

The New Humanity

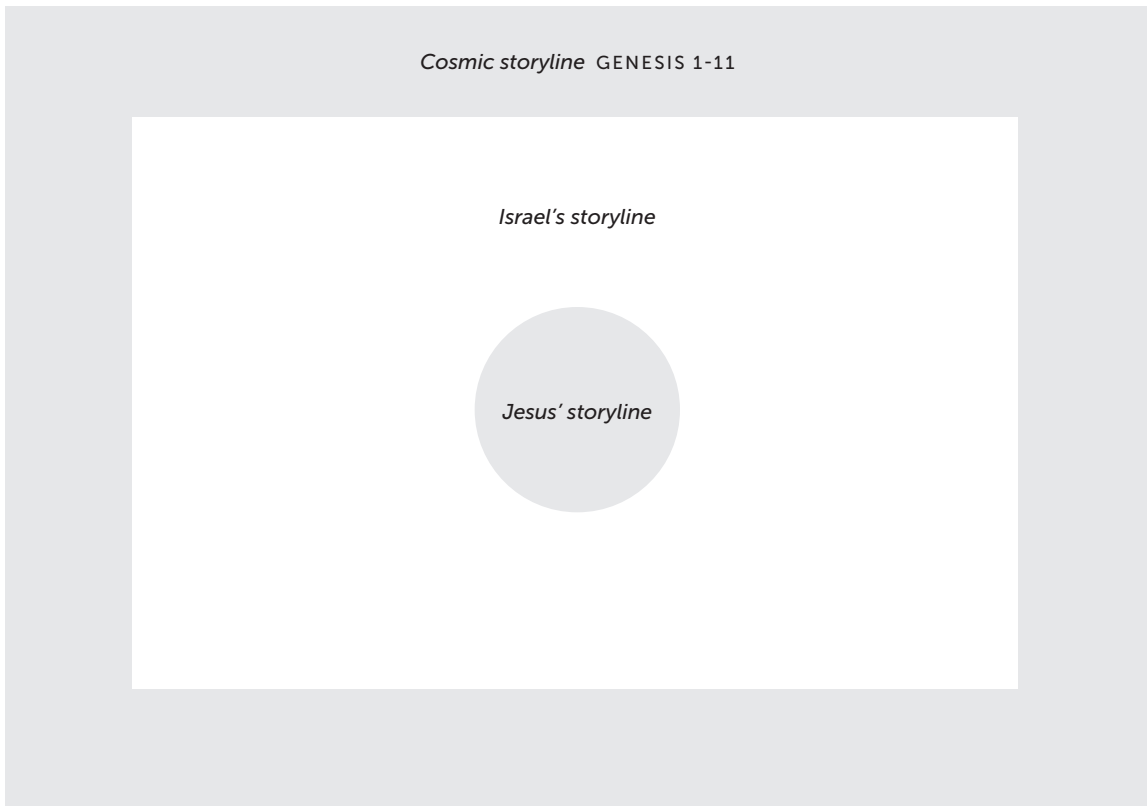
EPISODE 7

Throughout this series we've been exploring how spiritual beings fit into the storyline of the Bible and the mission and identity of Jesus. In this final study, we will see how the story of Jesus fulfills the story of all humanity as presented in Genesis 1-3 in particular. In his death and resurrection, Jesus opens up the way for a "new humanity" that is both human and spiritual.

SECTION 7.1

How the Biblical Story Works

When we turn to the four Gospel accounts of Jesus in the New Testament, we see him presented as the one in whom the entire biblical story reaches its climactic goal. The story of God's covenant promises to Israel's ancestors (Abraham, Moses, and David) is taken up by Jesus as he announces the arrival of God's kingdom. But his mission to Israel fits within an even larger drama, namely the cosmic rebellion of human and spiritual beings that is narrated in Genesis 1-11. The narratives about Jesus assume the reader will understand his story within both of these larger plotlines.



The Cosmic Storyline

God's purpose in Genesis 1-2

1. God's purpose is to partner with humanity as his image-bearing representatives, so they can rule over creation on his behalf.

*Then God said, "Let us make human in our **image**, according to our **likeness**; and **let them rule** over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the sky and over the cattle and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth."*

*God created human in his image, in the **image of God** He created him; **male and female** He created them.*

*God blessed them; and God said to them, "**Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth, and subdue it; and rule** over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the sky and over every living thing that moves on the earth."*

GENESIS 1:26-28

2. God elevates the humans from the dirt to the realm of the divine throne by placing them in the royal mountain temple called "Eden" (Hebrew for "delight").

*Then Yahweh God formed human of dust from the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and human became a living being. Yahweh God planted a garden toward the east, in Eden; and **there He placed the human** whom He had formed. Out of the ground Yahweh God caused to grow every tree that is pleasing to the sight and good for food, and also the tree of life*

in the middle of the garden, and the tree of the knowledge of good and bad.

*Then Yahweh **God took the human and put him into the garden of Eden** to cultivate it and keep it.*

GENESIS 2:7-9, 15

3. The tree of life is introduced to the reader by noting its presence in the middle of the garden. This is a clue to its significance, and the author assumes that the reader will grasp the contextual clues that point to the temple-symbolism of the garden (see the study notes for Episode 1: "Introduction to Spiritual Beings").
4. The geography of Genesis 2 maps precisely onto the symbolic geography of the world in the Hebrew Bible.

THE DRY LAND	EDEN	THE GARDEN IN EDEN	THE TREE OF LIFE IN THE MIDDLE
THE PROMISED LAND	JERUSALEM AND THE TEMPLE MOUNT	THE HOLY PLACE	THE HOLY OF HOLIES

5. This helps us understand the meaning of the "tree of life in the middle of the garden." Humans are commissioned to rule and tend the garden on God's behalf and to "fill the land" (Gen. 1:26-28) with its spreading beauty. And to do so, God gives them access to the tree of life, that is, immortal life that transcends their 'dirty' origins as mortal creatures. When humans live

in the immediate presence of the Creator, their mortal origins are transcended and they are transformed into something more and greater.

“[The tree of life] represents life that is beyond the original life that God breathed into human. The first human by nature is susceptible to death.... Nevertheless, continued eating from the tree could renew life and prevent death. Apart from disobedience to God’s command, mortals had access to this tree... The tree of life allows humanity to transcend its mortality, the state in which it was created on the sixth day, so it can move to a higher dimension... to eternal life and immortality. As one partakes of this... fruit by faith, one participates in this eternal life. This highest potency of life was available in the garden and becomes once again available to us as we reenter the temple-garden through the second Adam... and look forward to the resurrection of our bodies.” BRUCE WALTKE, “OLD TESTAMENT THEOLOGY”, 257.

6. Genesis 1-2 depicts God as offering mortal humanity the chance to rise above their mortal origins in the dirt so they can become God’s eternal partners in ruling the world together. This is why the poet of Psalm 8 is so blown away by God’s generosity—because this grand calling is so incongruent with human’s humble origins. (see Psalm 8).
 - a. This poem is reflecting on the remarkable calling that God has placed upon humans in Genesis 1-2. It seems ridiculous when the frail and mortal nature of humanity is compared with the honor of the heavenly beings and their exalted status.
 - b. Note also that the glory and majesty that God gives to humans is precisely the majesty that characterizes God himself in the opening and closing lines of the poem.
7. Humans are given a two-part command that will guide their participation in God’s commission.
 - a. Notice that God’s first command is to enjoy the garden and eat from all of the trees. What a great command to receive! “All of the trees” includes the tree of life mentioned in verse 9. This leads to the conclusion that humanity’s access to all the trees of the garden, including the tree of life, is not conditional. They are given as a gift. But continued access to this gift comes with a warning.
 - b. The second part of the command regarding the tree of knowing good and bad is not a rule that must be followed in order to win access to the tree of life. It’s just the opposite. The gift of eternal life is freely given so that the humans can rule with God forever. God’s warning about the tree of knowing good and bad is just that, a warning. If they eat from that tree, it will signify a lack of trust in God’s generosity, as well as direct rebellion against their Creator’s command. Without God’s wisdom, humanity’s “knowing of good and bad” will be short-sighted,

O Yahweh, our Lord,
How **majestic** is Your name in all the earth,

You have displayed Your splendor above the heavens!
From the mouth of infants and nursing babes
You have established strength
Because of Your adversaries,
To make the enemy and the revengeful cease.
When I consider Your heavens,
the work of Your fingers,
The moon and the stars,
which You have ordained;
What is human that You take thought of him,
And the son of humanity that You care for him?

You have made him a little lower than the spiritual beings,
Yet You crown him with **glory and majesty!**
You make him to rule over the works of Your hands;
You have put all things under his feet,
All sheep and oxen,
And also the beasts of the field,
The birds of the heavens and the fish of the sea,
Whatever passes through the paths of the seas.

O Yahweh, our Lord,
How majestic is Your name in all the earth!

PSALM 8

*Yahweh God commanded the man, saying,
“From any tree of the garden you may eat
freely; but from the tree of the knowledge of
good and bad you shall not eat, for in the day
that you eat from it you will surely die.”*

GENESIS 2:16-17

prone to distortion, and easily corrupted. God does not want that kind of corruption to ruin Eden, where heaven and earth are one. So he warns them that such a rebellion will result in losing access to the tree of life—that is, it will lead to exile and death.

8. When human is deceived by a spiritual being, God informs the humans that their loss of access to eternal life will result in exile and death.

Then to the human He said, "Because you have listened to the voice of your wife, and have eaten from the tree about which I commanded you, saying, 'You shall not eat from it';

Cursed is the ground because of you; In toil you will eat of it All the days of your life.

Both thorns and thistles it shall grow for you;

And you will eat the plants of the field; By the sweat of your face You will eat bread,

**Till you return to the ground,
Because from it you were taken;
For you are dust,
And to dust you shall return."**

GENESIS 3:17-19

- a. Notice that humanity's return to the dust is a return to their mortal origins in the dirt. This is not a demotion of a "perfect" humanity. Rather, this consequence represents a loss of the destiny that God wanted for the humans. Eternal life was a calling that humanity forfeited.

9. God decides that eternal life would be terrible for a humanity that has chosen to **take** its own knowing of good and bad. And so, in an act of severe mercy, God exiles humans from the garden, so that the gift of eternal life remains out of their reach.

*Then Yahweh God said, "Behold, the man has become like one of Us, knowing good and bad; and now, **he might stretch out his hand, and take also from the tree of life, and eat, and live forever**"—therefore the Lord God sent him out from the garden of Eden, to work the ground from which he was taken. And He drove the man out; and at the east of the garden of Eden He stationed the cherubim and the flaming sword which turned every direction to guard the way to the tree of life.*

GENESIS 3:22-24

Conclusions regarding the cosmic storyline of Genesis 1-3

1. God made humanity as his partners, to be his representatives who rule over creation on his behalf.
2. While humans are mortal dirt-creatures, God invites them into his own divine presence and gives them the opportunity to transcend their mortal origins. Eternal existence is not an inherent property of human nature in Genesis 1-2. Rather, mortal humans are given the gift of eternal life and are warned about the kind of behavior that will ruin the gift.
3. When the humans foolishly join the spiritual rebel in Genesis 3 and take their own knowledge of good and bad, they both rebel against God and also take a cheap substitute for the tree of life: they would rather have their own wisdom than God's gift.
4. In an act of severe mercy, God exiles the humans so that they do not live eternally in their corrupted state. They are sent away from the garden to the realm of the dirt, where they return to the dust from which they came.
5. The plot conflict introduced in Genesis 3 governs the entire narrative of the Hebrew Scriptures: God's mission is to restore humanity to their lost calling, to reinstall them as his image-bearing partners who can rule the world in the divine power of immortal life and love.
6. The solution is seen in God's purpose to raise up a "seed" from the woman (Genesis 3:15) who will both overcome spiritual evil at its source (to strike

the head of the snake) while also dealing with the horrific consequences of human and spiritual evil (to be struck by the snake). In other words, what we need is a new kind of human who will confront evil in God's good world and overcome it in a surprising and paradoxical way.

SECTION 7.3

The Israel Storyline

Throughout the Hebrew Scriptures, we are introduced to a whole lineup of heroes and heroines who, for brief moments, are presented as potential candidates for the promised seed of Genesis 3:15. Each narrative character steps onto the stage with great promise and hope, only to fail and leave their story as an image, a pointer to the anticipated "seed of the woman" who will fulfill the promise.

1. Noah in Genesis 5-9.

- a. Noah is introduced as a character who will offer comfort to all humanity after the debacle of Genesis 3-4.
- b. And yet Noah replays the failure of Adam and Eve in another garden whose fruit leads to his nakedness and shame (see Genesis 9:20-24).

And he called his name Noah, saying, "This one will give us comfort from our work and from the toil of our hands arising from the ground which the Lord has cursed."

GENESIS 5:29

2. Abraham in Genesis 12-25.

- a. Abraham is introduced as one who God will use to restore the blessing of Eden to all the nations.
- b. Yet Abraham twice betrays his wife by endangering her to save his own life (Genesis 12:10-20 and ch. 20). Then he and Sarah oppress an Egyptian slave and exile her and her son to die in the wilderness (Genesis 16 and 21).

*"And I will make you a great nation,
And I will bless you,
And make your name great;
And so you shall be a blessing;
And I will bless those who bless you,
And the one who curses you I will curse.
And in you all the families of the earth will be blessed."*

GENESIS 12:2-3

3. Joseph in Genesis 37-50.

- a. Joseph is presented as the beloved son who is rejected and persecuted by his brothers but exalted by God from the pit to rule over the nations.
- b. Joseph's dreams in Genesis 37 hint back to humanity's lost calling to rule over heaven and earth as God's partners.
- c. Joseph is eventually elevated to become second-in-command over the nations, ruling at Pharaoh's right hand.

*Now he had still another dream, and related it to his brothers, and said, "Look, I have had still another dream; and behold, **the sun and the moon and eleven stars were bowing down to me.**"*

GENESIS 37:9

*Then Pharaoh said to his servants, "Can we find a man like this, **in whom is the spirit of God?**" So Pharaoh said to Joseph, "Since God has informed you of all this, there is no one so **discerning and wise** as you are. **You shall be over my house**, and according to your command all my people shall do homage; **only in the throne I will be greater than you.**" Pharaoh said to Joseph, "See, **I have set you over all***

the land of Egypt.**" Then Pharaoh took off his signet ring from his hand and put it on Joseph's hand, and clothed him in garments of fine linen and put the gold necklace around his neck. He had him ride in his second chariot; and they proclaimed before him, "Bow the knee!" And **he set him over all the land of Egypt.

GENESIS 41:38-43

d. Yet Joseph eventually dies in Egypt, hoping for the future Exodus from their exile and the return to the land of God's promise.

4. Moses in Exodus 2–Deuteronomy 34.

a. Moses is presented as a royal priest who confronts human and spiritual evil among the nations (represented by Egypt and its gods, see Exodus 12:12). He alone is invited to ascend to the high place of Sinai where heaven and earth meet, and he is transformed for a brief moment into a new mode of human existence.

It came about when Moses was coming down from Mount Sinai (and the two tablets of the testimony were in Moses' hand as he was coming down from the mountain), that Moses did not know that the skin of his face shone because of his speaking with Him.

b. The high point of Moses' career as Israel's leader came when he offered his own life for Israel's sins so that God's covenant could be maintained with the people.

EXODUS 34:29

*On the next day Moses said to the people, "You yourselves have committed a great sin; and now I am going up to Yahweh, **perhaps I can make atonement for your sin.**" Then Moses returned to Yahweh, and said, "Alas, this people has committed a great sin, and they have made a god of gold for themselves. But now, **if You will, forgive their sin—and if not, please blot me out from Your book which You have written!**"*

c. Yet Moses consistently rebels against God's purpose, from the first moments of his commission (see Exodus 4:10-17) to the wilderness wandering when he dishonors God in the eyes of the people (Numbers 20:8-13).

EXODUS 32:30-32

5. David in 1 Samuel 16–1 Kings 2.

a. David is presented as the royal seed of Israel who is used by God to reunify the family of Abraham so that it can become God's instrument of blessing to the nations and overcome the forces of evil in the world.

*Once You spoke in vision to Your godly ones,
And said, "I have given help to one who is mighty;
I have exalted one chosen from the people.
I have found **David My servant;**
With My holy oil I have **anointed him,**
With whom My hand will be established;
My arm also will strengthen him.
The enemy will not deceive him,
Nor the son of wickedness afflict him.
But I shall crush his adversaries before him,
And strike those who hate him.
My faithfulness and My loyal love will be with him,
And in My name his horn will be exalted.
**I shall also set his hand on the sea
And his right hand on the rivers.**
He will cry to Me, 'You are my Father,
My God, and the rock of my salvation.'
**I also shall make him My firstborn,
The highest of the kings of the earth.**
My lovingkindness I will keep for him forever,
And My covenant shall be confirmed to him.
**So I will establish his seed forever
And his throne as the days of heaven.**"*

b. This poem is reflecting back on God's promise to David in 2 Samuel 7 and linking it to the cosmic storyline of Genesis 1-3. God called David to be that new human who would be exalted as God's human partner to rule the nations and subdue the chaos and evil among the nations. Like humanity in Genesis 1-2, David is the latecomer who was elevated as the firstborn (he was the eighth son of his father! See 1 Samuel 16).

c. In Psalm 89:29 we see humanity's lost calling reappear: Eternal life for the promised line of God's human partners, through whom the divine rule will be extended over all creation.

PSALM 89:19-29

d. For related statements of this hope connected to David and his line, see 2 Samuel 7, Psalms 2, 72, and especially 110.

Yahweh says to my Lord:

"Sit at My right hand

Until I make Your enemies a footstool for Your feet."

*Yahweh will **stretch forth Your strong scepter from Zion,** saying,*

"Rule in the midst of Your enemies."

Your people will volunteer freely in the day of Your power;

In holy array, from the womb of the dawn,

Your youth are to You as the dew.

The Lord has sworn and will not change His mind,

"You are a priest forever

According to the order of Melchizedek."

PSALM 110:1-2

- i. Here David is portrayed as speaking of another master whom Yahweh will elevate to sit beside the divine throne and rule over the nations from Jerusalem.
 - ii. Notice that this ruler is also a priest, which was not true of any of David's sons who ruled in Jerusalem. Rather, this poem anticipates that the future "seed of David" will be both a king and a priest, like Adam and Eve who ruled as the royal priests in Eden.
- e. Yet David replays the sin of Adam and Eve and Cain (Genesis 3-4) and the sons of God (Genesis 6).

DAVID IN 2 SAMUEL 11 AND 12	ADAM, EVE, AND CAIN IN GENESIS 2-4	THE SONS OF GOD IN GENESIS 6:1-2
<p>2 SAMUEL 11:2-4 <i>Now when evening came David arose from his bed and walked around on the roof of the king's house, and from the roof he saw (ראה) a woman (אשה) bathing; and the woman was very good of appearance (מראה טובת). So David sent and inquired about the woman. And one said, "Is this not Bathsheba, the daughter of Eliam, the wife of Uriah the Hittite?" David sent messengers and took (לקח) her, and when she came to him, he lay with her; and when she had purified herself from her uncleanness, she returned to her house.</i></p> <p>2 SAMUEL 12:9 <i>Why have you despised the word of Yahweh by doing evil in His eyes? You have struck down Uriah the Hittite with the sword, have taken his wife to be your wife, and have murdered (הרג) him with the sword of the sons of Ammon.</i></p>	<p>GENESIS 2:9 <i>And Yahweh caused to sprout from the ground every tree that was desirable of sight (מראה) and good (טוב) for eating...</i></p> <p>GENESIS 3:6 <i>When the woman (אשה) saw (ראה) that the tree was good (טוב) for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was desirable to make one wise, she took (לקח) from its fruit and ate; and she gave also to her husband with her, and he ate.</i></p> <p>GENESIS 4:6-8 <i>Then the Lord said to Cain, "Why are you hot with anger? And why has your countenance fallen? If you do well, will not your countenance be lifted up? And if you do not do well, sin is crouching at the door; and its desire is for you, but you must master it." Cain told Abel his brother. And it came about when they were in the field, that Cain rose up against Abel his brother and murdered (הרג) him.</i></p>	<p>GENESIS 6:1-2 <i>Now it came about, when men began to multiply on the face of the land, and daughters were born to them, and the sons of God saw (ראה) that the daughters of men were good (טוב); and they took (לקח) women (אשה) for themselves, whomever they chose.</i></p> <p><i>And the land was corrupted in the eyes of Yahweh, and the land was filled with violence.</i></p>

- f. Through the repetition of key vocabulary, the sin of David is set in comparison with the rebellion stories in Genesis 3-6. Just as humanity forfeited its access to the tree of life and partnership with God in ruling the world, so now David loses his chance to embody God's rule over the nations. Just as the sons of God violated the boundary between heaven and earth, so also David forfeits his chance to become the promised seed that would rule over heaven and earth.

Conclusions regarding Israel's story.

1. All of the narrative characters are presented as images of the anticipated “seed of the woman” promised in Genesis 3:15. In very different ways, they all replay the sins of their ancestors and forfeit the calling God has placed on Israel to mediate God's Eden-blessing to all the nations.
2. Israel's exile from the promised land, which happens in two waves (2 Kings 17 and 24-25), replays the exile of Adam and Eve from the garden (Genesis 3:22-24).
3. These portraits of humans at their best, in the figures of Noah, Abraham, Joseph, Moses, and David, stand in the Hebrew Scriptures as anticipatory images of the one who is to come. One book in the Hebrew Bible specifically picks up all these images and combines them into one complex mosaic, namely the “son of man” figure in Daniel chapter 7.

SECTION 7.4

Daniel 7: The Israel Story and the Cosmic Story Come Together

1. Check out The Bible Project video on “The Son of Man” for a summary of these ideas, and our “Son of Man” podcast series for an in-depth exploration of this biblical theme.
2. In Daniel chs. 1-6, we are introduced to the line of David (Daniel 1:3, “the seed of the kingdom”) that is taken into exile in Babylon.
3. Throughout Daniel 1-6, the line of David is faced with a test of allegiance to Yahweh (the famous stories of the fiery furnace and the lion's den). Daniel and his companions are all threatened with death to give allegiance to the kings of Babylon and Persia, and they refuse. This leads to their “death” in Daniel chs. 3 and 6, but God intervenes to redeem them from death. After this vindication, Daniel and the friends are elevated to rule over the empire alongside the king (sounds like Joseph!).
4. These narratives in Daniel 1-6 are combined and replayed in a dream Daniel has in chapter 7, which takes the “royal seed” of Daniel and the friends and combines them with all the narrative images that we explored earlier. And the combined portrait is astounding!
5. Instead of a snake, we find a horde of mutant beasts crawling out of a dark, chaotic sea to wreak violence on the earth (Daniel 7:1-8). But all of a sudden, the Creator takes his heavenly throne and brings divine justice upon the beast and its evil (Daniel 7:9-12). Then comes the climax of the dream.

*“I kept looking in the night visions,
And behold, with the clouds of heaven
One like a son of man was coming,
And he came up to the Ancient of Days
And was presented before him.
And **to him was given dominion,**
Glory and a kingdom,*

*That all the peoples, nations and men of every language
Might serve him.
His dominion is an everlasting dominion
Which will not pass away;
And his kingdom is one
Which will not be destroyed.*

DANIEL 7:13-14

- a. Here we see the original human calling restored to a figure who will rule alongside God as an eternal partner. The everlasting rule of the “**son of man**” will take place after the beastly evil of human empires has been done away with, so that only the rule of God and the **son of man** remains.
- b. Notice that in the stories of Daniel 3 and 6, the “seed of David” is brought through persecution and death (the furnace in ch. 3 and the lion’s den in ch. 6) and then elevated to rule beside the king. So here in Daniel 7, the **son of man** is brought up from the realm of the violent beasts to rule over all creation.
- c. This is a culminating image that summarizes the messianic hope of the Hebrew Scriptures. Notice that the heavenly beings play a key role in Daniel’s dream. They are surrounding the divine throne (Daniel 7:10), but the son of man is elevated to rule over them as well. We are back to our foundational images from Genesis 1-2, Psalm 8, and Psalm 110: Humanity was called by God to transcend their mortal origins and discover their elevated purpose to rule over heaven and earth, which is only possible if they accept God’s gift of eternal life.
- d. Daniel 7 is a poetic, dream-image of the fulfillment of God’s promise in Genesis 3:15, an eternal human who is exalted to rule as a divine-human partner over all creation.

SECTION 7.5

Jesus’ Story in the Gospels

The four Gospel accounts in the New Testament all portray Jesus, in their different ways, as the one in whom all of these promises find fulfillment. This is why the stories emphasize Jesus’ conflict with spiritual evil from the very start.

Jesus’ divine-human identity

1. After the litany of heroic failures from the Hebrew Bible, the Gospels present God’s surprising solution to the cosmic crisis and the failure of Israel. The Creator God who called Israel into being will himself become human in the person of the divine Son. Jesus will be the humanity that we could not be for ourselves, and he will be “Israel” in order to fulfill its calling to the nations.
2. Jesus’ Holy-Spirit conception is presented as the way that the Creator God enters into and becomes one with his human creations.

The angel answered and said to [Mary], “The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; and for that reason the holy One to be born shall be called the Son of God.”

LUKE 1:35

Jesus as the ultimate divine-human partner

1. Recall how the plot tension generated by Genesis 1-3 created the need for a human who can not only partner with God but also transcend death itself. The Gospels portray Jesus as the one in whom Yahweh the God of Israel is coming among his people to accomplish this very task.
2. Notice how Mark's Gospel begins with an extended quotation of Isaiah 40:1-3 (combined with wording from Malachi 3:1 and Exodus 23:20), which summons a prophetic herald to announce the arrival of Yahweh.
3. Mark clearly identifies John the Baptist as the heralding voice, who will prepare Israel for Yahweh's arrival.
4. Notice the narrative logic: If John is the herald for Yahweh, then Jesus' arrival is equated with the arrival of Yahweh.

*The beginning of the good news of Jesus Messiah, the Son of God.
As it is written in Isaiah the prophet:
"Behold, I send My messenger ahead of You,
Who will prepare Your way;
The voice of one crying in the wilderness,
'Make ready the way of the Lord,
Make His paths straight.' "*
*John the Baptist appeared in the wilderness
preaching a baptism of repentance for the
forgiveness of sins.*

*In those days Jesus came from Nazareth
in Galilee and was baptized by John in the
Jordan. Immediately coming up out of the
water, He saw the heavens opening, and the
Spirit like a dove descending upon Him; and
a voice came out of the heavens: "You are My
beloved Son, in You I am well-pleased."*

MARK 1:1-4, 9-11

Jesus' initial victory over the satan

1. Three of the four Gospel accounts locate the beginning of Jesus' kingdom announcement in his baptism and subsequent testing in the wilderness. Luke's account is an excellent example.

Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit, returned from the Jordan and was led around by the Spirit in the wilderness, for forty days, being tempted by the devil. And He ate nothing during those days, and when they had ended, He became hungry. And the devil said to Him, "If You are the Son of God, tell this stone to become bread." And Jesus answered him, "It is written, 'Man shall not live on bread alone.'

And he led Him up and showed Him all the kingdoms of the world in a moment of time. And the devil said to Him, "I will give You all this domain and its glory; for it has been handed over to me, and I give it to whomever I wish. Therefore if You

worship before me, it shall all be Yours." *Jesus answered him, "It is written, 'You shall worship the Lord your God and serve Him only.' "*

And he led Him to Jerusalem and had Him stand on the pinnacle of the temple, and said to Him, "If You are the Son of God, throw Yourself down from here; for it is written, 'He will command His angels concerning You to guard You,' and, 'On their hands they will bear You up, So that You will not strike Your foot against a stone.' " **And Jesus answered and said to him, "It is said, 'You shall not put the Lord your God to the test.' "** **When the devil had finished every test, he left Him until an opportune time.**

LUKE 4:1-13

2. Jesus' test is presented here as the climactic next step of both the cosmic storyline of Genesis 1-3 and also of the Israel storyline of Genesis 12 onward.

JESUS' STORY	ISRAEL'S STORY
<i>40 days in the wilderness</i>	<i>40 years in the wilderness</i>
<i>The wilderness is where Jesus obeys the will of the father and does not put him to the test.</i>	<i>The wilderness is where Israel tested God and disobeyed the will of Yahweh.</i>

In Jesus' first and last tests, he responds to the satan by quoting from Deuteronomy 8:3 and 6:16, passages that recall Israel's failure in the wilderness.

- a. The point: Jesus is reversing the failure of Israel in the wilderness and so proves himself as Israel's true royal-priestly representative who can fulfill the nations' calling before God.

JESUS' STORY	HUMANITY'S STORY
<i>The divine Son is tested in a wilderness.</i>	<i>Adam, the first "son of God" (see Genesis 5:1-3) is tested in a garden.</i>
<i>The satan's test that Jesus could take power over the nations happens "on high" (Luke 4:5).</i>	<i>Adam and Eve were tested by the snake in Eden, the high-garden-temple.</i>
<i>The satan's test is about how Jesus will become the ruler of the world.</i>	<i>Humanity's test is about how they will become co-rulers with God in Eden (Genesis 1:26-28).</i>

- 3. In each case, Jesus resists the temptation to grab political power on his own terms, and he deprives himself of food and honor, trusting that his Father will deliver him. In this way, he overcomes the testing of the satan, and submits himself to the road of hardship that lays ahead.

*Jesus was going throughout all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues and **proclaiming the good news of the kingdom, and healing every kind of disease and every kind of sickness among the people.** The news about Him spread throughout all Syria; and they brought to Him all who were ill, those suffering with various **diseases and pains, demoniacs, epileptics, paralytics; and He healed them.***

MATTHEW 4:23-24

*Then they brought him **a demonized man who was blind and mute, and Jesus healed him, so that he could both talk and see.** All the people were astonished and said, "Could this be the Son of David?" But when the Pharisees heard this, they said, "It is only by Beelzebul, the prince of demons, that this fellow drives out demons." Jesus knew their thoughts and said to them, "Every kingdom divided against itself will be ruined, and every city or household divided against itself will not stand. If Satan drives out Satan, he is divided against himself. How then can his kingdom stand? And if I drive out demons by Beelzebul, by whom do your people drive them out? So then, they will be your judges. **But if it is by the Spirit of God that I drive out demons, then the kingdom of God has come upon you. Or again, how can anyone enter a strong man's house and carry off his possessions unless he first ties up the strong man? Then he can plunder his house.**"*

MATTHEW 12:22-29

Jesus' mission to inaugurate God's heavenly kingdom

- 1. Jesus went about announcing the arrival of God's kingdom, and he brought God's reign to bear on the lives of Israelites and non-Israelites living around Galilee. Notice Matthew's description.
 - a. Notice how Matthew equates Jesus' announcement of the kingdom of God with two kinds of activity, teaching/announcing as well as healing. Notice also that these healings are for people who are sick along with those who suffer what modern western cultures would call "mental illness," a sickness of the brain.
 - b. In Jesus' view of the world, sickness, mental illness, even death itself, is a sign of our world's captivity to the powers of spiritual evil. His announcement of God's kingdom manifests itself in ministries of healing, generosity, hospitality, and welcome to the outsider.
- 2. Jesus' ministry of healing is portrayed as an act of liberation from humanity's captivity to spiritual evil.

*And He was teaching in one of the synagogues on the Sabbath. And there was a **woman who for eighteen years had had a sickness caused by a spirit; and she was bent over, and could not straighten up at all.** When Jesus saw her, He called her over and said to her, "Woman, you are freed from your sickness." And He laid His hands on her; and immediately she was made erect again and began glorifying God.*

*"And this woman, a daughter of Abraham as she is, **whom the satan has bound for eighteen long years, should she not have been released from this bond on the Sabbath day?**"*

LUKE 13:10-13, 16

- a. Notice that in both of these stories, Jesus describes his ministry of healing in the language of confrontation with and liberation from spiritual powers of evil.
 - b. Jesus viewed his healings as a kind of offensive battle against the spiritual forces of death and evil.
3. Jesus invited his followers to view themselves as participants in the arrival of God's kingdom. This is why his famous Sermon the Mount (Matthew 5-7) has at its center the prayer Jesus invited his followers to say every day.
 4. Jesus presented God's kingdom as arriving, even invading earth, in and through his own mission. He invites his followers to pray that God's will and purpose be more and more manifest on earth. Within the context of the Sermon on the Mount, this means that God's kingdom displays itself **through the behavior of Jesus' followers as they imitate his own mission and way of life.**

*'Our Father who is in heaven,
 May be Your name be recognized as holy.
 'Your kingdom come.
 Your will be done,
 On earth as it is in heaven.
 'Give us this day our daily bread.
 'And forgive us our debts,
 as we also have forgiven our debtors.
 'And do not lead us into the test,
 but deliver us from the evil one*

MATTHEW 6:9-13

Jesus brings God's kingdom to Jerusalem

1. Jesus intentionally timed his kingdom of God movement to come to its climax in Jerusalem during Passover. Every moment in this part of Jesus story was pre-planned and strategically executed.
2. He made a public challenge to Israel's leaders who governed the Jerusalem temple. His announcement and symbolic destruction of the temple was a prophetic warning that their days as Israel's leaders were numbered (see the sequence of events in Mark 11).
3. Jesus provoked the temple leaders, knowing that they would arrest him as a troublemaker and rebel. This was his plan. His words and actions at his messianic Passover meal make clear that he meant to offer his own life on behalf of rebellious Israel (and therefore, for all humanity). See the sequence of events in Mark 14:22-31.
4. In the final hours before his arrest, Jesus went to a garden for one last test. In Gethsemane we watch Jesus wrestle with his calling once again, just as he did in the wilderness.
 - a. Notice that Jesus' prayer matches the Lord's Prayer that he taught his disciples in the Sermon on the Mount. This helps us see that this prayer was not simply an item of instruction for Jesus. Rather, in the Lord's Prayer he shares with us the very words that sustained him in his effort to bring God's kingdom into the world at the cost of his own life and well-being.
 - b. Notice also that Jesus calls himself **the son of man**, that is, the figure from Daniel chapter 7 and Psalm 8. In this moment of vulnerability and weakness, Jesus is paradoxically at his most influential and royal: He is the truly human one exercising God's rule over the world—by giving up his life.

Then Jesus came with them to a place called Gethsemane, and said to His disciples, "Sit here while I go over there and pray." And He took with Him Peter and the two sons of Zebedee, and began to be grieved and distressed. Then He said to them, "My soul is deeply grieved, to the point of death; remain here and keep watch with Me." And He went a little beyond them, and fell on His face and prayed, saying, "My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from Me; yet not as I will, but as You will."

*Then He came to the disciples and said to them, "Are you still sleeping and resting? Behold, the hour is at hand and **the son of man is being betrayed into the hands of sinners.** Get up, let us be going; behold, the one who betrays Me is at hand!"*

MATTHEW 26:36-39, 45-46

5. In Luke's version of Jesus' arrest, Jesus identifies the Jerusalem authorities as agents of spiritual evil.
6. Jesus described his coming death and resurrection as his victory over the powers of darkness.

And Jesus answered them, saying, "The hour has come for the son of man to be glorified. Truly, truly, I say to you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains alone; but if it dies, it bears much fruit.

"Now My soul has become troubled; and what shall I say, 'Father, save Me from this

hour'? But for this purpose I came to this hour.

"Now judgment is upon this world; now the ruler of this world will be cast out.

And I, if I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all men to Myself."

JOHN 12:23-24, 27, 31-32

Then Jesus said to the chief priests and officers of the temple and elders who had come against Him, "Have you come out with swords and clubs as you would against a robber? While I was with you daily in the temple, you did not lay hands on Me; but this hour and the power of darkness are yours."

LUKE 22:52-53

- a. Jesus is portraying his coming death as precisely the way that he will overcome the powers of evil who hold the power of death itself. Only through experiencing death on behalf of rebellious Israel and humanity can Jesus become the New Humanity.
7. Jesus' resurrection is portrayed as his vindication from death and the way that he receives divine authority over all of heaven and earth.
 - a. Jesus is here claiming to be the vindicated son of man, the figure from Daniel 7:12-14 and Psalm 8, who is installed as the divine-human ruler over all of heaven and earth.
 - b. The risen Jesus is the new humanity!

And Jesus came up and spoke to them, saying, "All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age."

MATTHEW 28:18-20

Jesus as the New Humanity in Paul the Apostle's Letters

1. Paul regularly refers to Jesus as "the image of God" from Genesis 1 and to followers of Jesus as the "new humanity" who are being transformed to become like the risen Jesus.

For He rescued us from the domain of darkness, and transferred us to the kingdom of His beloved Son, in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.

He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation. *For by Him all things were created, both in the heavens and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities—all things have been created through Him and for Him.*

COLOSSIANS 1:13-16

And having disarmed the powers and authorities, he made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them by the cross.

COLOSSIANS 2:15

Do not lie to one another, since you put aside the old humanity with its evil practices, and have put on the new humanity who is being renewed to a true knowledge according to the image of the One who created him—a renewal in which there is no distinction between Greek and Jew, circumcised and uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave and freeman, but the Messiah is all, and in all.

COLOSSIANS 3:9-11

- a. Notice that in these passages, Jesus is the truly human image of God who has defeated the spiritual powers of darkness in his death and resurrection.
- b. In Colossians 1:13-15, Paul uses the language of “firstborn” and “kingdom of the Son” (recall Psalm 89 discussed above) and the “image of God” from Genesis 1. He also draws upon the imagery of Daniel 7 in Colossians 2:15, describing Jesus’ death as his victory over the powers of evil. Here, Paul is combining the ideas of Genesis 3:15 with the gospel announcement of Jesus’ resurrection.
- c. In Colossians 3, Paul then extends Jesus’ new humanity to include those who trust in Jesus and give their allegiance to him. They will find themselves being transformed into the new kind of humanity that Jesus pioneered on our behalf.

The Resurrection of the New Humanity

1. In 1 Corinthians 15, Paul offers his most developed thoughts on the nature of Jesus’ resurrection and how it provides a solution to the problems created in Genesis 1-3.
 - a. Paul presents Jesus as a new Adam—and remember, in Hebrew the word *adam* is the word for “humanity.” It was humanity’s rebellion, leading to death, that prevented humans from being God’s eternal partners who could rule over heaven and earth.
 - b. This is precisely the problem that the resurrection of Jesus solves. It opens up the way for a new humanity that does not die to be God’s covenant partners in ruling creation. Jesus is presently the only new human who exists in this resurrected, new creation state.
 - c. Notice that Paul quotes from Psalm 8:6 in the final line above, showing that he equates Jesus with the new humanity.
2. The climax of Paul’s argument in this chapter is an exploration of the new creation humanity, whose prototype is the risen Jesus.

*But the Messiah has indeed been raised from the dead, the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep. For **since death came through a human, the resurrection of the dead comes also through a human.** For as in Adam all die, so in Messiah all will be made alive. But each in turn: Messiah, the firstfruits; then, when he comes, those who belong to him. Then the end will come, **when he hands over the kingdom to God the Father after he has destroyed all dominion, authority and power.** For he must reign until he has put all his enemies under his feet. The last enemy to be destroyed is death. For **he “has put everything under his feet.”***

1 CORINTHIANS 15:20-27

*But someone will say, “**How are the dead raised? And with what kind of body do they come?**” You fool! That which you sow does not come to life unless it dies; and that which you sow, you do not sow the body which is to be, but a bare grain, perhaps of wheat or of something else. But God gives it a body just as He wished, and to each of the seeds a body of its own. **All flesh is not the same flesh,** but there is one flesh of men, and another flesh of beasts, and another flesh of birds, and another of fish. There are also heavenly bodies and earthly bodies, but the glory of the heavenly is one, and the glory of the earthly is another. There is one glory of the sun, and another glory of the moon, and another glory of the stars; for star differs from star in glory.*

So also is the resurrection of the dead. It is sown a corruptible body, it is raised an imperishable body; it is sown in dishonor, it is raised in glory; it is sown in weakness, it is raised in power; it is sown a natural body, it is raised a spirit-empowered body. If there is a natural body, there is also a spirit-empowered body. So also it is written, “**The first man, Adam, became a living being.**” **The last Adam became a life-giving spirit.** However, the spiritual is not first, but the natural; then the spiritual. **The first human is from the earth, of dust; the second human is from heaven. As is the earthy, so also are those who are earthy; and as is the heavenly, so also are those who are heavenly. Just as we have borne the image of the earthy, we will also bear the image of the heavenly.**

1 CORINTHIANS 15:35-57

- a. This is an extremely dense paragraph, and our English vocabulary “physical” and “spiritual” are inadequate translations to help us understand the nature of what Paul is trying to say in Greek.
 - b. Paul’s larger point is that different creatures have different kinds of bodies, so that the heavenly bodies (which, remember, are considered spiritual beings in the biblical worldview) are a kind of “body” that is similar but also different from the “bodies” of earthly creatures. This helps Paul’s larger point, that the resurrection body of Jesus is still a body, but of a different kind.
 - i. In 15:43-44, Paul contrasts a “natural (ψυχικόν, *psuchikon*) body” with a “spiritual” (πνευματικόν, *pneumatikon*) body. The problem is that in English, the contrast pair “natural” and “spiritual” sounds like a contrast between “physical/material” and “non-material/spiritual.” This has led some readers to read this paragraph, which in 15:45 describes the risen Jesus as a “life-giving Spirit,” to conclude that Paul believes that the resurrection body is non-physical, that is, a disembodied reality. This is NOT what Paul is saying.
3. Paul used the words “natural” and “spiritual” earlier in this same letter, and these parallel examples are important to understand what Paul means by these same words in chapter 15.
- a. Notice that we find the same contrast between “natural” and “spiritual” but we have lots of other additional terms that fill out the portrait of each.
 - i. “Natural” = “foolish” and “human” and “fleshly” = “jealousy and strife”
 - ii. “Spiritual” = “from God” and “wise” and “mature”
 - b. In other words, Paul’s main contrast in using the words “natural” and “spiritual” is not between “physical” and “non-physical.” In this context he’s addressing how there are some Corinthians who have turned the church into a popularity contest aimed at increasing the honor and status of celebrity leaders. This is what he calls “natural” and “fleshly,” because it leads to jealousy and strife.
 - c. For Paul, “spiritual” refers to a mode of humanity that is **empowered by God’s life-giving Spirit**, creating love, peace, and generosity in the world. These are acts that are very much physical, but they exist in a different kind of way than “mere human” behavior.
4. When we apply these conclusions to the contrast between the Genesis 1 human as “natural” and “earthy” in contrast to the risen Jesus who is “heavenly” and a “life-giving Spirit,” Paul is not saying that the resurrected Jesus is not physical. Just the opposite! He is saying that the risen Jesus exists as a **new kind of humanity**, whose origins, values, and nature are not determined by the physical constraints of creation as we currently experience it. The risen Jesus is the first prototype of a Spirit-empowered humanity whose life can be given to others through the power and presence of God’s Spirit.

*Now we have received, not the **spirit of the world**, but the Spirit who is from God, so that we may know the things freely given to us by God, which things we also speak, not in words taught by **human** wisdom, but in those taught by the Spirit, combining spiritual thoughts with spiritual words.*

*But a **natural** (ψυχικός, *psuchikos*) human does not accept the things of the Spirit of God, for they are **foolishness** to him; and he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually appraised. But he who is spiritual appraises all things, yet he himself is appraised by no one.*

For who has known the mind of the Lord, that he will instruct Him? But we have the mind of Christ.

*And I, brothers and sisters, could not speak to you as to spiritual humans, but as to humans of the **flesh**, as to infants in Christ. I gave you milk to drink, not solid food; for you were not yet able to receive it. Indeed, even now you are not yet able, for you are still **fleshly**. For since there is **jealousy** and **strife** among you, are you not **fleshly**, and are you not walking like **mere humans**?*

1 CORINTHIANS 2:12-3:3

“When Genesis 2 speaks of the creator making Adam as a living “being” (Greek Septuagint, *psyche*), this was not a secondary form of humanity, but its primary form. What humans now need is not to get away from, or back behind, such an existence, but rather to go on to the promised state of the final Adam, in which this physical body will not be abandoned, but will be given new animation by the Creator’s own Spirit. Paul does not believe in a return to the primal state, but in the redemption from the sin and death which has corrupted the primal state, in order that a way forward be found into the new creation which, though always in the mind of the creator, has never yet existed. The ‘man from heaven’ is not a being who, unsullied by the world of creation, remains in a purely non-physical state; he is the risen lord who will come from the heavenly realm (1 Cor 15:47-49). He will enable other humans, not to escape from the physical world... but to go on to bear, in the new resurrected body, the ‘image of the human from heaven.’” N.T. WRIGHT, “THE RESURRECTION OF THE SON OF GOD”, 353.

*Now I say this, brothers and sisters, that **flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; nor does the perishable inherit the imperishable. Behold, I tell you a mystery; we will not all sleep, but we will all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet; for the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised imperishable, and we will be changed. For this perishable must put on the imperishable, and this mortal must put on immortality. But when this perishable will have put on the imperishable, and this mortal will have put on immortality, then will come about the saying that is written, “Death is swallowed up in victory. O death, where is your victory? O death, where is your sting?” The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law; but thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Messiah.***

1 CORINTHIANS 15:50-57

5. With the contrast between the “new” and “old” humanity in place, Paul concludes the entire line of thought with his hope of a transformation of our mortal bodies into a new creation existence—the immortal state that humanity forfeited in Genesis 3.
 - a. In Paul’s mind, the future resurrection of the new humanity is the grand fulfillment of the storyline of Genesis 1-2.

The New Humanity and the New Creation

1. In the final book of the Bible, John the visionary depicts the new creation as a New Jerusalem-Eden-Temple, which recalls Genesis 1-2 but also carries it further into new territory.
 - a. This new creation is simultaneously a new heavens and earth (recalling Genesis 1:1), a new Jerusalem (recalling Isaiah 60 and 65), a new temple (recalling Exodus 25-31 and 35-40), and a new garden of Eden (recalling Genesis 2), all at the same time. John is combining images of the “new Eden” from all over the Hebrew Scriptures because he takes them as referring to one ultimate reality.

*Then I saw a **new heaven and a new earth**; for the first heaven and the first earth passed away, and there is no longer any sea. And I saw the holy city, **new Jerusalem**, coming down out of heaven from God, made ready as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a loud voice from the throne, saying, “Behold, **the tabernacle of God** is among men, and He will dwell among them, and they shall be His people, and God Himself will be among them,*

REVELATION 21:1-3
 - b. Notice the final line of the scene in 22:5, “and they will reign forever and ever.” This clearly recalls the original human vocation from Genesis 1:26-28, that humanity as the image of God reigns as God’s partners and children forever in creation.

*Then he showed me a **river of the water of life**, clear as crystal, coming from **the throne of God and of the Lamb**, in the middle of **its street**. On either side of the river was the tree of life, bearing twelve kinds of fruit, yielding its fruit every month; and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations. There will no longer be any curse; and the throne of God and of the Lamb will be in it, and His bond-servants will serve Him; they will see His face, and His name will be on their foreheads. And there will no longer be any night; and they will not have need of the light of a lamp nor the light of the sun, because the Lord God will illumine them; **and they will reign forever and ever.***

REVELATION 22:1-5

Once all of creation joins Jesus and the new humanity in the resurrection, God's ultimate purposes for creation will be fulfilled. This is all possible in and through the divine-human partner, who loved us and gave himself for us, so that his eternal life could become our own.

FURTHER READING

[The Unseen Realm: Recovering the Supernatural Worldview of the Bible](#)

MICHAEL HEISER

[The Genesis of Perfection: Adam and Eve in Jewish and Christian Imagination](#)

GARY A. ANDERSON

[The Last Adam: A Theology of the Obedient Life of Jesus in the Gospels](#)

BRANDON CROWE

[Surprised by Hope: Rethinking Heaven, Resurrection, and the Mission of the Church](#)

N.T. WRIGHT