

The Story of the Bible

Trying to answer five questions.

1. What is the Gospel?
2. What is the good news of the Kingdom?
3. Why did Jesus have to die?
4. What on Earth am I here for?
5. Where is all of it going?

ACT 1 – Creation & the Human Calling (Genesis 1-2)

ACT 2 – Human Rebellion & the Fall out (Genesis 3-11)

ACT 3 – Israel & the Great Commission (Genesis 12 – Malachi 4)

ACT 4 – Jesus – the Promised King (The four gospels)

ACT 5 – The Church & the New Humanity (Acts 1 – Rev. 20)

ACTS 6 – The return of the King & the New Creation (Rev. 21-22)

We will unpack these six acts over the next couple of weeks.

- Thereafter the idea is to do a brief overview of each book in the bible ...
- To see where and how it fits into the story, over the next 5-10 years.

ACT 1 – Creation and the Human Calling

Genesis 1 – God creates and orders a wonderful world out of chaos.

- And sets in it a beautiful garden filled with ...
- Mind-blowing trees, plants all kinds of vegetation and wild life.

What is the purpose of this garden?

- This garden was created as a sacred space, a cosmic temple you could say.
- A place where heaven and earth ^[God's space & our Space] would come together.
- A place FOR God's own dwelling.
- A place where he could take up his rest.
- Meaning a place from where he could rule and reign the universe. ^[Psalm 132:14]

And although the creation was very good (as we see throughout Genesis 1) ...

- It wasn't perfect ^[tā-mīm – complete] as it seems to be **IN-complete**.

In other words, Genesis 1 & 2 doesn't appear to be a **Static Work of Art** ...

- Like a "picture" on a "canvas" that is just meant to be ...
- Looked at, appreciated and enjoyed ...
- But rather a **Project that is Going Somewhere**.

So ...

1. What is the project?
1. Where is it supposed to be going?
2. And how will God take it there?

Genesis 1:26–28 ²⁶ Then God said, "Let us make mankind ^[adam] in our image, ^[selem] in our likeness, so that they ^[adam] may rule over the fish in the sea and the birds in the sky, over the livestock and all the wild animals, and over all the creatures that move along the ground."

²⁷ So God created mankind ^[adam] in his own image, ^[selem] in the image ^[selem] of God he created them; male and female he created them.

²⁸ God blessed them and said to them, "Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it. Rule over the fish in the sea and the birds in the sky and over every living creature that moves on the ground."

Ok, so we have the **Garden that is like a Cosmic Temple**.

- Beautiful with wildlife, trees, plants and flowers.
- And in the middle of it, God then places his **image, adam** ...
- With a very specific purpose.

So, what is "adam" ^[humanity] supposed to do?

- What is the purpose of humanity?
- What on earth am I here for?

Genesis 1 & 2 – seems to give us two primary, broad scope purposes.

1. There is the **"Image"**, part.

Gen. 1:26 "Then God said, "Let us make mankind ^[adam] in our image ..."

And then there is the ...

2. Be Fruitful ... Subdue ... Rule ...

Genesis 1:28 “God blessed them and said to them, “Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it. Rule over the fish in the sea and the birds in the sky and over every living creature that moves on the ground.”

And then somehow those two parts are intertwined.

Let’s start with humanity’s purpose as **IMAGE** ...

- Image – Selem ^[Tshê-lem]
- And the word selem, shockingly to most means – **Idol**

So, we have the **Cosmic Garden Temple**.

- And right in the center of it God places...
- A **Selem – idol – EIKŌN - Image** of himself.

Now, what on earth does that mean?

- One of the things we learned in the introduction to this series ...
- Is that in order to understand what the text most likely meant ...
- To its original audience ...
- You need to have some understanding of their world view and culture.

In other words, if they hear “image” or “selem” or “eikon” ...

- What do they hear?
- How did they make sense of it?

In the Ancient Near East different people groups had different **creation accounts** ...

- Genesis 1 & 2 are not the only recorded creation accounts of the time.

One of these creation accounts that has been fully preserved on tablets ...

- Is called **ENŪMA ELIŠ**

ENŪMA ELIŠ

According to this creation account the first gods were ...

- A male god called **Apsu**
- And a female god called **Tiamat**
- And somehow these two gods were intertwined ...
- And they were a couple.

The two of them then created four others gods called.

- Lahmu, Lahamu, Anshar and Kishar.
- From Kishar → Anu → Ea

One day Ea realized that he was not very happy with his spot in the hierarchy.

- He wanted the top job.
- He wanted the top god ...
- And he didn't only want Apsu's authority, he also wanted his halo.
- So, we have some god envy going on.

Ea then overthrew Apsu and took his halo for himself ...

- And became ruler of the gods with his wife Damkina.
- And somehow the two of them then created another God ...
- Marduk from within the heart of Apsu.

Ok, so we have the godly couple Apsu and Tiamat.

- They create four others gods of which one is Kishar.
- From Kishar → Anu → Ea
- Ea has god envy, want the top job and the halo.
- So he kills Apsu and with his wife creates Marduk out of Apsu's heart.

Through time though, as these things always go ...

- Marduk exceed Ea and the other god's in his godliness.

And it was during that time that ...

- Some of the gods approach Tiamat to avenge Apsu ...
- And take on Ea.

Ea shivered in his boots and rushed to some of his inner circle gods for council.

- Together they decided to choose Marduk as their champion to fight Tiamat ...
- With the condition that Marduk will be appointed the supreme god ...
- If and when he wins.

So Marduk and Tiamat goes to war.

- And as any mighty woman would do, she tries to swallow him ...
- But he outwits her, kills her and splits her body into two.
- With the one half he made the sky with the other the earth.

But the gods were a fairly lazy bunch and didn't want to do any work ...

- He then decides to create humans as servants of the gods.
- By offering the god Kingu as a sacrifice ...
- And using his blood to form humans ...
- By mixing it with clay.

After creating humans Marduk then divided the gods into ...

- Gods above and gods below.
- He placed 300 gods in heaven and 600 on the earth.

The gods then propose that they should build a throne or shrine for Marduk –

- Marduk tells them to construct Babylon.
- The gods then spend a year making bricks and build the Temple of Marduk.
- And inside of it they placed a Selem/ Idol of Marduk

Now, every ancient temple, like the temple of Marduk had a Selem in it.

- The Selem was an image of the god that the people were worshipping.
 - And it had a three-fold purpose ...
1. The Presence of that “god” would somehow be vested into his image/ Selem ...
 - So that people could sense the power, majesty and awesomeness of the God ...
 - When they were faced with the “god’s” image.
 2. And then they would also Get Direction from their “god” through the image.
 3. They would bring their worship to their ‘god’ through the image ...

That was Ancient Near East worldview and culture.

What does that bring to the context of our passage?

- God placed “adam”^[humanity] in the garden – the Cosmic Temple
- With their primary purpose being his Selem/Image/ EIKŌN

What is the purpose of the EIKŌN?

1. The EIKON is to be like a mirror that would reflect YHWH into the world.
 - That would reflect his glory^[doxa] ...
 - Splendor, beauty, power, majesty and awesomeness into the world.

So, it is the reflection of God that people would see ...

- Whenever they come face to face with the EIKŌN.

2. The EIKŌN is the means by which the rest of creation ...
 - Gets their direction from God.

MIRROR BALL

KEY RING SLIDE

3. Creation should be able to bring their **worship** to God through image.

Remember, two broad scope Purposes

1. The one part being the **IMAGE** ... and the other part ...
2. **Be fruitful**, increase in number, fill the earth ^[spread]
 - **Subdue** – bring order to it and harness its potential
 - **Rule** - Expand the garden and take it somewhere.

In laymen's terms ...

- Fill the world with my image.
- Build a flourishing society and fill it with ...
- My beauty, my splendor, my majesty ...
- My love, my kindness and my wisdom.

What on earth are we here for?

- To be an EIKŌN.
- To Expand the garden and fill it with his image.

That was and I believe still is our human vocation, our God given purpose.

- Harness, subdue, rule, image, spread.

Spread my glory and my pulsating life and being into the world

- Through who you are.
- Through the way that you rule and the way that you reign ...
- My world on my behalf.

So that ...

Habakkuk 2:14¹⁴ ... the earth will be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord as the waters cover the sea.

To put it in very simplistic analogy.

- Imagine the world was a desert (and I am not saying that it was).
- And there was a man (in this case God) who nurtured this beautiful garden in it ...
- With trees and plants and birds and rivers and fruitfulness ...
- Bringing life all around it.

This person then invites one of the desert dwellers into this garden project.

- Putting their arm around them saying ...
- Imagine the whole world being just like this.

That is my dream and my desire ...

- To bring (or establish) this kind of fruitfulness and life ...
- Throughout the whole world.
- And I want to invite you into my loving and generous family.
- In order to partner with us in expanding this garden ...
- With my pulsating life, love and wonder.

That my friends is ACT 1

- Creation and the human calling.