

**The First Gospel
(Part 1)
Genesis 3:15**

*“I will put enmity between you and the woman,
and between your offspring and her offspring.
He shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise his heel.”*

Big Idea: God announces the first promise of redemption. A Deliverer will come from the woman’s line who will defeat the serpent through suffering.

Intro: The Bible is one story of redemption, with one hero, Jesus, and one theme, God reconciling all things to himself. That story began in eternity

- before God created the world (Eph 1:4),
- is expressed in God’s directives to Adam to represent him on the earth (Gen 1:28) and
- revealed in the first announcement of God’s redeeming efforts in Gen 3:15.

Genesis 3:15 is the first gospel ([*protoevangelium*](#)).

Note: Monday, I sent CG Leaders “The View from My Study,” which consists of my thoughts for the upcoming preaching text and a daily devotion based on Colossians 3:16.

- Monday = Observation Day – Here’s what the text says (the 5 Ws)
- Tuesday = Interpretation Day – Here’s what the text means
- Wednesday = Correlation Day – Here’s where else the Bible says this
- Thursday = Application Day, CG questions and 3 Daily Devotions

This week, when I got to Wednesday, I realized the sermon began at the Fall but didn’t explain the Fall. The bad news – we are all sinners – is the best news – when seen in the light of the bad news. *“The bad news is bad, but the good news is better than the bad.”* In other words,

- Why is there enmity?
- Why does the serpent want to bruise Eve’s offspring?
- Who is Eve’s offspring?
- How does that offspring bruise the serpent’s head?

At that point, I thought, *“I need to back up to the beginning,”* and that’s why the sermon changed on Wednesday.

That begins with....

First: The World We Lost: A Glimpse of Eden's Original Goodness

Genesis 1 details the six days of creation. It must have been a glorious world. Can you imagine it? What would an unspoiled, divinely created world look like? Perfection in every conceivable way. Here is a biblically grounded picture.

1. Creation Was Marked by Perfect Harmony

Before the fall, there was no conflict, no decay, no predation, no fear, and no death. Genesis describes a world in which everything God made was “*very good*” (Gen. 1:31).

We don't have time to look at all the implications of “good,” but at the least it means creation that glorified God in these ways,

- a) Perfectly fit God's design
- b) Was Morally pure
- c) Was Pleasing to God, humanity and creatures
- d) Was Abundantly Life-giving
- e) Defined Shalom / peace, wholeness, flourishing in presently unimaginable ways
- f) In every tangible way, it embodied God and his glory as our good

This means:

- The physical world worked exactly as it should.
- The human body operated without pain or corruption.
- Relationships contained no suspicion, resentment, anxiety, or self-protection.
- Nature and humanity were in perfect rhythm. Nothing threatened us, and we threatened nothing.

2. Creation Was Beautiful, Abundant, and Unscarred

Eden was not an accidental or sparse garden.

- a) God made light before the sun – 1:3
- b) Look how God made the earth and sky

Genesis 1:6 - *And God said, “Let there be an expanse in the midst of the waters, and let it separate the waters from the waters.”*⁷ *And God made the expanse and separated the waters that were under the expanse from the waters that were above the expanse*

- a) Expanse = *raqia* – spread out, an ancient word for ‘sky.’
- b) The expanse = the sky, the space between the sky and water below (oceans/seas) and the waters above (clouds atmospheric moisture)
- c) Gen 1:2 – “waters”
 - Lower waters = seas, oceans, rivers, lakes
 - Upper waters = clouds, atmospheric waters, precipitation systems

This describes the establishment of the water cycle necessary for sustaining life on earth. This means that:

- Rain does not exist by chance
- Weather does not operate independently but in a coordinated fashion

So, in separating the “waters,” God,

- Created structure
- Defined boundaries
- Introduced habitable space
- Moved creation toward function and purpose

By the time God finishes with day six, the Garden was a cultivated, ordered paradise, bursting with life that God intended to fill the whole earth.

Scripture points to:

- Uncursed ground: no thorns, no resistance (Gen. 3:17–18 describes the *change*).
- Perfect climate: no extremes, or natural disasters.
- Abundant food: every tree “*pleasant to the sight and good for food*” (Gen. 2:9).
- Overflowing rivers that nourished the earth (Gen. 2:10–14).

Eden was the original temple-mountain of God’s presence. Later biblical imagery (tabernacle/temple, New Jerusalem) echoes what was lost.

3. Work Was Joyful and Effortless

Genesis 2:15 says Adam was placed in the garden “*to work it and keep it.*” This is what it mean to ‘image God,’ in the work of reigning, tending, and expanding God’s ordered beauty, not fighting thorns but cultivating glory.

Adam worked, but not in the way we understand work.

- No frustration
- No fatigue
- No failure
- No futility

Work was worship.

4. Human Relationships Were Pure and Fully Transparent

Before sin, there was:

- No shame (Gen. 2:25).

- No insecurity.
- No fear of rejection.
- No hidden motives.
- No grudges or bitterness.
- No self-protection.

Adam and Eve were fully known and fully loved, the very thing we all long for, the element that Satan struck at and the thing we all create dysfunction to sinfully never fully obtain because we

- Fail to receive it in Jesus
- Seek to obtain it selfishly (James 1:14 & 4:1-3)

But, their relationship was the perfect picture of unity, trust, affection, and partnership.

5. Humanity Walked in Direct, Unbroken Fellowship with God

God is said to “walk” in the garden (Gen. 3:8), which implies:

- God’s presence was near and tangible, not distant.
- Prayer was natural communion, not wrestling through distance or doubt.
- There was no need for sacrifice, atonement, or repair.
- God’s voice was clear and unmarred.

The whole point was to create a place and then a people to live in that place so that God could live amongst them and bless them.

Adam and Eve lived *coram deo*, face-to-face with the One who made them.

6. Creation Was Untouched by Evil, Pain, or Death

This is the most staggering truth:

- No sickness
- No decay
- No aging
- No entropy
- No disaster
- No loss
- No grief
- No death

Everything moved toward life, not away from it. This means every emotion was perfectly ordered:

- Joy without fear
- Peace without threat

- Love without insecurity
- Wonder without danger
- Dominion without exploitation

Humanity lived in a world where nothing was broken, and everything worked the way it was designed.

7. Creation Before the Fall Reveals What Christ Will Restore

The closing chapters of Scripture echo the opening ones:

- No curse (Rev. 22:3)
- No death (Rev. 21:4)
- No night (Rev. 22:5)
- God dwelling with His people (Rev. 21:3)
- A renewed garden-world with water, fruit, healing, and light (Rev. 22:1–2)

God's plan is not to abandon Eden, but to restore Eden in fuller and fullest glory, in Christ.

Thought: Thinking on creation before the Fall, what do you miss most?

APP: God's commitment to Eden is a model of his commitment to you.

Romans 8:31-39 - *If God is for us, who can be against us? ³² He who did not spare his own Son but gave him up for us all, how will he not also with him graciously give us all things? ³³ Who shall bring any charge against God's elect? It is God who justifies. ³⁴ Who is to condemn? Christ Jesus is the one who died—more than that, who was raised—who is at the right hand of God, who indeed is interceding for us. ³⁵ Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or danger, or sword? ³⁶ As it is written, "For your sake we are being killed all the day long; we are regarded as sheep to be slaughtered." ³⁷ No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. ³⁸ For I am sure that neither death nor life, nor angels nor rulers, nor things present nor things to come, nor powers, ³⁹ nor height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.*

Note: The new creation is not merely a return to Genesis 2, it is everything Genesis 2 was, and infinitely more, completed and secured by the blood of the Lamb.

Second: An Illustration of What God is Doing. Ezra 3:8-13 –

- Ezra 3 takes place after Israel has returned from Babylonian exile, a captivity that lasted 70 years (Jer. 25:11–12) because of generations of covenant unfaithfulness, idolatry, injustice, and disregard for God's law.
- In 586 BC, the Babylonians destroyed Jerusalem, burned the temple, and carried the people into exile—an event experienced as the loss of God's presence and blessing.

- After 70 years, God moved the heart of King Cyrus of Persia to allow the Jews to return home and rebuild the temple (Ezra 1:1–4).
- Under the leadership of Zerubbabel (the governor, a descendant of David) and Jeshua (the high priest), the first wave of exiles arrived back in a devastated Jerusalem.
- Ezra 3 records their first major act of spiritual restoration. Before they rebuild their homes, city walls, or economy, they rebuild the altar so they can offer sacrifices and restore daily worship. Then they lay the foundation of the temple, the visible symbol of God's presence among His people.

The emotional response is profound and speaks to an understanding of what was lost, regained but never fully restored -

Ezra 3:8-13 - *Now in the second year after their coming to the house of God at Jerusalem, in the second month, Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel and Jeshua the son of Jozadak made a beginning, together with the rest of their kinsmen, the priests and the Levites and all who had come to Jerusalem from the captivity. They appointed the Levites, from twenty years old and upward, to supervise the work of the house of the LORD. ⁹ And Jeshua with his sons and his brothers, and Kadmiel and his sons, the sons of Judah, together supervised the workmen in the house of God, along with the sons of Henadad and the Levites, their sons and brothers. ¹⁰ And when the builders laid the foundation of the temple of the LORD, the priests in their vestments came forward with trumpets, and the Levites, the sons of Asaph, with cymbals, to praise the LORD, according to the directions of David king of Israel. ¹¹ And they sang responsively, praising and giving thanks to the LORD,*

*“For he is good,
for his steadfast love endures forever toward Israel.”*

And all the people shouted with a great shout when they praised the LORD, because the foundation of the house of the LORD was laid. ¹² But many of the priests and Levites and heads of fathers' houses, old men who had seen the first house, wept with a loud voice when they saw the foundation of this house being laid, though many shouted aloud for joy, ¹³ so that the people could not distinguish the sound of the joyful shout from the sound of the people's weeping, for the people shouted with a great shout, and the sound was heard far away.

The old men wept because they were glad the Temple was being rebuilt. The old men wept because they knew, as glorious as it was, what it cost to rebuild that temple and that, it would never be the same.

Take that thought – of the rebuilding of the Temple made with earthly hands, and go with me to Revelation...

Revelation 21:1-4 - *Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and the sea was no more. ² And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. ³ And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, “Behold, the dwelling place of God is with man. He will dwell with them, and they will be his people, and God himself will be with them as their God. ⁴ He will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain anymore, for the former things have passed away.”*

There is a profound connection here –

1. The old men in Ezra 3 weep over what was lost.

In Ezra 3:12, the older men who had seen Solomon’s temple weep as the new temple foundation is laid. Their tears come from:

- memory of former glory
- grief over sin and exile
- the pain of judgment
- the awareness that what was destroyed will never be the same

Their weeping is the weeping of longing, regret, and incomplete restoration. Even the rebuilt temple is only a shadow of what once was.

Their tears say:

“This is good... but it is not what it was or yet, what it should be.”

2. The saints in Revelation 21 weep for a different reason — and for the last time.

In Revelation 21:4, God Himself wipes away every tear. These tears come from:

- the suffering of life in a fallen world
- the pain of death, mourning, shame, exile, and loss
- the accumulated grief of all humanity since Eden
- the glory of rest and peace, the return of all that is ‘good.’

But here is the difference:

In Ezra, the tears remain.

In Revelation, God removes them forever.

Their tears say: “This is not what it was. It is better. This is not, not what it should be. It is everything it should be. This is what our souls have been longing for ever since Eden.”

3. The theological connection: “not yet,” “already” and “done.”

Ezra 3 represents:

- a partial restoration
- a return from exile, but not the end of exile. We are still far from our true home.
- worship restored, but the presence still diminished
- hope rising, but not yet fulfilled

Revelation 21 represents:

- the final restoration
- the end of all exile forever
- the fullness of God’s presence with His people
- the moment every longing is satisfied

In other words:

Ezra 3 is the ache.

Revelation 21 is the answer.

Ezra 3 is the beginning of restoration.

Revelation 21 is the completion of restoration.

Ezra 3 contains tears because the world is still broken.

Revelation 21 sees tears wiped away because the world is finally made whole.

Third: The Birth of Jesus: What Salvation Really Means

Jesus’ birth is God’s declaration that the long ache of a fallen world will not have the final word. Everything that was lost in Eden, everything Israel mourned in exile, everything age and sin and decay have taken from us, everything we long for, finds its answer in the birth of Jesus.

In Ezra 3, the old men wept because the world was still broken.

In Revelation 21, the saints rejoice because the world is finally made new.

In a manger in Bethlehem, the answer to life’s greatest question, “Why,” begins.

The birth of Jesus means:

- a) The curse is being undone.

The child born of the woman is the One promised in Genesis 3:15. The serpent’s power is ending, and the world’s long exile is closing.

Galatians 3:13 — “Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law...”

Jesus is the promised Seed who comes to break the serpent's power and reverse the curse unleashed in Eden.

b) God has returned to dwell with His people.

The temple was a shadow. Jesus is Emmanuel—God with us. His birth is the true restoration of God's presence

Matthew 1:23 — *"They shall call his name Immanuel (God with us)."*

John 1:14 — *"The Word became flesh and dwelt among us."*

The temple was only a shadow. Jesus is the true presence of God restored to His people.

c) A new creation has begun.

His birth is the dawn of a new Eden. The One through whom all things were made steps into the world to remake it.

2 Corinthians 5:17 — *"If anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation."*

Revelation 21:5 — *"Behold, I am making all things new."*

The One through whom all things were created (John 1:3) steps into the world to re-create it.

d) Our deepest longings are answered.

The longing the old men felt in Ezra 3, the longing of Israel's exiles, the longing of all humanity—is met in Christ. He comes to restore what sin has broken, to give back what the curse has taken, and to heal what rebellion destroyed.

Haggai 2:7 — *"The desire of all nations shall come."*

Luke 2:30–32 — *"My eyes have seen your salvation... a light for the nations."*

Everything Israel longed for in exile and everything we long for in its brokenness is fulfilled in Christ.

e) The final restoration is guaranteed.

The manger leads to the cross, and the cross leads to the empty tomb, and the empty tomb leads to Revelation 21. Because Christ came once, the day is coming when He will come again and wipe away every tear.

1 Corinthians 15:20–23 — *"Christ the firstfruits..."*

Revelation 21:4 — “*He will wipe away every tear...*”

His birth begins the restoration that His return will complete. Bethlehem points toward the New Jerusalem.

In other words: The birth of Jesus is God stepping into the ruins of our world to begin the renewal of all things.

- Ezra 3 looks forward in longing.
- Revelation 21 looks backward in fulfillment.
- Bethlehem stands in the middle as God’s answer to both.

This is what the birth of Jesus means for our guilt, our shame, and our deepest longings. But if we stop there, we are still thinking too small. Jesus was born to reclaim a fallen creation, to answer the groan of the whole universe, and to begin the work of making all things new.

Fourth: The Scope of Salvation: Making All Things New

a) Salvation Is Personal, but It Is Also Cosmic

When we talk about salvation, we often think first about forgiveness of sins and eternal life. But Scripture shows that God’s saving work is far larger than individual redemption. The gospel is not only about saving *people* from judgment. It is about healing creation itself, restoring everything sin has fractured, and making *all things* new (Rev. 21:5).

b) The Fall damaged all of creation, not just individual hearts.

Romans 8:19–22 says creation “groans” under bondage to corruption.

Sin brought:

- disorder into creation
- suffering into the human body
- hostility into relationships
- corruption into culture
- decay into the natural world

In other words, everything broke. Not just us.

c) Salvation repairs more than individuals, it repairs all creation, all reality.

Jesus came to do exactly that.

Colossians 1:19–20 - *Through Him God was reconciling all things, whether on earth or in heaven.*

All things means:

- people
- creation
- the spiritual realm
- the material realm

Christ does not save *in spite* of creation; He saves *with creation* in view.

d) Jesus' birth begins the renewal of the entire cosmos.

When the eternal Son takes on flesh, He enters not just human history but the material world. His birth signals that God is reclaiming this world, not abandoning it.

Bethlehem is the assurance of a new creation.

e) The resurrection is the first piece of a restored universe.

Jesus rises not as a ghost, but with a physical, glorified body.

1 Corinthians 15:20 calls Him the "firstfruits." Where there are firstfruits, there is a harvest coming.

His resurrection body is the prototype of the renewed creation.

f) Salvation ends not with escape from creation, but the renewal of creation.

The Bible doesn't end with souls floating in heaven. It ends with:

- a new heaven and new earth (Rev. 21:1)
- the New Jerusalem coming down (Rev. 21:2)
- God dwelling with humanity (Rev. 21:3)
- creation healed (Rev. 22:1–3)

Heaven comes to earth. Creation is restored. Eden returns and surpasses itself.

g) Personal salvation and cosmic salvation are inseparable.

God is not saving isolated individuals and leaving the world burned behind them. He is saving a people to inhabit a renewed creation where righteousness dwells (2 Pet. 3:13).

Your personal salvation is the beginning of your participation in God's global restoration project.

Summary: Jesus did not come merely to save souls out of a dying world. He came to redeem the world itself, to break the curse, and to make all things new, from the human heart to the entire cosmos.

Conclusion: Seeing the goodness of God's world makes the Fall feel even more tragic. Eden's harmony collapses in a moment, and the people who once walked with God now hide in fear and shame. Yet it is here, in the wreckage, that the surprising grace of Genesis 3 appears. God does not wait for Adam and Eve to come to Him. He comes to them. The Creator who formed the world now steps into its ruin to not only recover it, but make it better than it was originally.

And that brings us to the second movement of the passage in next week's sermon.

Addendum

Why Are There Tears in Heaven?

Scripture acknowledges tears in Heaven because their removal marks the vivid and eternal distinction between the Fall and our post-Fall lives, between the temporary sorrow caused by the Fall and the forever joy that is ours in God's presence, Eden-restored, but made better in the New Jerusalem. Here are the reasons the Bible gives and a list of the commentaries I consulted to get this list.

1. Because redemption finishes what suffering began

Revelation 21:4 says, "He will wipe away every tear from their eyes." Tears exist because the effects of the Fall reach all the way into human memory, longing, and experience. The wiping away happens because there were sorrows to heal, injustices to reverse, and wounds to comfort. Heaven is not the denial of earthly pain. It is the undoing of it.

2. Because God Himself comforts His people

In Isaiah 25:8 the promise is similar: "The Lord God will wipe away tears from all faces." The act of wiping tears is deeply personal. It is the image of a Father bending down to His child. The tears in Heaven are not tears of ongoing suffering but tears that God personally removes, demonstrating that comfort in eternity is relational, not merely circumstantial.

3. Because judgment brings both joy and grief

When God sets the world right, believers will rejoice, but they will also see the truth about sin, justice, and the cost of wickedness. Scripture hints that the last day includes both deep joy and sobering awe (Rev. 18–19). The tears He wipes away may include the holy weight of seeing evil judged and the full truth of what redemption required, particularly Jesus' sacrifice.

4. Because final healing includes emotional restoration

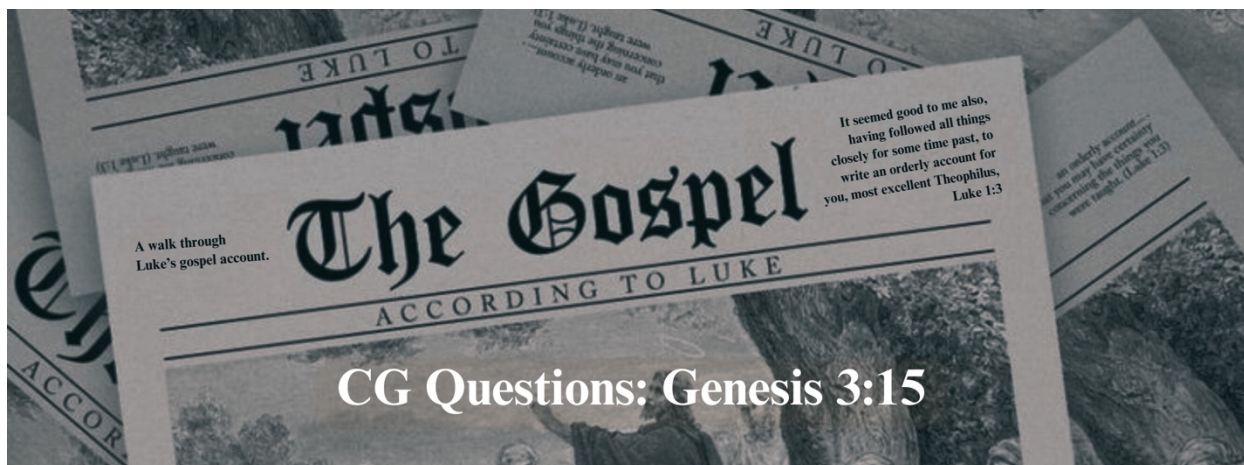
Heaven is not stoicism. It is wholeness. The human heart will be fully restored, which means every unmet longing, every grief carried through life, and every wound that shaped our earthly walk will be met by God's healing presence. Tears in Heaven are the last vestige of a fallen world being transformed by a risen Christ.

5. Because love sometimes weeps at the end of the story

Heaven magnifies love, it does not diminish it. Heaven solves pain, it does not deny it. Think of tears shed at a long-awaited reunion, at the sight of the Lamb, or at the realization that every promise God ever made has come true. These are tears of relief, worship, gratitude, and awe. They are not the tears of lament but the tears of completion.

There are tears in Heaven not because eternity is sorrowful, but because God is personally removing every trace of sorrow, sin, injustice, and pain from the hearts of His children. They are tears of unspeakable and unending, perfect joy. Every tear wiped away is a place where God's mercy touches human brokenness one last time. The final act of redemption is not only cosmic; it is intimate. God wipes the tears because it has always been his desire and plan to live among the people he loves.

1. Matthew Henry, *Commentary on the Whole Bible*, Rev. 21.
2. John Gill, *Exposition of the New Testament*, Rev. 21:4.
3. G. K. Beale, *The Book of Revelation*, NIGTC (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1999), 1043–45.
4. Grant R. Osborne, *Revelation*, BECNT (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2002), 736.
5. Robert H. Mounce, *The Book of Revelation*, NICNT (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1977), 383.
6. Leon Morris, *Revelation*, Tyndale New Testament Commentary (Downers Grove: IVP, 1987), 238–39.
7. Alec Motyer, *The Prophecy of Isaiah* (Downers Grove: IVP, 1993), 205–08.
8. John N. Oswalt, *The Book of Isaiah*, NICOT (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998), 459–61.
9. Henry M. Morris, “Tears in Heaven?” Institute for Creation Research.
10. Randy Alcorn, *Heaven* (Carol Stream: Tyndale House, 2004), 277–79.



CG Questions: Genesis 3:15

OBSERVATION

(What does the text say? What do you see?)

1. In Genesis 3:15, what key elements do you observe in the promise God makes?
 - Who is speaking?
 - To whom is He speaking?
 - What does God promise will happen?
2. What contrasts or repeated ideas stand out in the sermon's description of Eden before the Fall?
3. When you read Ezra 3:12–13, what do you observe about the people's emotional responses and why might they be different from one another?

INTERPRETATION

(What does it mean? What truth is being taught?)

4. Why does God declare *enmity* between the serpent and the woman's offspring?
5. How does this help interpret the rest of the biblical storyline?
6. How does understanding Eden's "very good" creation shape the impact of the Fall?
7. What does it mean when the sermon notes say: "*Ezra 3 is the ache. Revelation 21 is the answer.*"
8. How does this interpret our present experience of longing and brokenness?
9. What does the birth of Jesus reveal about God's long-term plan to undo the curse and restore creation?
10. How does Genesis 3:15 function as the "first gospel"?

CORRELATION

(Where else does the Bible say this? How does Scripture interpret & reinforce Scripture?)

11. How do passages like Revelation 21:1–4 deepen the promise first made in Genesis 3:15?
12. What similarities or fulfillment patterns do you see?
13. Look at Romans 8:19–22. How does creation’s “groaning” connect to the sermon’s theme that salvation is *cosmic* and not only personal?
14. Read Colossians 1:19–20. How does this passage correlate with the promise that God will “reconcile all things” through Christ?
15. How does it expand your understanding of Genesis 3:15?
16. How do the Gospels (e.g., Matthew 1:23; John 1:14) show the fulfillment of God’s promise to dwell with His people?

APPLICATION

(How should we respond? What difference does this make?)

17. Which loss from the world before the Fall (harmony, beauty, painless work, transparent relationships, nearness to God) do you feel most acutely in your life today? Why?
18. Where in your life do you feel the tension Ezra 3 describes of “joy and sorrow at the same time”?
19. How does God meet you in that tension?
20. Which aspect of Jesus’ coming (undoing the curse, dwelling with us, new creation, satisfying our longings, guaranteeing restoration) is most meaningful to you *right now*?
21. How does it reshape your fear, grief, disappointment, or hope?
22. If salvation is not merely personal but cosmic, what does it look like for you to participate in God’s renewing work this week?
 - At home?
 - In relationships?
 - In spiritual disciplines?
 - In suffering?
23. Genesis 3:15 promises that evil will not have the last word. Where do you need to cling to that promise today?
 - In a sin struggle?
 - A family situation?
 - A fear or burden?
 - A longing that seems delayed?



Theme: The First Gospel — God’s Promise in Our Ruins

MONDAY — The World We Lost

Think. Reread Genesis 1:31. Think about the world God originally created—whole, beautiful, flourishing, and free from fear, shame, or death.

Reflect. Which aspect of creation’s original goodness do you long for most?

Apply. Name one place in your life where you feel the effects of the Fall (fear, shame, conflict, decay, weakness).

Pray. “Father, help me see both what has been lost and the hope You promise in Christ. Restore in me what sin has damaged and by your Spirit, live that restored life in me.”

TUESDAY — Enmity and the Ache

Think. Genesis 3:15 introduces *enmity*: conflict, resistance, and spiritual warfare.

Reflect. Where do you most experience this enmity in your daily life? In your thoughts? Desires? Relationships?

Apply. Identify a recurring temptation or internal struggle. What would resisting it in the power of Christ look like this week?

Pray. “Lord, I feel the enmity in my own heart. Strengthen me to stand against the devil’s schemes.”

WEDNESDAY — The Tears of Longing

Think. In Ezra 3, the old men wept because restoration had begun, but not fully.

Reflect. When have you felt joy and sorrow at the same time, thankful for God's work but longing for more?

Apply. Bring one area of unfinished restoration in your life to Christ. Tell Him honestly what feels incomplete.

Pray. "Lord, meet me in the tension of 'already' and 'not yet.' Comfort my longing with Your presence."

THURSDAY — Bethlehem: The Answer Begins

Think. The birth of Jesus is God stepping into our ruin to undo the curse. "Bethlehem is where the answer to the 'why' begins."

Reflect. Which truth of Christ's coming do you most need today:

- Undoing of the curse
- God with me
- New creation begun
- Longings satisfied
- Final restoration guaranteed

Apply. Write it down. Carry it with you today. Speak it to yourself when discouragement or fear rises.

Pray. "Jesus, thank You for stepping into my broken world. Hold me fast when I feel weak."

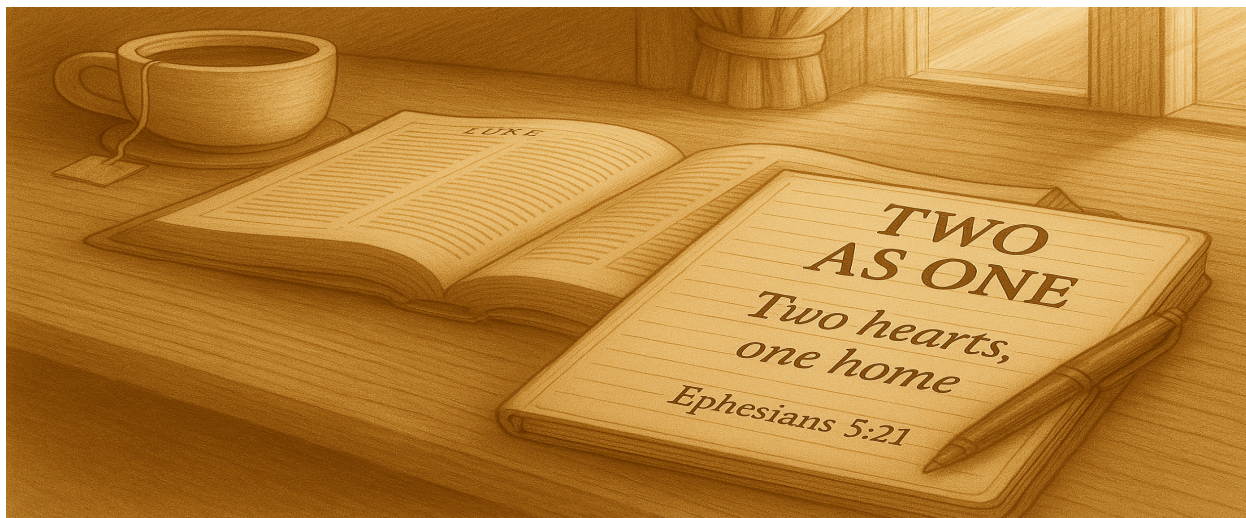
FRIDAY — The World Made New

Think. Revelation 21:1–4 promises that God will wipe every tear from every eye.

Reflect. What is one tear you long for God to wipe away someday?

Apply. Let this hope shape one practical choice today, how you speak, forgive, endure, or love.

Pray. "Lord, anchor my hope in the world You are making new. Give me strength to walk faithfully until that day."



Theme: The First Gospel — Hope for Our Homes

MONDAY — Remembering Eden Together

Think. Discuss Genesis 1:31 and each of you describe at least one beautiful thing about the world before Eden.

Reflect. Where do you see remnants of Eden’s goodness in your marriage? Where do you feel the effects of the Fall?

Apply. Read Galatians 5:22-23 and each of you choose one relational discipline/ habit / characteristic to emphasize this week.

Pray. “Lord, make our marriage a small reflection of the goodness You intended.”

TUESDAY — The Enmity We Feel

Think. Genesis 3:15 explains why relationships experience tension, miscommunication, and temptation.

Reflect. Where do you feel spiritual or emotional resistance between you? Speak honestly, gently, without blame.

Apply. Commit to one step of reconciliation at that point in your marriage today.

Pray. “Lord, heal the places where we feel enmity. Make us one.”

WEDNESDAY — Tears Like Ezra's

Think. Ezra 3 shows people with mixed emotions, joy for what God is doing and sorrow for what is not yet restored.

Reflect. Where does your marriage experience this same mix of gratitude and disappointment together?

Apply. Share one longing you each carry. Listen without fixing, trusting God to do the work.

Pray. “Father, meet us in the very places where we long for more and satisfy that longing.”

THURSDAY — Bethlehem in Our Home

Think. Jesus' birth means God has stepped into our ruin.

Reflect. Which aspect of Christ's coming does your relationship need this week?

Apply. Speak one encouraging gospel truth to your spouse today.

Pray. “Jesus, dwell in our marriage. Let the hope of Your coming renew our life together.”

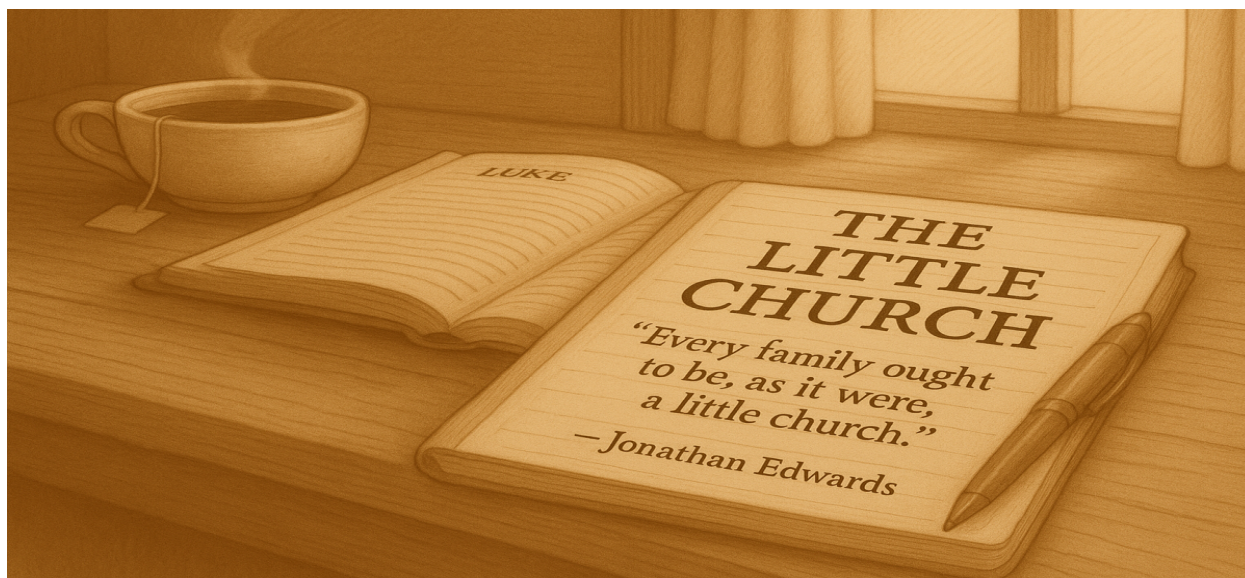
FRIDAY — All Things New

Think. Revelation 21 promises a world made whole.

Reflect. Where do you most need Christ's restoring power in your marriage at this moment?

Apply. Offer one act of love toward your spouse that points toward the new creation God is bringing.

Pray. “Lord, make us equal partners in Your restoring work in each of us until the day You wipe away the tears we have caused each other.”



Theme: The First Gospel — God’s Forever Promise

MONDAY — God Made Everything Good

Think. Read Genesis 1:31. Ask: “What do you think a perfect world was like?”

Reflect: What do you wish the world still had today? (No crying, no fighting, no sickness, no fear.)

Apply. How could you help God to restore the world?

Pray. “God, thank You for making a good world. Help us see Your goodness today.”

TUESDAY — Why the World Feels Hard

Think. Read Genesis 3:15. Explain simply that sin brought fighting, fear, and sadness into the world.

Reflect. Ask: “What is one hard thing you faced today?”

Apply. As a family, choose one way for each of you to show kindness where the world feels unkind.

Pray. “Jesus, help us to live like you when life feels hard. Make our hearts strong in You.”

WEDNESDAY — Tears in the Bible

Think. Tell the story of Ezra 3. Some people were happy, some cried, because things weren’t the same yet.

Reflect. Ask: “When did you feel happy or sad today?”

Apply. God sees every tear and promises to one day wipe them all away.

Pray. “Lord, thank you for seeing my tears. Help me to trust you when I cry.”

THURSDAY — Jesus Came to Help Us

Think. Read Luke 2:11. Explain: Jesus came because God loves us and wants to fix what sin broke.

Reflect. Ask: “To whom could you be loving today?”

Apply. Because Jesus loves you, who could you be loving toward?

Pray. “Jesus, thank You for loving us. Help me today to love someone else.”

FRIDAY — God Will Make Everything New

Think. Read Revelation 21:4: “God will wipe away every tear.”

Reflect. Ask: “What tear do you want God to wipe away someday?”

Apply. Whose tears could you dry?

Pray. “God, we can’t wait for the day when You make everything new.”