

## THE STORY — Week 8

### Blessing

### Genesis 1

#### Our Rules for the Road

1. The Bible was written for me but not to me.
2. The Bible is a library with different literary genres (Narrative, Poetry & Discourse)
3. The Bible must be read in Context (Ancient, Situational & Biblical)
4. The Bible must be read with an understanding of language and words (Repeated words drive dominant themes)
5. The Bible is a unified story that leads to Jesus

#### I. The Story of Blessing - The Narrative's Flow and Resolution

1. **Genesis 1:1** Main Character – *Elohim* - God
2. **Genesis 1:2** Plot Conflict – Chaos (Dark, Lifeless, Dangerous)
3. **Genesis 1:3-25** Rising Action to the Plot – God's speech addresses the Chaos by bringing Order, Goodness & Purpose... 10 times “And God said...”
4. **Genesis 1:26-31** Plot Climax – God speaks and makes man in His Image & Blesses him.
5. **Genesis 2:1-3** Plot Resolution – God speaks and Blesses the 7th Day for Rest

- Implication: It is God's Speech/Word that produces Blessing.
- Eden, the second narrative is the place of God's Blessing, where heaven and earth meet.

#### II. The Meaning of Blessing

- Blessing in Hebrew is “*Barakh*”
- 400 times in the Old Testament.
- 88 times in Genesis
- God is the ultimate one who blesses and when he does, it bestows the ability to produce and multiply; what Genesis calls “fruitful” – full of good things.

“A blessing in the Hebrew Bible is a potent way to invoke, distribute, or celebrate the wellbeing that comes from God's favor. In the Old Testament blessings primarily invoke fertility, authority, dominion, wholeness, peace, and rest. And while these blessings might proceed from God to humans, or from humans to other humans, or even humans back to God. A blessing at its core is God's enhancement to a life of fullness.”

— Scholar Jeff Anderson

**Implication: To be blessed Biblically is to experience the overflow of good things from our communion with God.**

### III. The **Source** of Blessing - The Narrative's Functions and Ramifications

#### Genesis 1:1-2:3

Tell the reader (Israelites released from bondage in Egypt & Us):

- Who God is (The Ultimate Royalty) &
- Who we are. (God's Royal Representatives)

#### **Who Is God?**

##### 1. The Supreme being of the Cosmos - *Elohim*/God, Who Blesses

In the **context** (*Rule #3*) of an evil battle of wills among the gods of ancient Egypt, Assyria, & Babylon, who were often given **Royal Status** through the Kings & Pharaohs who wielded abusive Authority and Domination.

#### **INSTEAD**

Genesis introduces us to a **Good**, **Generous** and **All-Powerful** God/Elohim with Royal Power who **shares** His Authority & Dominion & wants to **Bless** Humanity.

Notice the **Royal Pre-formative Speech** (10 times God speaks)

7 of the 10 is "And God said... and it was so."  
(verses 3, 6, 11, 14, 20, 24, & 26)

##### 2. The Ultimate Source of Blessing

The Blessing of God has a dominant quality of **production** and **reproduction**, or **fruitfulness**.

- God made the land/earth to **produce** & reproduce - be fruitful.

**Genesis 1:11-12** "Then God said, 'Let the land **produce** vegetation: **seed**-bearing plants and trees on the land that **bear fruit** with seed in it, according to their various kinds.' The land **produced** vegetation: plants bearing **seed** according to their kinds and trees **bearing fruit** with seed in it according to their kinds. And God saw that it was **good**."

- God made the animals to produce & reproduce - be **fruitful**.

**Genesis 1:22** “**God blessed** them and said, “**Be fruitful and increase** in number and **fill...**”

- God made Humanity to produce & reproduce - be **fruitful**.

**Genesis 1:28** “**God blessed** them and said to them, “**Be fruitful and increase** in number; **fill** the earth...”

- God made the 7th Day for a rhythm of Rest for fruitfulness

**Genesis 2:3** “**God blessed the seventh day** and made it **holy**, because on it he **rested** from all the work of creating...”

- Implication: It is God’s creative Speech/Word that produces Blessing, which is to be fruitful.

### **Who are We?**

#### **The Imago Dei**

*Imago Dei* is Latin meaning the “**image of God**” and is one of the most vital and foundational beliefs within Christianity.

Out of the creation, **only mankind** (*Adam* = humanity; male & female) is said to be in God’s image. We are therefore:

#### **1. God’s Image Bearers, created and called to be:**

- Reflections
- Representatives, who are:
- Relational (to God, Nature & Others)
- Responsible- to rule with not over others
- Rested from being in His Presence

#### **2. To **be blessed** and to be a **source of blessing to others**.**

- God made the land/earth to **produce** & reproduce - be fruitful.

**Genesis 1:11** “Then God said, ‘Let the land **produce** vegetation: **seed**-bearing plants and trees on the land that **bear fruit** with seed in it, according to their various kinds.’”

- God made the animals to produce & reproduce - be fruitful.

**Genesis 1:22** “**God blessed** them and said, “**Be fruitful and increase** in number and **fill...**”

- **BUT ONLY TO MAN DOES God CALL US to be fruitful, and to rule over (STEWARD) the fruitfulness of creation.**

**Genesis 1:28** “**God blessed them and said to them, ‘Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it. Rule over...**”

**Only to humanity does God call us, personally, to rule over His fruitful creation.**

The Crescendo (climax) to our first narrative is God’s invitation and delegation for us to be co-regents (viceroys); God deputized humanity to be His **reflections** & his **representatives**; ( to rule, to be responsible, to be relational, reproductive and to rest). Mankind was created with the capacity for this “Rule” to be like God and in so doing to represent Him well and to be a **blessing**.

**Why are we here?**

3. **The Divine Partnership Theme is to extend God’s blessing (The Eden Blessing) to others.**

Only to the humans does God speak to. The animals have no choice; they will be fruitful and multiply. But to humanity, he calls us to **obey out of choice**. This will prove to be the path **we all are invited into if we want to experience and reproduce blessings.**

**The Eden Narrative - How the Blessing was lost.**

The Unified Story of Scripture (*Rule #5*) is God’s relentless pursuit of mankind for the sake of Blessing-communion with Him.

**To Noah**

**Genesis 9:1** “**Then God blessed Noah and his sons, saying to them, ‘Be fruitful and increase in number and fill the earth.’**”

**To Abram**

**Genesis 12:1-3** “**The Lord had said to Abram... ‘I will make you into a great nation, and I will bless you; I will make your name great, and you will be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you, and whoever curses you I will curse; and all peoples on earth will be blessed through you.’**”

**2 Corinthians 9:8-11** (MSG) “**God can pour on the blessings in astonishing ways so that you’re ready for anything and everything, more than just ready to do what needs to be done.... This most generous God who gives seed to the farmer that becomes bread for your meals is more than extravagant with you. He gives you something you can then**

*give away, which grows into full-formed lives, robust in God, wealthy in every way, so that you can be generous in every way, producing with us great praise to God.”*

#### **IV. The Condition of Blessing**

**Just as God’s word created Blessing in Genesis 1 and in Eden His word is the Key for us to be blessed and to be a blessing to others.**

#### **Listen to Jesus**

**John 15:7-8** *“If you remain in me and my words remain in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you. This is to my Father’s glory, that you bear much fruit, showing yourselves to be my disciples.”*

**John 13:15 & 17** *“I have set you an example that you should do as I have done for you.... Now that you know these things, you will be blessed if you do them.”*

**Matthew 7:24** *“Therefore everyone who hears these words of mine and puts them into practice is like a wise man who built his house on the rock.”*