

AHM

CONNECT  
TEACHING

# Welcome to

*Offering men hope  
and direction  
in a confusing world  
through  
Jesus Christ.*



## AHM Connect

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# Today

## Session #3 of 6



# “The Story God is Telling”

# Purpose of this Series

UNDERSTAND

God's  
Larger Story

*Living in  
Creational Reality*

BECOME AWARE

Your  
Smaller  
Story

# Outline of Series

## God's Story

1. History is God's Story
2. How God Tells a Story
3. The Story God is Telling

## Your Story

4. How your Story was Formed
5. Not all Stories are Created Equal
6. Living into God's Story

# Today

## Session #3

# The Story God is Telling

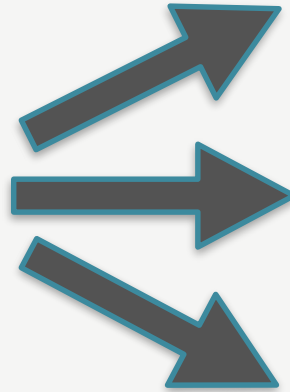
*The Biggest Story  
the Bible Allows Us  
to Imagine*

# Question

As God moves  
time/history forward

What is He up to?

What kind of story  
is God telling?



Pleasant Story  
*Make us feel good?*

Triumphant Story  
*Guarantee Success?*

Cruel Story  
*Break our Hearts?*

# Today's Thesis:

In order to Discover  
the kind of story God is telling  
We must carefully observe  
How the biggest events  
in the Biblical Narrative  
COME TOGETHER  
to form a  
*single, cohesive message*

## God's Master Story

# Today's Approach

**A Jet Tour**  
over the Biblical narrative  
at 30,000 feet



God is telling  
a Story with  
**7 key Chapters**

(Adapted from L. Crabb 1995 class notes)

A large commercial airplane is shown from a low-angle perspective, flying directly towards the viewer over a long, straight runway. The runway has white dashed lines down the center and solid lines on the sides. The sky is filled with soft, golden clouds, and the sun is low on the horizon, creating a warm, golden glow. The landscape on either side of the runway is green and flat. The overall scene is serene and evokes a sense of travel and adventure.

Buckle your seat belt  
Prepare for Take Off

Chapter 1: Only God  
*Fullness of Life*  
*in a Complementary, Connected Community*

As the Story begins there is  
“ONLY GOD”

Existing eternally  
as a TRINITY

One God  
existing in Three  
separate/distinct Persons

Living together  
in COMMUNITY

Perfect relationship  
of mutual love  
and infinite joy

# Note 2 Things About God's Community

## 1. It's a *fully connected* Community

No

Selfishness,  
Grasping  
or Attempts to  
**fill an emptiness**  
in One Member  
*by taking from*  
the Other Members  
Phil. 2:5-11

Only

Other-centered Love  
that gives out of  
**perfect fullness**  
for the purpose of  
*blessing the Others*  
Jn 3:35

This is what gives  
the Trinity  
**its greatest joy!**

## Note 2 Things About God's Community

2. A Community of *complete complementarity*.

No

Competition, rivalry,  
jealousy or conflict.

No

Confusion or  
misunderstanding *about*  
*"Who's who"*  
*"Who does what"*

Only

Perfect understanding of  
**WHO**  
*they are,*  
**WHAT**  
*they have to give,*  
**ROLE**  
*they are to play*  
on the Divine "Team."

# So As God's Story Begins...

There is only God

But He is not isolated or alone

He exists as a Trinity  
in Complementary Connected Community

No selfishness  
No competition  
No jealousy  
No power struggles

Only mutual Love  
where each joyfully gives  
*out of their infinite fullness*  
to perfectly bless the Others

# Note

We will call  
this style of  
**Trinitarian relating**  
“THE FULLNESS-EXPRESSION PATTERN.”

The Bible calls it  
**“GOD’S GLORY”**  
(cf. Jn 1:14-17)

## CHAPTER 2: God Plus Angels

### *The Beginning of the Fulness-Expression Pattern*

In chapter 2  
God reveals His fullness  
for the first time  
*outside the community*  
of the Trinity.

This happens  
when God  
creates the Angels.

# Who are the Angels?

Angels are the first created beings.

*Like us,*  
Angels are  
**personal beings**

*Unlike us,*  
they do not bear  
**God's image**

They have  
names, longings,  
intellect, will,  
and emotions

In all of Creation  
only people  
bear God's  
image

# Why point out Angels don't bear God's image?

It tells us something about their nature

Angels have not been called  
*into the same kind of*  
family relationship with God  
as we have  
(Heb 2)

More like a  
trusted butler  
than a son or daughter  
(cf. Heb 1:14)

Created as  
God's messengers  
to *serve* His purposes  
and *minister* to His glory.

# What else do we know about the Angels?

a. God reveals Himself to the angels  
*out of His fullness, but not fully.*

When God created  
the angels  
*He revealed  
Himself*  
out of His  
fullness-expression  
pattern

But  
He does not  
*fully reveal*  
all of His fullness  
to Angels  
as He does within  
the Trinity.

# Why?

Because Angels are Servants



God only reveals  
*what they need to know*  
to be  
***Faithful***  
**Servants**



# What do Angels need to Know to be Faithful Servants?

God is both  
**BIG** and **GOOD**

## **BIG**

God has  
all power  
knowledge,  
authority

He can do whatever  
He wants

## **GOOD**

God is always  
just, truthful,  
blameless,  
righteous

Whatever He does  
is always right

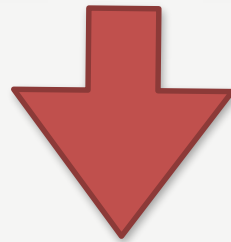
# Because God is BIG and GOOD

*Faithful service*  
to GOD  
by Angels  
would be  
**entirely reasonable**

*Any violation*  
of that service  
by Angels  
would be  
**reasonably punishable**

# Important Observation from 1 Peter 1:10-13

“Concerning this salvation, the prophets who prophesied *about the grace* that would come to you... which [grace] even the **angels** would like to understand.”



While God reveals His **goodness** to Angels,  
He does not reveal His **grace** to them  
*as He does to people*

# Why?

As God's "Butlers"

Angels were  
not created  
to enjoy grace  
(1 Pet 1:13)

Since to Enjoy Grace

Means to experience  
forgiveness from God  
(Eph 2:8)

God's Forgiveness

*Reserved only for*  
People created in  
"God's image"  
(Heb. 2:16)

## (Something else we know about the Angels)

b. God places angels in their own  
**COMPLEMENTARY, CONNECTED COMMUNITY**

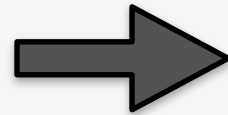
Each have a  
**complementary role**  
in serving God  
Dan 10:12ff/Jude 6

Together they serve  
in a **connected community**  
of *worship* to God  
Rev 5:12.

Their service is done out of the  
**FULLNESS-EXPRESSION PATTERN**  
Jude 6

# Summary of Chapter 2

God creates Angels to serve Him



“Trusted Butlers”

God reveals Himself to angels *out of His fullness* but not fully

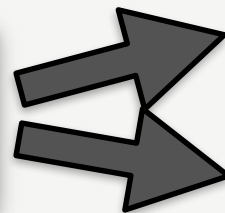


Big/Good  
Not Grace



Reasonable to faithfully serve Him

God designs Angels to be like the Trinity



Live in complementary, connected community

Relate from Fullness-Expression Pattern

# CHAPTER 3: Lucifer Becomes Satan *The Beginning of an Alien Pattern*

Chapter 3 begins with  
**the rebellion of Satan**  
(Isa 14; Ezk 28)

In Chpts 1-2  
everything  
exists as  
an expression  
of **God's fullness**  
("Shalom")

Here Creation's  
"*Shalom*"  
ends as  
a new pattern  
of relating  
begins

Satan's  
EMPTINESS-PURSUIT  
PATTERN

A violation of God's  
FULNESS-EXPRESSION  
PATTERN

# Who is Satan?

An Angel  
*of the “Cherub” class*  
(Guarder of God’s holiness)

Given the name  
**Lucifer**  
“Carrier of the Light”  
“Morning Star”

Given great  
power and beauty  
Isa 14  
Ezk 28

# Note 3 Things About Lucifer

Lucifer's Power/Beauty  
were given to serve God  
through the  
FULLNESS-EXPRESSION  
PATTERN

It was reasonable  
for Lucifer to do this  
because God  
had revealed to him His  
BIGNESS/GOODNESS

But God  
did not reveal  
to Lucifer  
His GRACE

# How did Lucifer Become Satan?

Lucifer made the “willful” choice to:

Not believe what  
God revealed  
about Himself:  
BIG/GOOD

Not serve God  
through the  
FULLNESS-EXPRESSION  
PATTERN

Isa. 14:13-14

“I will climb up to the sky.  
above the stars of God  
I will set up my throne.  
I will rule on the mountain of assembly  
on the remote slopes of the North.  
I will climb up to the tops of the clouds;  
I will make myself like the Most High!”

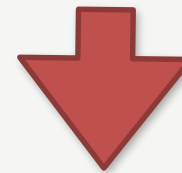
# What was Lucifer's Strategy to become like God?

He led one third of God's angels to rebel against God's authority and defy their creational design  
(Rev 12:4; Jude 6)

God judged Lucifer and those angels that followed him

Lucifer = Satan  
*"the Destroyer of God's Shalom"*

Rebellious Angels = Demons  
*"Satan's army to do his will"*



The Villain and Antagonists in God's Story



# Put on Thinking Cap

Prior to his rebellion,  
Satan must have realized

There was a level of  
Life and happiness  
*that only God fully knew/enjoyed*

In other words

Lucifer did not know or enjoy  
the **FULL** fullness of God

So what did he do?

# He decided to take it!

“I WILL NO LONGER  
BE CONTENT  
WITH THIS ARRANGEMENT!”

“THERE IS  
SOMETHING MORE TO BE HAD  
THAT GOD HAS NOT GIVEN”

“I WILL TAKE IT  
FOR MYSELF!”

# Thus

Satan's Rebellion  
flowed out of a  
Raging Demand  
*to fully know and enjoy*  
THE FULL FULLNESS OF GOD

**I WILL BE LIKE GOD!**

# The Collateral Damage of Satan's Rebellion

Satan's attempt to  
*Take what God had not given*  
introduced into Creation  
a Destructive "VIRUS"

**SELF-PLUS-SOMETHING OUTSIDE THE SELF**  
(but not God)  
*is necessary for Life.*

This "VIRUS" manifests itself in  
a new, alien Pattern for living

# THE EMPTINESS-PURSUIT PATTERN

# Summary of Chapter 3

As this chapter closes  
There are now **two opposing patterns** of relating  
existing in Creation

## FULLNESS-EXPRESSION PATTERN

Trinity's style of relating  
that *expresses fullness*  
as a means of **giving to others**

## EMPTINESS-PURSUIT PATTERN

Satan's style of relating  
that *fills an emptiness*  
by means of **taking from others.**



A large commercial airplane is shown from a low-angle perspective, flying directly towards the viewer over a runway. The sun is low on the horizon, creating a golden glow and casting long shadows. The sky is filled with scattered clouds, and the runway is flanked by green fields. The overall scene is dramatic and evocative of a sunset flight.

Buckle your seat belt  
Prepare for Take Off

# CHAPTER 4: Paradise for People *When God creates People to Reflect Himself*

In this Chapter  
God makes  
the **Garden and People**,  
*then places them in it*

Note Three Things

# 1. God creates People “in His Image”

## Genesis 1:26-27

### This Means

There is a **significant difference** between  
People and Angels

People = God’s image  
Angels **≠** God’s image



People are capable of  
a **level of intimacy with God**  
*that Angels know nothing about*

# For Example

John *leans on* Jesus' breast  
**Angels** never do  
(Jn 13:25)

Jesus *died* for **People**  
not for **Angels**  
(Heb 2:16).

Jesus *weeps* for **People**  
never for **Angels**  
(Jn 11:35)

Jesus *prepares a Home*  
for **People**, not **Angels**  
(Jn 14:2).

## 2. God designs people to reflect the Trinity's *Complementary, Connected Community*

First

God creates Woman to remove Man's loneliness  
**Community**

Second

God designed Man/Woman to be *different*  
with *diverse roles/responsibilities*  
to be carried out in a "*one flesh*" relationship

**Complementary Community**

Third

Together the Couple experience  
*mutual enjoyment and loving intimacy*  
as they *fully give themselves* to each other

**Connected Community**

### 3. God reveals Himself to People Out of His fullness but not fully

God reveals the *same thing about Himself*  
to People in this chapter  
as He does to Angels  
in chapter 2

God is **BIG**

God is  
**GOOD**

# And because of...

## God's BIGNESS

It's reasonable for Adam/Eve  
to **OBEY** God  
*by not eating from the Forbidden Tree.*

## God's GOODNESS

Adam/Eve can  
fully **ENJOY**  
*all God had provided in the Garden*

# Summary of Chapter Four

God creates People and tells them

“Look at all I have given you!  
I have given you the Garden and each other  
*to richly enjoy.*

Now Worship and serve me  
on the basis of  
*My Bigness/Goodness.*

*And as you do,  
continue to live in  
My Fullness-Expression Pattern .*

**CHAPTER 5: Paradise Lost**  
*When Satan reproduced himself  
to create the first dysfunctional family*

This chapter tells  
the story of  
**Our rebellion against God**  
And how  
**the Virus of Sin**  
entered the Human Race,  
*infecting us all with*  
**Satan's Emptiness-Pursuit Pattern**

**Note 3 things from chapter 5**

# 1. God's Warning

Genesis 2:17

“If you eat of the Tree  
of the Knowledge of Good/Evil  
you will surely die”

From these words  
the Couple would have realized  
*there was another way to live*

One that did  
*not submit to*  
God's Bigness

One that looked for  
*Life outside of*  
God's Goodness

# Note

Realizing there was  
Another Way to Live

The Couple's  
obedience to God  
was to be based on  
their continued belief  
*There is NO GOOD  
to be found  
Outside of God.*

SHALOM

As long they  
Believed this...

They would  
not desire  
*the alternative  
lifestyle*

They would continue  
to experience  
*perfect contentment  
with God*

It's into this context  
that the

Serpent

now enters the Story  
and says:

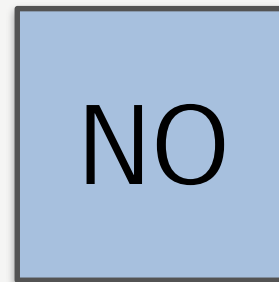
**“Let's consider the alternative!”**

## 2. The Serpent's Temptation

Genesis 3:1-5

Satan suggests to Eve  
*there is more good  
to have and enjoy*  
that God is withholding from them

Is this Suggestion True?



# How can it be True?

There were still depths  
to God's fullness  
that had not been revealed  
to Adam and Eve  
But if He had revealed them  
would have brought them  
even greater joy!

# In other words

## Satan's Strategy:

Arouse/exploit  
Eve's desire  
*for what was possible  
but not yet available*

## Satan's Deception:

There is something more  
you should be enjoying  
*that God is withholding  
from you"*

## Satan's Cunning:

Not directly saying,  
*"Go against God,"*  
but rather,  
*"Go for the good."*

# “Go for the Good!”

## Note How This Scheme Works

TRUE or FALSE

There was more of God’s fullness *to be enjoyed* that He had not given

TRUE

God was *withholding* “the more” from them

TRUE

The reason God was *withholding* “the more” was out of indifference or malice toward them

FALSE

Scheme

To create a narrative that mixes TRUTH/ERROR about God

# Why?

A narrative of truth/error  
creates **confusion** and **doubt**  
*making people vulnerable*  
to **deception**



Can I trust a God  
who has chosen  
NOT to give me  
*all that He*  
*could give?*

Can such a God  
be truly **Good**?

# 3. The Couple's Response

After they both Listened to the Serpent's Lies

*(You will not die and God doesn't want your best)*

Genesis 3:6

She took its fruit and ate it. She also gave some of it to her husband, *who was with her*, and he ate it too.

Both ate  
from the Tree  
God had forbidden

1 Timothy 2:14

And it was not Adam who was deceived by Satan. But the woman was deceived, and sin was the result.

Each responded  
differently  
to Satan's Lies

# The Woman's Response

Eve ate  
*Because she was deceived*  
by Satan's Lie

“There is a good to be pursued  
outside of God  
So forget God and  
**GO FOR IT!**”

# The Man's Response

Adam was not deceived by Satan's lie  
*But ate anyway*

## Unlike Eve

Adam heard  
the Lie  
about God  
*but did not believe it*

## This Means

Adam continued  
to believe the truth:  
*There is no good  
outside of God.*

Why then  
did Adam sin?



# Possible Answer

Because of his failure to act as a man *by being silent in the chaos*, Adam found himself in a new/strange position:

What do I do with a *sinful* wife?

And what does *death* look like?

With this new uncertainty about Life, Adam must now act as a man *on the basis of what he knows about God.*

# In other words

Adam still has the opportunity  
to bring order to the chaos  
*by acting like a man.*

But to  
“ACT LIKE A MAN”  
would now require  
Adam to  
“LIVE BY FAITH”  
in the midst of  
Life’s new uncertainty.



# This Means

Adam's "Faith"  
would need to rest  
*in the Hope*  
that God would be  
**GOOD ENOUGH**

## To Redeem

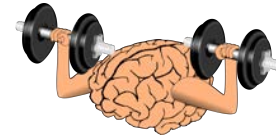
His past failure  
to act as a Man  
*by restoring Shalom*  
*to his chaotic world*

## To Vindicate

His future obedience,  
*even when*  
*obedience would*  
*feel more like death.*



## Key Point!

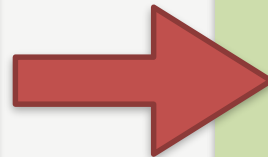


By means of Adam's FAITH  
*God would now reveal*  
the yet-unexplored-depths of His Goodness

## GRACE

But for this to happen Adam's Faith...

Must rest in what  
God had **already**  
*revealed about*  
*Himself*



With the hope that  
**even more**  
*goodness would*  
*be revealed.*

## GRACE UPON GRACE

# How did Adam respond to Life's New Uncertainty?

Adam chose to NOT live by Faith, but rather by Sight

*So he joined Eve and ate the forbidden fruit!*



# Note How Chapter 5 Ends

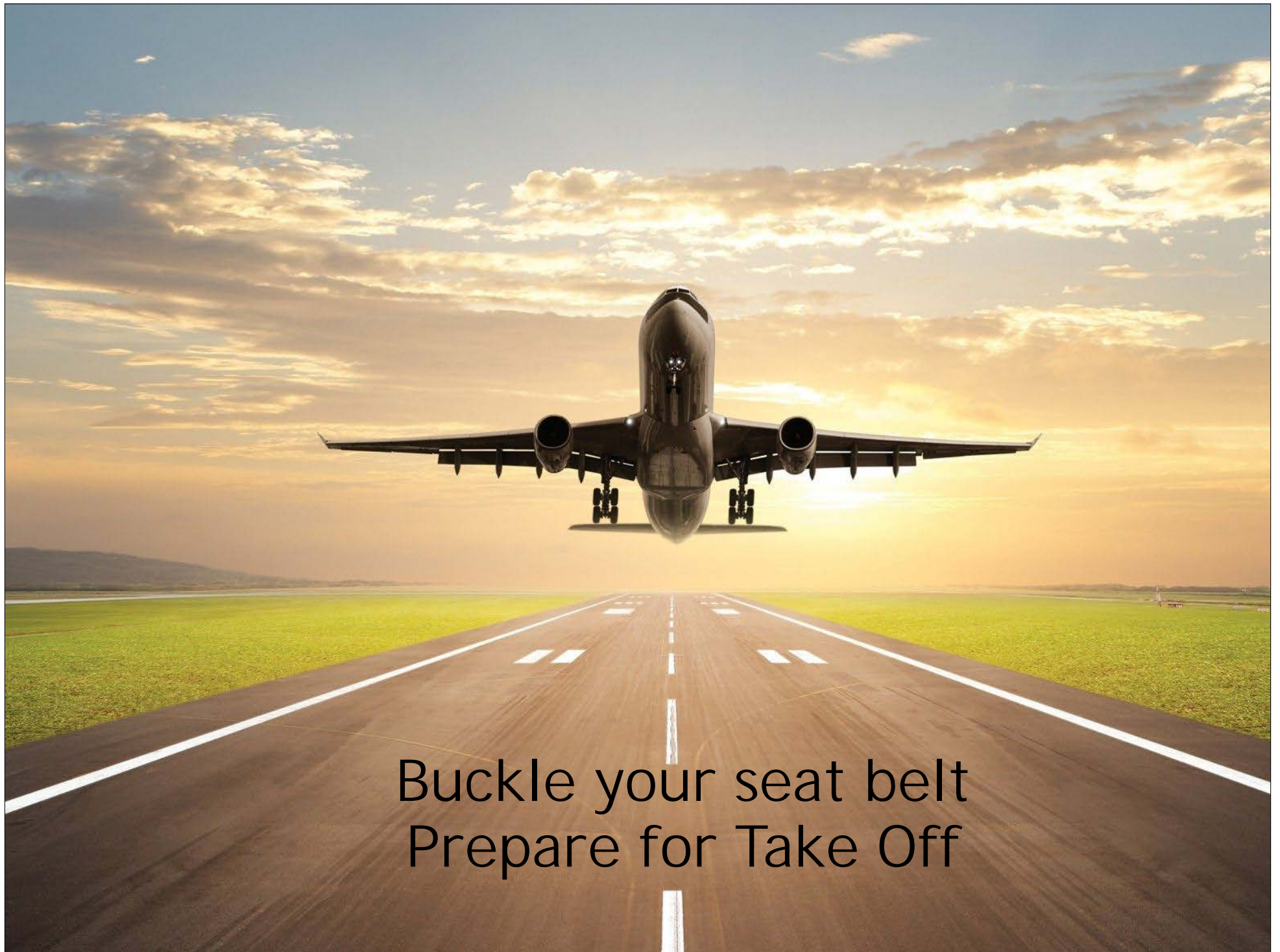
## Because of Adam's Response

Sin and **Death** begin to  
*fill and dominate*  
the entire World  
(Rom 5:12)

God's "**Shalom**"  
*ends* and Creation's  
"**Groaning**" *begins*  
(Rom 8:23)

The Virus of Satan's  
**Emptiness-Pursuit Pattern**  
*is passed on*  
*to Adam's decedents*  
(Gen 4—Cain/Able),





Buckle your seat belt  
Prepare for Take Off

## CHAPTER 6: Glory Revealed

*Lifting people up to a new way of thinking  
with the emptiness-pursuit pattern no longer at the center.*

Chapter 6 begins  
**after the Fall**

(Gen 3)

And concludes  
**at Christ's Second Coming**

(Rev 20)

It centers around  
**the Gospel of Jesus Christ**  
*and the 3 reasons*  
*He came into the world.*

# 1. Jesus came into the world to destroy the works of the Devil —1 Jn 3:8

## The works of the Devil...

Energize  
*the ongoing Lie*  
that goodness/life  
can be found  
outside of God.

Manifest  
themselves in people  
*in the*  
Emptiness-Pursuit  
Pattern of Relating

# The Emptiness-Pursuit Pattern in People

Puts self at the Center instead of God  
*“I am the point of my existence”*

Uses people and things  
to fill an Internal Emptiness

Is the source of all  
Marital, Family and Relational Problems

Violates the Fullness-Expression Pattern  
of the Trinity

## 2. Jesus came into the world to seek and to save that which was lost —Lk 19:10

### Who are the “Lost?”

#### Like Eve:

The Lost are those who have **been deceived** into thinking *Life can be found outside the goodness of God*

#### Like Adam:

The Lost are those who **refuse to believe** *God is good enough to be trusted with the uncertainty of life.*

# Put another way

The Lost are those  
who seek  
to make life work  
apart from God  
*by following  
Satan's  
Emptiness-Pursuit  
Pattern.*

Bible says  
Jesus came  
into the World  
to give the “Lost”  
a different way  
to find life and goodness  
*that is centered  
in Him.*

### 3. Jesus came into the world to reveal the Glory of the Father—Jn 17:4

#### According to the Bible

The Father's glory  
*is the depths of*  
“the fullness of His grace.”  
Jn 1:14-18; Eph 1:6

Jesus revealed  
“the full glory of the Father's grace”  
*while dying on the cross to restore us to God*  
Jn 12:20-28

We are to respond to  
God's full expression of grace  
*in 3 ways*

# Our 3-Fold Response to God's Grace

## First

By facing the  
**uncertainty of Life**  
with PERSEVERING  
FAITH in God's  
goodness *like*  
*Abraham,*  
*the father of faith*  
Rom 4:16-21

## Second

By relating to  
**Others** out of the  
FULLNESS-  
EXPRESSION  
PATTERN  
*as we are filled*  
*with God's Spirit*  
Eph 5:18-6:9

## Third

By reflecting  
**to the World**  
the  
COMPLEMENTARY  
CONNECTED  
COMMUNITY  
*of the Trinity*  
John 13-17

This 3-fold response to Grace is necessary  
to advance a man spiritually forward  
into the likeness of Christ

# CHAPTER 7: Glory Enjoyed

*No goodness imaginable beyond Life with God*

This final chapter  
tells of a future time  
when the fullness of God's glory  
will be enjoyed by people  
*in a way it could never be enjoyed before.*

God will no longer withhold anything from people!  
He will give us the best of who He is!  
(cf. Eph 3:20)

## SHALOM!

# In this Final Chapter

We will see God  
as He really is  
in all His majesty  
and glory  
(1 Jn 3:2)

We will live under God  
subject to His just reign  
on a restored Earth  
filled with perfect peace  
(Isa 54-66)

We will live with God  
in His visible presence  
never to be  
separated again  
(Rev 22)

We will worship God  
knowing the fullness of  
His grace and serving  
out of fullness with joy  
(Isa 11, 52, Rev 21-22)

# What happens to our struggle with Sin in this Chapter?

When we finally

**See God**

*in all of His Glory*

And when we finally

**Experience God's Grace**

*in all of its Fullness*

It will be then

**We will finally believe**

*what we struggled to believe  
all our lives*

There is no possibility  
**WHATSOEVER**  
of finding  
Goodness and Joy  
outside of God!

# And when we finally know this

We will no longer sin  
not because we can't  
but because  
*sin will be unthinkable*

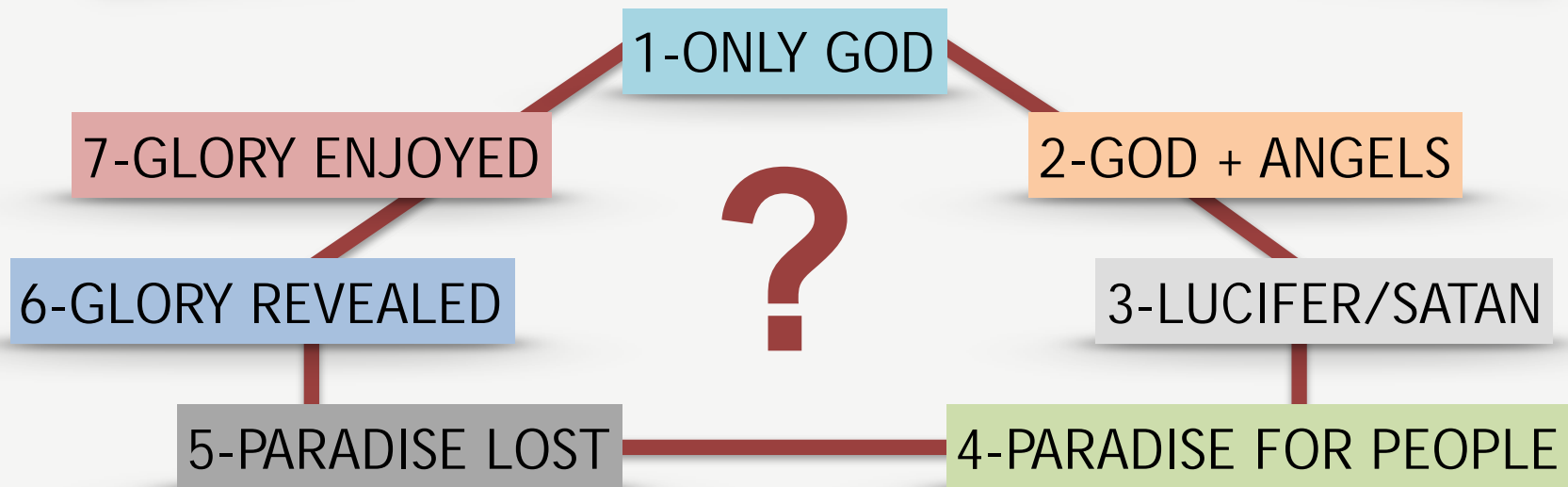
But Until Then

The best things  
about God  
are not yet fully revealed,  
*So sin is still thinkable*

# Conclusion

## *So What's the Story God is Telling?*

To Discover  
the Story God is Telling  
we must “connect the dots”  
*of the Seven Chapters*



# We Discover God is telling a Story that is...

Using both  
**Innocence and Tragedy**  
to *progressively open us up*  
to something infinitely  
Breathtaking

Something the Angels  
**can't know**  
*But long to understand*

**The Fullness of the Depths**  
of God's glorious  
**GRACE!**

So that when fully known

Will give us  
Life/Goodness  
**BEYOND IMAGINATION**

Will make any thought  
of looking for  
Life/Goodness  
outside of God  
**UNTHINKABLE!**

# But what does *this* Story Have to do with Your Story?

Remember the purpose of this Series

UNDERSTAND



How do I do that?



Learn to Plug Your Story  
Into God's Story

# A FRAMEWORK FOR PLUGGING YOUR STORY INTO GOD'S STORY

## *As you live in the Tragedy of a Fallen World*

God is seeking to win your  
**ABANDONING TRUST**  
*in the goodness of His Grace*

Despite the **ABSENCE** of *blessing*  
and in the **PRESENCE** of  
*unexplained suffering*

So that  
out of your **WORSHIP...**  
*(Only thing Father seeks—Jn 4:23)*

You will develop (1) the Strength  
to **PERSEVERE...**  
*(Life without compromise/complaint)*

Regardless of seasons of personal **FAILURE**  
**DISCOURAGEMENT, REJECTION**  
*(Christ's blood is basis for approaching God—not the quality of our lives)*

And (2) a Commitment to  
**VALUE LOVING GOD/OTHERS**  
*(Fullness-Expression Pattern)*

Above personal **RELIEF/COMFORT/POWER**  
*(Emptiness-Pursuit Pattern)*

# So what's the Story God is Telling?

God is telling a Story that is inviting "LOST" people to be caught up into the **Greatest Story Ever Told**



It's the Story of the Depths of His Grace



By which  
He is making all Creation New



Through which  
He is filling those who trust Him with the joy and fullness of His Son

**WHAT'S THE STORY YOUR LIFE IS TELLING?**

Next Time  
Saturday  
April 13, 2019

# How Your Story was Shaped and Formed

Session #4



AHM

CONNECT  
TEACHING

# Thank You For Coming!

*Offering men hope  
and direction  
in a confusing world  
through  
Jesus Christ.*



# See you next Month!

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# Conclusion

## *So what's the Story God is telling?*

