreciation for Jesus' arrival at Christmas!
- H. The Bible is one unified story that begins with creation, ends with new creation, and centers on Jesus Christ
    1. But to understand why Jesus came, we first need to understand what went wrong
- I. Genesis 1–11 introduces us to the world God created, the people he made, the problem of sin, and humanity's repeated rebellion against God
- J. These chapters establish the foundation for everything that follows in Scripture

II. Creation
- *A. "In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth" (Genesis 1:1)*
    1. Before there was anything, there was God.

2. That's the most important thing you need to know from Genesis 1
3. Whether there was a whisper or a loud bang, IDK, but God created all things from nothing – and he did a great job

B. Throughout the chapter we see a good God making a beautiful creation in an ordered way. He makes a canister, he fills it. He makes aardvarks and slugs
C. And he calls it good. Like sipping some lemonade from the porch after a long day out on the farm
D. When he makes humankind, he looks at everything and declares it very good
E. In Genesis 1:26–28, God creates human beings in his own image, male and female, and gives them a unique responsibility
    1. They are to be fruitful, multiply, fill the earth, subdue it, and exercise dominion over the living creatures → explain statue of king
F. Human beings were created to represent God and extend his good rule throughout the earth → like little kings expanding God's kingdom on earth
G. Point: as people had babies, we would fill the earth with image-bearers, reflecting God's character, his creativity, his goodness and joy → a great plan!
H. Genesis 2 zooms in on mankind and this amazing home God made specifically for Adam and Eve → the Garden of Eden (Delight)
    1. This is the holiest of holies in God's creation → like the inner most part of a garden temple on top of a mountain // high and lifted up above all
    2. The picture is of a mountain temple where God and man dwell together. From it flow four rivers of life, essentially providing for all the earth
I. Here we see humanity enjoying what God intended: a perfect relationship with God, with one another, with themselves, and with creation
    1. There is no sin, shame, suffering, or death. God gives them meaningful work, functioning as a sort of priestly family
J. The world as God designed it… the world we all want. What happened?

III. Fall

A. In Genesis 3, the enemy, the villain, the serpent enters the garden
B. The Bible tells us he was jealous of God, jealous of mankind, wanting to ruin their special relationship
C. He tempts Eve to question God – to doubt his love and goodness
D. God had given Adam and Eve permission to eat from every tree in the garden except one: the tree of the knowledge of good and evil
E. The serpent tells a big lie. He convinces Eve that God is withholding something from them and that eating the forbidden fruit will make them like God
F. Adam and Eve disobey God's command, they choose to determine good and evil for themselves rather than trusting their Creator
    1. They choose to eat from the forbidden tree rather than realizing that man lives by every word that comes from the mouth of God
G. At the heart of sin is humanity's desire to live independently of God – to reject his authority and deciding for ourselves what is right and wrong
H. Immediately they feel the impact of their sin
    1. They realize they are naked… they are ashamed… they hide

2. They blame one another… they blame the serpent… they blame God

I. Sin fractures every direction of their lives → Up, Down, In, and Out
   1. Their relationship with God is broken by guilt and rebellion
   2. Their relationship with one another is damaged by blame and conflict
   3. Their relationship with themselves is distorted by shame and fear
   4. Even their relationship with creation changes as work becomes painful and the ground is cursed

J. And of course… death enters the story
   1. God kills an innocent animal to cover their shame
   2. Adam and Eve see that b/c of their sin, something innocent had to die

K. But even in this story, God promises he will deal with the fracture, fix the divide

L. In Genesis 3:15, God announces that a descendant of the woman will one day crush the serpent's head, though the serpent will strike his heel
   1. One of Eve's kids… but who? How?

IV. Cain & Abel

A. In Genesis 4, we quickly learn that sin is not just an Adam & Eve issue

B. Adam and Eve have two sons, Cain and Abel
   1. Both bring offerings to God, but God accepts Abel and his offering favorably while rejecting Cain and his offering
   2. Rather than responding with humility & repentance, Cain gets angry

C. God warns him that sin is crouching at his door, desiring to rule over him, and that he must master it, but Cain ignores the warning and murders his brother.

D. Think about how quickly things have deteriorated
   1. In Genesis 3, humanity rebels against God
   2. By Genesis 4, their firstborn murders his own brother
   3. What were Adam and Eve thinking?

E. God confronts Cain, and he responds with the famous question, "Am I my brother's keeper?" He's completely emotionally disconnected from his sin.
   1. Cain doesn't feel remorse or responsibility. There's no repentance here

F. Cain's descendants go on to develop cities, culture, technology, even music.

G. Genesis 5 traces the generations from Adam to Noah. Why? In part, so we can hear a haunting refrain reminding us of the price of Adam's sin: *"...and he died."*

H. Be fruitful, multiply, have dominion, fill the earth…
   1. Well, humanity is fulfilling God's command to multiply, but rather than filling the earth with righteousness, mankind is multiplying sin, violence, and death. The problem is getting worse, not better

V. Flood & Covenant

A. By Genesis 6, humanity's rebellion permeates everything. Scripture tells us that human wickedness was so great on the earth that *…every inclination of the thoughts of the human heart was only evil continually (Genesis 6:5)*

B. The "very good" world is now completely corrupted

C. In response, God announces that he will bring judgment on the earth, but in the midst of this, God narrows down to one man, Noah, who he gives GRACE

D. God tells Noah to build an ark via which he, his family, and representatives of the animal kingdom will be protected and saved
E. When the flood comes, the waters cover the earth, and God brings judgment
F. The flood account echoes the language of creation
    1. The waters once separated to make room for life now collapse back upon the earth, like a form of uncreation
G. But God made a promise to Noah, and he causes the waters to recede, and brings Noah and his family into a renewed world.
H. God re-establishes his command: be fruitful, multiply, and fill the earth
I. God then establishes a covenant with Noah promising never again to destroy all flesh through a flood. He places the rainbow in the clouds as the sign of this covenant.
    1. Essentially he promises to not “fix sin” via global destruction
J. The flood came, and some wicked people died, but **even a global flood isn’t enough water to wash wickedness from the human heart**
K. Genesis 8:21, God says that the inclination of the human heart is evil from youth
L. In Genesis 9, Noah gets drunk, and his actions lead to another shameful situation in his family
M. The flood shows us both the seriousness of sin and the mercy of God, but it has **not** solved humanity's fundamental problem
N. The world needs more than a good powerwashing. Humanity needs a new heart

VI. Babel

A. Genesis 10 describes the descendants of Noah spreading into different peoples, lands, and nations, but Genesis 11 takes us into a flashback
B. At a place called Babel, humanity gathered together to build a city and a tower reaching into the heavens
C. They declare, *"Let us make a name for ourselves, lest we be dispersed over the face of the whole earth" (Genesis 11:4)*
D. Remember God's original command: *Be fruitful, multiply, and fill the earth*
E. Rather than spreading throughout the earth in obedience to God, humanity unites in rebellion against him
    1. Instead of seeking to glorify God's name, they seek to make a name for themselves
F. Throughout the Bible, Babel (Babylon) represents humanity's attempt to establish security, significance, and greatness apart from God
G. In response, God comes down to their little tower and confuses their language so they can’t work together
    1. Their building project comes to an end, and the people are scattered
H. Humanity comes together to resist God's command to fill the earth, so God accomplishes his purpose by scattering them himself
I. By the end of Genesis 11, the world is populated by nations and peoples who are divided by language, geography, and culture
    1. But their deepest problem is not their division from one another, but from God

VII. CONCLUSION

A. Genesis 1–11 introduces the problem that the rest of the Bible addresses
    1. God created a good world and placed mankind within it to bear his image, enjoy his presence, and extend his rule throughout the earth
    2. Humanity rejected God's authority and chose rebellion instead
B. What began with one act of disobedience in the garden quickly spread into murder, violence, corruption, and ultimately a world united in rebellion
C. Every time humanity receives another opportunity for change, the same problem resurfaces
    1. Adam and Eve sin in paradise
    2. Cain murders his brother
    3. The generations before the flood fill the earth with violence
    4. Noah receives a fresh start, and gets drunk and naked
    5. At Babel, humanity tries to unify in order to dethrone God
D. The problem is not bad luck, unfortunate circumstances, lousy parents, or a lack of education → **The problem is the human heart**
E. In Genesis 11, we are left with a world that is broken, a humanity that is sinful, and nations that are scattered and separated from God and one another
F. God's 'very good' creation has been corrupted, and the people he created to represent him have turned against him
G. **But God has not turned against them.**
    1. He clothed Adam and Eve and made a promise
    2. He extended grace even to Cain, allowing him to live
    3. He preserved the world through Noah
    4. He scattered the nations rather than destroying them
H. But where does the story go from here?
    1. How is God going to turn this around? How is he going to fix this mess?
    2. If the problem is the human heart, how can anything truly change?
I. **How will God restore what has been broken?**
J. The answer begins to unfold in Genesis 12, where God turns his attention from the nations to one man and his (yet to be born) family
K. Through that family, God will begin unfolding his plan to bring blessing to all the nations of the earth
L. Through that family, we will see the rescuer one day be born
M. His name is Abraham, and he's the great grandfather (56 generations later) of Jesus Christ, the one who would crush the serpent's head on the cross
N. Adam and Eve broke the world, but Jesus Christ, who the Apostle Paul called the 2nd Adam, is going to fix it and make it brand new