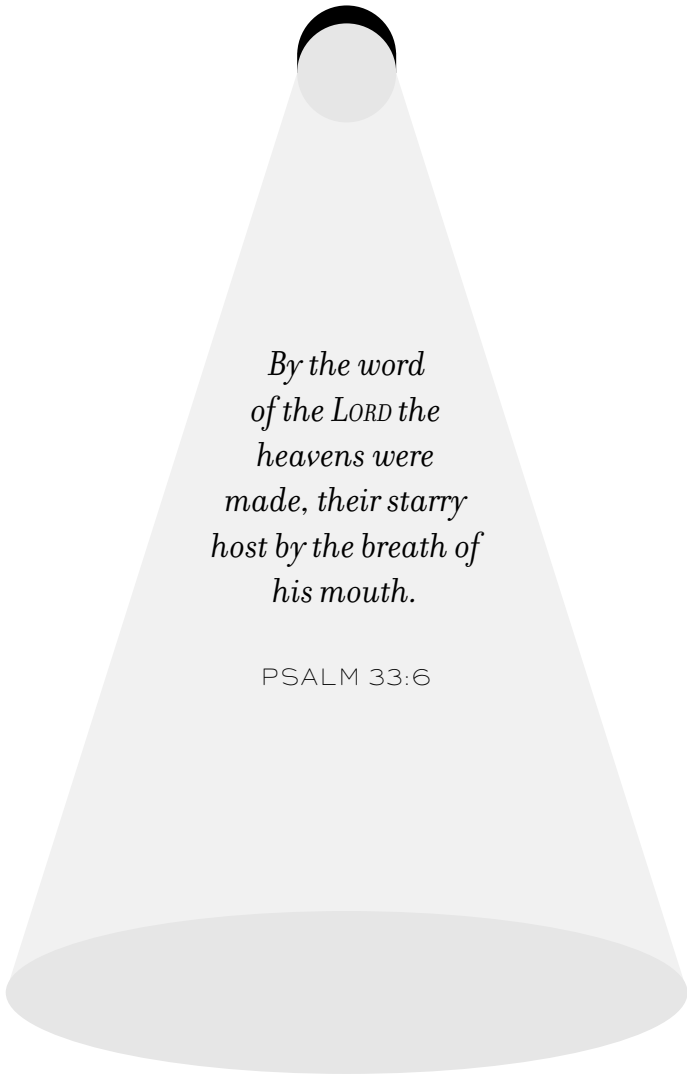


DISCOVER
HOW JESUS
TRANSFORMS
ORDINARY
DISCIPLES INTO
A MISSIONARY
MOVEMENT.

movements.net

AVAILABLE EASTER 2021



*By the word
of the LORD the
heavens were
made, their starry
host by the breath of
his mouth.*

PSALM 33:6

THE BEGINNING

Read GENESIS 1–3

God created the heavens and the earth from nothing. The earth was without form, covered in darkness, and the Spirit of God hovered over the waters. God's first recorded words declare, "Let there be light!"—a bright canvas on which to display his glory. He created effortlessly by his Word, and the earth was brimming with life—the fish of the sea, the animals roaming the land, the birds of the air. Creation is good, but it is not divine. The sun, moon, and the stars are not gods to be worshiped but lights hung in the sky by the one, true God.

The pinnacle of all God's creation was humanity, the goal to which everything was directed.¹ On the sixth day, the Lord formed a man from the dust of the ground, and breathed into him the very breath of God, the breath of life. Man as male and female uniquely display God's image—they are made for relationship with him.

That relationship was a gift, but it was maintained by faithful obedience to God's Word. The man and the woman he made could eat freely from any tree in the garden, but they must not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil or they would die.

Eden was a garden planted by the Lord for the man and the woman to enjoy. The garden was the place where heaven and earth met.² In this garden-temple, humanity was both priest and king,³ walking with God, bringing his rule, and

obeying his Word. Adam was to work and take care of the garden—words that later refer to Old Testament priests and their work in the tabernacle and temple. At first, Adam ruled the garden for God, and then he extended God's reign over the whole earth.⁴

God gave humanity a part to play: they were to push out beyond the boundaries of Eden and fill the earth with his glory. The man and the woman must live by faith in God's Word and obey him. Through their obedience, they would reflect his image and glory, and God's nature would be displayed throughout the world.⁵ Everything depended on this.

Into this ideal world came the Tempter in the form of one of God's creatures, a snake. He opened a discussion with Eve on the meaning and significance of God's command. The Serpent asked, "Did God really say?" questioning the truthfulness of God's Word. He cast doubt on the character of a God who restricts human freedom and assured Eve if she ate from the tree she would not die. Instead, she would become like God, deciding for herself what is right and wrong.

Sin is the refusal to trust God's goodness and obey his Word. It is the dethroning of God, so we might rule in his place. Through their betrayal, Adam and Eve exchanged God's loving rule for Satan's domination, and the whole created order was subject to futility (Romans 8:20).

Ashamed, the man and woman hid from God, fearing his rejection, refusing to cast themselves on his mercy. Yet a merciful God came looking for them, calling out, "Where are you?" and asking, "What is this you have done?" Adam and Eve didn't ask for forgiveness. Instead, they denied responsibility. The woman blamed the Serpent. The man blamed the "woman *you* put here with me."

Adam and Eve put their word above God's Word, and death came into the world. Relationships were shattered between God and his image bearers, between men and women,

between humanity and the earth. “With sin God’s curse enters creation alongside God’s blessing.”⁶ Life would now be plagued by shame, hardship, pain, and conflict. Through the man and the woman, Satan gained control of everything placed by God under their authority. Satan usurped God’s authority and set himself up as the prince of this world.⁷

As God’s priests and kings, Adam and Eve had the authority to drive the Serpent from the garden, but instead *they* were expelled. The ones who should have extended God’s dwelling place throughout the earth were excluded from God’s presence.⁸ They had a part to play, and they failed.

But the story didn’t end there.

God continued to shape them as they experienced both his justice and mercy. Judgment was not God’s last word. God promised that a descendant or “seed” would come from the woman. The mission to fill the earth with God’s glory would continue, but in a different way. God had a plan. He set out on a mission to rescue “sinful, but repentant, people from the power of sin and death.”⁹ This is the story that unites all the stories of Scripture. The battle against evil is won through suffering. The Serpent will strike his heel, but the offspring of the woman will crush the Serpent’s head.

Genesis 3 ends in an act of faith and hope. Adam names the woman *Eve*, for she will become the mother of all the living. She will bear the offspring who is the hope of God’s image bearers, the One who dies in their place, the One who will crush the Serpent’s head, and fill heaven and earth with the glory of God.

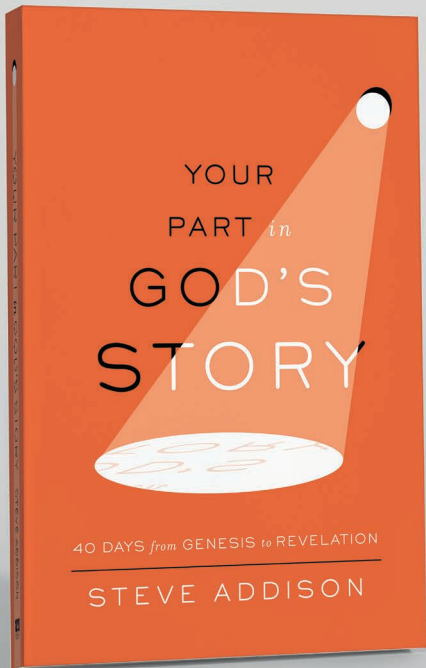
YOUR PART IN GOD'S STORY

1. What are you learning about God and his mission?

2. How does God shape the people he calls?

3. What is God saying to you about your part in his story?

4. How will you think and act differently?



FIND OUT
MORE

movements.net