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## #201 Interpreting Genesis, Adam and Eve, Suffering and the Fall (Replay)

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## Ask NT Wright Anything - Premier

As we dive into the new year here's a replay from the podcast archives, where Tom Wright answer listener questions on how to interpret the early chapters of Genesis, what he believes about the nature of Adam and Eve, and whether suffering and death existed before the fall... Tom also pulls out the guitar once more for a Bob-Dylan x Genesis story song. For Tom's free video course on The Lord's Prayer http://ntwrightonline/askntwright Subscribe and Rate the Ask NT Wright Anything podcast on your podcast provider! • Subscribe to the Ask NT Wright Anything podcast: https://pod.link/1441656192 • More shows, free eBook, newsletter, and sign up to ask Tom your questions: https://premierunbelievable.com • For live events: http://www.unbelievable.live • For online learning: https://www.premierunbelievable.com/training • Support us in the USA: https://www.premierinsight.org/unbelievableshow • Support us in the rest of the world: https://www.premierunbelievable.com/donate

## Transcript

Truly understanding your identity is a deeply personal journey and discovering who you are starts with knowing where you came from. This applies to us as individuals as well as collectively. Though it's popular to question the existence of a historic Adam and Eve, did they truly exist? Or were they merely archetypes? The truth is, much of our uniqueness as humans only makes sense in the light of the Genesis account of creation.

These questions and more are explored at length in a free download I believe. Welcome to this replay of Ask NT Wright Anything where we go back into the archives to bring you the best of the thought and theology of Tom Wright, answering questions submitted by you, the listener. You can find more episodes as well as many more resources for exploring faith at premierunbelievable.com and registering there will unlock access through the newsletter to updates, free bonus videos and e-books.

That's premierunbelievable.com and now for today's replay of Ask NT Wright Anything.

The Ask NT Wright Anything podcast. Well hello once more.

It's Justin Briley with you, theology and apologetics editor for premier. The person who gets the pleasure of sitting down every so often with New Testament scholar and prolific author Tom Wright to ask your questions here on the show brought to you by premier in partnership with SBCK and NT Wright online and today in episode 12 we're returning to the Old Testament with your questions to Tom on Genesis, Evolution, Adam and Eve and the Fall and Tom's going to be pulling out the guitar again for something special at the end of today's show so stick around for that. It's a song with lots of Genesis overtones and based on Bob Dylan's shelter from the storm.

Now if you'd like more episodes, updates the bonus video content or indeed want to ask a question yourself for a future programme do please register at Ask NT Wright dot com and the congratulations to all the winners of the Bible for everyone. That was a competition we were running through to the end of March. Sign copies of that book on their way to the winners including Barry in London who was delighted when I told him he was getting ahold of a copy.

Do get yourself subscribed though to the newsletter so that you're automatically entered into any future prize drawers on the podcast. Again it's Ask NT Wright dot com to do that. Right time to get into today's questions.

Welcome back to the show. It's the Ask NT Wright anything podcast with me Justin Briley and Tom Wright and we're back again with our Jaffa cakes and our fruit and our cups of tea. It's got to that point in the day where we're on to the tea and that's a rather good thing because we're going to be tackling a big old subject.

Genesis, Evolution, Admaneave, The Fall. These are the questions that I've brought together for today's podcast Tom. Of course in a previous podcast you played for us that song you composed with with Francis Collins which I thought has tremendous words.

There's a lot of depth to it but obviously a song can only say so much and so can a podcast at the end of the day. These are big issues aren't they? Sure. We'll do our best though.

Let's start with George in Mexico. Thank you for listening from Mexico, George. And he says it's simply the age old question variously put is it indispensable in the interest of a strong Christian faith to be able to reconcile the findings of science with the literal interpretation of the Bible? Oh my goodness.

Two big questions there. I sometimes say to people the trouble is you think the jigsaw has pieces of this shape and you're trying to fit them together like that but actually over time that piece of the jigsaw has got out of shape and so has this piece. So the phrase the findings of science is always in fact fluid.

Yes. Every scientific finding is a hypothesis in need of verification and again and again it may take a generation or two but then along comes Einstein who says actually doing it wrong. Now we'd need to do it like this and that goes on and likewise what do mean by the literal interpretation and obviously over the last two centuries the question of the Bible being quote literally true unquote has been massive particularly in North America where a particular strain of rationalism came in with the Enlightenment broadly in the 18th century and much of American Christianity seized onto that in a false war a phony war between people saying it's all rubbish it's all myth it's all just made up and other people saying no it's all literally true and pinning that onto the idea of the authoritative scripture which comes through in Protestantism ever since the Reformation that if you're challenging the authority of the church well what you've got instead well it's the Bible so the Bible must be literally true otherwise we don't know what to believe and then so the Protestant emphasis on the Bible comes together with the Enlightenment emphasis on rationalism and you got a big problem especially when then Epicurean scientists like Erasmus Darwin Charles' grandfather are saying we've got to look at the way the world makes itself which is ancient Epicureanism with a modern twist and then Charles Darwin eventually gets on a boat and discovers some turtles and finches and so on so bingo got it this is how it all works sort of but then the new thing there is the the survival of the fittest and people forget that what that means is like the idea of monkeys typing Shakespeare and you have got to imagine really rather a lot of near misses so for evolution to work you have to stretch it out of a massive millennia and the ancient Epicurean saw this as well as the modern ones it's not a modern idea but this is where the idea of evolutionary development which I think most modern Christians would happily accept in some way or form gets hooked up with a modern idea of progress that actually this is where everything is progressing and therefore we the scientists are telling you the way the world is we're telling you the way history is going that's where the problem comes because actually science doesn't do that and and actually in order is a so-called literal interpretation of genesis either and very often when we're talking about the quote-unquote literal interpretation of genesis we're talking about the very early chapters and we're talking about the creation narrative and in that sense you know this is a question from me rather than a listener though I think a lot of listeners will be asking this question is simply if in a nutshell you were not a scientific description of how the world came to be what is it I am reading.

There are several layers and we loosely refer to it as poetry and of course it isn't poetry in the sense that it isn't composed in the same way say the Psalms are it doesn't have that kind of verse structure but it's poetic in the sense that as only poetry can it's saying three or four or five things at the same time and my friend and colleague John Walton from Wheaton College has written very helpfully on this in terms of the ancient Near Eastern world that forms the context within which genesis would have meant what it meant. The lost world of genesis I think. That's right he's written several books and a commentary on genesis well I think two commentaries and genesis if I remember rightly and part of the point there is that this description of something being created in six stages ending with an image being put into it is the creation of a temple the image being humankind.

In Genesis one yes if you create something this structure which is a heaven and earth structure which it is and if the last thing to go in is an image and then the god who's made it takes his rest that's coming in to take possession this is now God's home this is where he wants to be with his human creatures and so it's a way of saying look at the whole creation the way we look at a temple and then it also means turning it round look at the temple in lerusalem as a microcosm of the whole creation and certainly the the decoration of the temple indicates that as in the tabernacle in the wilderness as well so that suddenly a whole world of cosmology is opened up which has got nothing whatever to do with were these six periods of 24 hours now actually most British Christians and I think most Christians around the world don't get hung up on the six periods of 24 hours in the way that some Americans still feel they have to and it's a shame it's because that major event happened in American culture the scopes trial in was it 1929 something like that was somewhere around there which you know nobody else could have had that that was a post civil war northern liberals versus southern conservatives flexing their theological muscles and everyone wanted to know what was going to happen about this because it was sort of are we going to be in the modern world or the ancient world with all sorts of overtones that was a very America specific thing and I never tired of saying this because these questions regularly come from American people often don't realize how peculiar that context is that needs demystify the cultural context often determines the kinds of questions people are asking but here's here's some actually from Surrey, Derby and Romania okay places who were asking related questions and particularly to do with well how did what are the results of the fall if there is a long evolutionary process involving death and decay and so on so I'll just read all three of these they're asking similar questions Malcolm in Surrey says it's said that creation and evolution are not in conflict simply different ways of describing the same thing but whereas creation teaches that death came into the world through sin evolution teaches that death was in existence from the beginning can that circle be squared if not is the gospel message invalidated Ada in Romania says I don't know how to view creation in terms of the understanding we now have of science evolution again implies death suffering fear survival of the fittest etc how does this match with Paul's teachings that through sin death has entered the world and again death came into the world through a man but also with God's declaration of the goodness of the initial creation and finally Jamie in Derby who says you believe that heaven is a restoration of the heavens and earth it was originally in the beginning you also believe in millions of years of evolution what we see in the fossil record is millions of years of bloodshed cancer disease suffering and death so according to your worldview all that horror existed before sin what exactly will a restored earth be like and what exactly was the physical punishment for sin if all of that existed before sin sorry to be blunt but your worldview doesn't seem to add up shows Jamie so yeah clearly there are again if I spoke before about two pieces of particular puzzles about 10 there and they're all in need of cleaning up and I'm not necessarily the right personal the best person to do all of that cleaning up however it does seem to me that I take the point completely if there is a long period before that primal pair of hominids find that some strange force or power or presence that they were only dimly aware of seems to be saying to them you are special I've got a job for you to do that rather does imply and many theologians have said this precisely that the call of call them how many of the same sake of argument is itself the creators act of saying now there's been a lot of mess and muddle and decay and and so on but now we're going to have a garden and this is going to work out thus and so and they are called to be God's agents and instruments to bring his wise order into this creation which has hitherto been without form and void to who are born when they then rebel this is at a different level as it were so that there is yes decay and death in the fossil record in trees and plants dinosaurs whatever but when they are told on the day that you eat of it you will die there is something else going on there a different level which I think may correspond in some ways that I've not really worked this out to what you get in the book of Revelation when it talks about the first death and the second death that there may be different different levels different meanings of death and that Paul is definitely looking at the second one but the other thing we have to realize there is that as with Genesis 1 and the temple so with Genesis 3 if we assume as most people do that the Pentateuch is being edited at least during the Babylonian exile and it's seen as a whole so that there's a narrative arc from the beginning of Genesis to the end of Deuteronomy clearly the end of Deuteronomy is saying if here is the law given to Israel if you obey you will live if you disobey you will die and what will die mean it will mean exile the curse of exile Deuteronomy 27, 8 and 9 picked up at the end of Leviticus 18 as well and then there is the prospect of restoration but that's how the narrative works and so anyone in Babylon in the Jewish community in sort of the middle of the first millennium BC writing or reading or editing Genesis 3 would say we know exactly what the story is about here's of how you are given a task given a lovely land to live in told to be responsible who blew it disobeyed and they get kicked out and that is the ultimate death because how can you sing the Lord's song in a strange land in other words this is already an allegory of Israel or vice versa Israel is to be seen as acting out what's happened to all the human race so you've got these different bits of the great lewish story jangling against one another and until you've put all that back together again it's hard as it were to put the different elements into a rationalistic scheme and say well Paul says death entered so how are you going to do that so I'm not saying that solves the problem in a sense it complexifies further but I think it's a healthy complexity which then enables us to say that there are levels of death that God's choice of the humans was in order precisely to bring new life and coherence to the chaos that when they messed up this was the beginning of a new level of death which then had to have a new sort of injection of life that the work of the ultimate human Jesus has to do what Adam and Eve were supposed to do but also to rescue them in the process and that I think is why Romans 5 12 to 21 is such an

incredibly difficult and then's passage Paul is saying all of that at the same time right Before we rejoin today's episode I need to tell you about an urgent challenge premiere insight is facing today as we begin this new year twenty thousand dollars is needed by February the 29th in order to keep premiere insights strong and financially on target at the outset of this new year that couldn't be more important as you know or said to Christianity is in rapid decline across the United States so many Christians feel ill equipped to defend their faith against the angry and antagonistic rhetoric of our day but at the very same time there's also a growing spiritual openness with 84 percent of Americans saying they're open to a conversation about Jesus both these trends mean that America is crying out for a clear and courageous Christian voice in 2024 a voice that not only equips believers to stand firm but one that also winceingly engages skeptics and seekers with the claims of the gospel that voice is premiere insight your gift today will help keep premiere insight strong at this pivotal moment so please give generously to help meet the twenty thousand dollar need you can give online at premiere insight dot org forward slash nt right that's premiere insight dot org forward slash nt right thank you so much well let's talk about that again from a different perspective robin down derry asks what is genesis three by which i assume he means the sort of passage about the fall about underneath the rebellion trying to tell us about a fundamental fracture between god and man why does western theology in particular appear to traditionally focus on the fall and the curse why would god curse and banish a mankind that was created in love and blessing about twenty years ago maybe even more maybe thirty years ago there was a an american called matthew fox who was actually a dominican except the order then didn't like him anymore and they i think he became an epicapalian actually as many do and he wrote a book called original blessing which was a kind of an answer to original sin and he was basically a new age proponent um who used to go and stay up at the community at fin to warn up in northern scottland and so on and it was an odd mixture i wanted a television program with him one of other people and it was an odd mixture of bits of genuine christianity with bits of extraordinary new age stuff from um it must have been the eighties actually um and uh there the emphasis was the western church ever since augustin has been fixated on sin and curse and death and oh dear and how do we get out of that but in fact creation was always wonderful and good the danger with rejecting the dualism is that you buy into a monism where aswith other forms of monism like stoicism it's very hard to have any critique of evil at all if there's anything you don't like in the world in other people in yourself um then as epic teeter says the door stands open you're free to leave in other words stoics commit suicide if they don't like the way things are um it's fine to be uh an original blessing person when the sun is shining in your family being nice to you and and you know you've got money in the bank for most of humans for some of the time and some humans most of the time is not actually like that and so most humans most of the time are faced with the question well yes there are great good impulses but things have gone horribly wrong it's like you know people say well i can't believe because of the problem of evil but if you're an atheist you have the problem of good why why would anything seem other than random

if if you're a complete atheist um and uh Dawkins i suppose would say it's atavistic impulses of remembering um hunting rituals from when we were in the trees and so on um that the things which seem good to us are really related to those primal instincts or something like that i'm character during um so i want to say yes god created the world and he created it good but the goodness was never static it was always genesis one is the beginning of a project it's not a tableau this so that in the new testament it isn't a matter of saying let's go back to the garden like a famous song by jony mitchell has that you've got to get back to the garden um no where the garden was the beginning the garden was god's project which turned into a city was it meant to turn into a city when cane built a city isn't that interesting the tower of bables says no book of revelation says well yes actually but not like that so it isn't the tower of bable humans reaching up to god the new Jerusalem comes down from heaven to earth so the garden is meant to be the beginning of a community which turns into the garden city the danger is that it turns into a city which is purely human arrogance etc and those are the images we ought to be looking at because those are the things which say yes to the goodness of creation no to all that's infected and corrupted and now where is this going to go what is the new world towards a training the ask anti-write anything podcast is brought to you by premiere in partnership with sbck and anti-write online now anti-write online is the place where you can find all of tom's online theology courses taught by tom himself in video format now if you've been around church you probably know the lord's prayer but have you ever really thought about it and why jesus gave it as the model for talking to god in his brand new course tom will guide you through the context that informs the lord's prayer the deeper ideas in it you may not have noticed and practical ways in which the lord's prayer can shake your daily spiritual practices and podcast listeners can get it absolutely free just go to anti-write online.org forward slash ask anti-write Henry and windboard has a question which i sort of want to add another question to Henry asks did sin come into the world through adam satan was already present and along with him sin if god is going to finally deal with satan and annihilate him why didn't he do this before he created adam i suppose i want to go to another facet of that which is but what is what do you can see is what happened when that that fall whatever form it took that rebellion happened what what did that so into creation and how how is that something that that is responsible for the the physical attributes you know this creation that is subject to decay as well as yeah puts it i yes in a sense i want to say the creation was before the call of these two hominids was already decaying and going through a cycle but the human project was to take it from there and move it into the new way that god intended to be it's very difficult to cash out genesis three into any other sorts of propositions whichever things one does there will be elements missing and this is this is of course notorious and but i i do want to say that the early pair if they were a pair and i i don't much mind if they were exactly two of them but you know what i mean the the early hominids who are given this vocation are thereby given a call to worship the creator and reflect his wise stewardship into the world and somehow there is something there is this tree in inverted commas and this snake in inverted commas which say there are other possibilities here

do you have to do this and i wouldn't go all the way into the traditional quote free will defense unquote as though we had to have freedom in order for it to work but something like that needs to be said along with all the other things that are going on and part of the rationale of why there's a snake seems to be that in the lavish extraordinary creation that god made you know what once once you get away from sort of thinking of god simply with these six periods saying i'm now i'm going to do this now i'm going to do that and end of conversation once you move with something like john paulking horn into a much more open idea of god dare we say experimenting god saying let's let's do giraffes why not let's let's do pineapples so you just have think around creation a bit and yes and you have to say god was having fun with this stuff but out of all of that god is a much more unpredictable god the danger is that i think ever since particularly the dayism of the 17th and 18th century we tend to see god as the clockmaker as the one who's made a machine that ought to work and if it isn't working it's his fault for making it wrong and i think that's a fundamentally wrong view of god i mean coming back to henry's question where he he asked sort of about the role of satan in all this and and i have heard others speak of the idea of a sort of fall before the fall of the cosmic fall which at some level proceeds and is kind of i've heard the allegiance to speak of that as being that the thing that creates the the nature of the universe into which adam and eve are this project i'm not sure about the word nature but but but but there's some sense in which the a cosmic fall you know and i forget the exact reference in scripture but where where we only have a very brief mention of it but the idea that there was a an angelic rebellion yeah yeah it's a beginning of genesis six where when the watchers um you know and this is where some of milton comes from and so on the rebellious angels who get crossed because it seems that god is going to make these human beings who are going to be his primary agents and and these angels think hey that's not fair we ought to be that um there is enough in scripture about that in some of the serums as well actually for one to say something like that seems to be there what we have to have again and again with scripture is appropriate hermeneutical humility this doesn't mean that we can't know things it means that we just may not have very good language for this and i think they were as aware of that as we are just like we today we talk about there seem to be some forces unleashed you look back at the history of the 20th century and you say in the 1930s there just seemed to be demonic forces unleashed i've no idea what that phrase actually means but what we're saying is more was going on here than simply the sum total of a few wicked human beings something else was at work rather like scott peck says in his book people of the lie that there's a certain amount that humans just do by messing up but then there is another dimension beyond that and it seems to me that to to project that back onto early cosmology cautiously is guite a wise thing to do because scripture does seem to be doing that and that doesn't exactly explain why there's a snake in the garden but i think you have to say something about the freedom of god and god's um lavish letting be god saying let there be this let there be that and the things that god says let there be to are not puppets there's a sense in which god doesn't doesn't control them like the author of a novel doesn't doesn't control the characters if the author of a novel tries to control the characters too much be a very bad novel yes um let's get a last question in from estraman in texas and i think this does fall into the sort of whole free will sort of question but um estraman says one question i've never found an answer nor have seen discussed among theologians and i did study theology and philosophy regards adam and eve's fall and and he says he understands the bible passage may be allegorical but how could their disobedience be a punishable sin if they were created pure and couldn't tell the difference between a good and evil before committing the sin if they committed the sin willingly it means they chose evil over good and could already tell the difference if they did it ignorantly and couldn't differentiate good from evil then god would have been unfair in his judgment the only logical answer in my view according to the story of genesis is that they already knew good and evil yeah this is this is a cleverly argued little bit of sort of philosophical speculation and and as an exegete as a historian i'm always wary when theologians or philosophers say this must have meant or would have been right whatever because i want to say hang on what is being smuggled in here and i would want to take that whole paragraph and just gently unpick it and say are we sure about these moves here um because when somebody addresses you and says i love you you and my people i want to reflect myself through you into my world then this isn't oh now we have a sort of a moral index of what good and evil means it means oh wow you are amazing we are your people we bask in that how delightful and the giving of a command or a prohibition implies something about um this is what you ought to do obviously and you could stand back from that and say well hang on i'm going to be a philosopher for a minute and this means you're teaching me a bit about good and evil doesn't it but if they haven't got any such idea yet it says okay that's what you want us to do but then guess what there's some other way which is impinging upon us and i think the knowledge of good and evil in genesis is is just one of those very very profound things i don't think it's oh yes i know that there is a difference between good and evil i think it's actually a knowing by experience we have now found out what the difference is um that that good is is life and evil means darkness and exile and and curse so i i think the knowledge of good and evil is not just ahead knowledge um oh yeah we've got this index and we understand that there is something called good and i think it's you'll now you'll know what it's really all about it's the sort of experiential sort of like cslur says somewhere about um somebody who climbs up to a high diving board um says you know you want to know what a 50 meter thing the dive is all about wait until you're standing there then you'll know what it's really well thank you very much is there again a lot of ground covered there in in various different ways um just before we we finish up um you mentioned john wollton as possibly a good place to start exploring these issues any other recommendations for people who want to get get the head around the whole way to put genesis together and the full and everything else i mean i have been very struck in the last five or six years uh well the last ten years really by this whole business of temple theology in genesis gregory beals book the temple and the church's mission um starts off with some of that and develops it in terms of forwardlooking way sitting back to creation you know the church's mission is to be the temple of

god in the world for the world against the day of the new creation etc um that's been very helpful john levenson the jewish studies professor at harvard who's a remarkable jewish scholar um he has a book um whose title is just slipping my mind but you can say i will i will let people know i'm sorry this is this is just year old age kicking in plus the fact that i got up very early this morning um uh i think i think it's creation and the persistence of evil okay but that that is a very sensitive and interesting jewish reading of not any genesis but what follows from it well i will make sure sure listeners have the correct title and where to get hold of it by the end of today's program for the moment tom thank you very much thank you thank you very much and i can confirm that the book tom mentioned there by john levenson is creation and the persistence of evil it's published by princeton university press well thanks for listening to today's show but do stick around to hear some of the stories from genesis set to another classic bob dillon tune in a moment's time we'd also love for you to sign up to the show newsletter it's every fortnight it gets you bonus video content as well and exclusive updates and access to book giveaways loads of opportunities if you sign up to the website also allows you of course to ask questions yourself so do go there to ask nt right dot com and get yourself subscribed tom we've got another song from you always enjoy this part of the show where we get to hear something from the playbook of tom right and so this is something you've come up with again with a friend of yours Francis Collins who was the well-known christian scientist and another co-author or next friend brian wash um i i wrote the first three verses of this um i had had the beginning of this song in my head for a year or two and it goes to the tune of bob dillon's song shelter from the storm which ought to be played in e major but my voice won't do that anymore so i'm going to play it in c just out of it and because brian wash is um as well as the theologian is is a great dillon fan um i sent brian the first three or four verses and said what do you think about this and blow me by email back came another verse which i then fiddle around with and then i sent them all to Francis Francis wrote a special last verse for the biologos conference which was coming up that doesn't really fit with with how i'm doing it now but um so it was like a lot of things in life a rich collaboration sounds like the next um you know crossby stills and nash it's uh it's right colins and and walrus yes yes but it's it's it tells it tells the story of salvation from one or two unusual angles and kind of gets them scrunched up together a bit which um and had its first airing did you say at the missio alliance conference i think it had its first airing at a biologos conference in houston a couple of years ago and then i doctored it a bit and then digit at the missio alliance yeah very well let's hear it okay and the the harmony of shelter from the storm is actually quite basic so there's not much guitaring it's just okay when can had married a local girl as they always knew he would and seth was running the family farm enable was gone for good then eve shook ahead and to adam she said as they planted out the corn with a family to feed but what we need is a new world to be born when can had built him a city as they always knew he might and they planned a tower right up to the sky so the top would be out of sight then adam's side and to eve replied as they face the neighbor's scorn a city means greed but what we need is a new world to be born when no one decided to build him a

boat and collect a floating zoo and it rained so hard that they called out the guard but was nothing they could do then adam thought back to the snake and the grass on that innocent sunny morn and he muttered to eve we've got to believe there's a new world to be born now a brand had no family and he'd left his city behind and against all the odds he trusted in god not knowing what he would find then sarah heard the voice of eve a whispering in her ear it may sound funny but never mind honey the new world starts right here the new world's born in blood and pain and the birth pangs are severe when jesus can't the angry storm we knew that it was near as eve stood weeping by the city wall and the temple veil was torn they watched him die with one last cry so the new world could be born so then the grave burst open and adam sang in praise all creatures heard the good news and their victory song they raised on that sunday morning early they blew the jubilee horn with the death of death and the spirit's breath the new world has been born one day the holy city will come down from heaven to earth a vast unnumbered family to proclaim the world's rebirth the lambs drew bride with gates flung wide to welcome the bright new dawn with slaves set free and fresh leaves on the tree the new world has been born you never heard that before did you no no well there it is macartney bob dillon they did they know there's this fruitful sideline in theological renditions of their souls kickstart the new year with premier's bible in new year podcast in the beginning god created the heavens and the earth from genesis to revelation in a year's worth of daily readings he who testifies to these things says yes i am coming soon amen premier's bible in a year podcast available now on all platforms as well as premier dot plus