

# From the Creation-to the Exodus

by J.R. Miller

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*The sermon explores the creation story, God's love and provision for man, and the consequences of yielding to temptation.*

**Scripture:** Genesis 1:1, Genesis 3:6, Genesis 4:8, Genesis 5:24, Genesis 6:5-8, Genesis 9:12-15, Exodus 12:13, Exodus 14:21-22, Romans 8:28, Hebrews 11:1

**Topics:** "Creation", "Faithfulness of God"

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## Description

J.R. Miller's sermon 'From the Creation to the Exodus' explores the profound narrative of the Bible, beginning with God's creation of the world and culminating in the Exodus of the Israelites from Egypt. He emphasizes God's eternal presence and love, illustrating how He prepared the earth for humanity and the significance of man's creation in His image. The sermon also delves into the stories of key biblical figures such as Abraham, Joseph, and Moses, highlighting their faith and the unfolding of God's redemptive plan. Miller draws connections between the trials faced by these figures and the overarching theme of God's faithfulness and mercy throughout history.

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## Transcript

Devotional Hours with the Bible

J. R. Miller, 1908

Volume 1.

From the Creation--to the Exodus

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The First Temptation

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The Story of Enoch

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The Call of Abraham

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Genesis 1-2

Genesis is the book of beginnings. The first chapter is one of the most wonderful portions of the Bible. It takes us back far beyond all beginnings. Its first words are among the sublimest ever written, "In the beginning--God." We are now in the midst of a vast universe full of life--but there was a period when there was nothing--not a grain of sand, not a blade of grass, not a flower, not a leaf, nor the tiniest

insect--nothing but God.

There never was a time, however, when God was not. He had no beginning. "Before the mountains were brought forth, or before You had formed the earth and the world, even from everlasting to everlasting You are God." The thought is too great for us to grasp! Everything else that we see or of which we know--had a beginning. The sea with its majesty began away back somewhere in the midst of the ages of creation, when the Creator gathered the waters of the globe together into one place. The mountains which we think of as ancient, hoary, abiding, of which we speak as eternal--also had a beginning. There was a period when they were not, and then a time when by some gigantic convulsion they were lifted up.

Everything but God, had a beginning. Matter is not eternal. All life is derived. Not only was God before all things--but all things are the work of His hands. God created all things. Nothing came by 'chance'. It is no part of the plan of this book to suggest any scheme of creation. We do not need to vex ourselves with questions as to how things came into being. We do not have to know or understand. But whatever the theories may be, science has not set aside the teaching of Genesis, that God created all things. The best science accepts the Christian teaching, that God made all things.

The writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews states the case thus: "By faith we understand that the worlds have been framed by the Word of God, so that what is seen has not been made out of things which do appear." God was the Creator, however many ages may have been occupied in the vast work, or whatever the order or the processes of creation may have been. That is all we need to know.

At the very beginning of the story of creation, we have a wonderful glimpse of the heart of God and of His love for man, His child. Man had not yet been made. Indeed, there was only chaos. "The earth was waste and void, and darkness was upon the face of the deep." Then we have this statement, "The Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters." A marginal reading is, "The Spirit of God was brooding upon the face of the waters."

The picture suggested in the words is that of a hen sitting on her nest, covering her eggs, brooding over them to bring out the new lives through the warmth of her own body. Without unduly pressing the words, they certainly suggest that when He brooded over the mere chaos, God was thinking of His children yet to be and planning for their happiness and good. That is the way love always does. It prepares the nest for the little birds. It fills the storehouse for the coming winter.

Through all the great ages of continued world-building, we find evidence of this same Divine brooding and forethought. Man was not the first of the creatures made--indeed, he was the last of God's works. In this fact we see a wonderful expression of the Divine kindness and love. If man had been created at an earlier period, he could only have perished. He was not created until a place had been prepared for him. From the beginning, he was in God's thought. All through the creative ages before man was made--God was preparing and fitting up this earth to be his home.

First, there was chaos, a world without beauty, light or life, waste and empty--yet with God brooding over it. Then light broke over the dark world. Then the waters were gathered into seas and lakes and rivers, and the continents emerged--plains, hills, mountains. Then life appeared--vegetable life, animal life, in orderly succession. As the time drew near for man's creation, one particular place was chosen and fitted up to be a home for man--the Garden of Eden, filled with the rarest things of creation. All this for man not yet made; all the exquisite beauty and variety of scenery, all the wealth hidden away in mountains and hills, all the useful things prepared and stored up in nature--were for man's happiness and comfort!

Think, for instance, of the vast beds of coal laid up among earth's strata, ages and ages since, in loving forethought, that our homes may be warmed and brightened in the late centuries. Think of the minerals that were piled away in the rocks long before there was a human footprint on the sand, to be discovered and brought out for use in remote ages. Think of electricity, stored in exhaustless measures everywhere and kept undiscovered until these modern days, when it has been brought out to perform its vast service for the world. Think of the 'laws of nature', as we call them, established to minister to man's pleasure and profit. Think of all the latent forces and properties that have been lodged in matter, to be brought out from time to time, at the call of human need. Look at the springs of water opened on every hillside, in every valley, to give drink to man and beast. Note the provision in every climate and every zone, for food and clothing. Look at the medicinal and healing virtues stored away in leaf, in root, in fruit, in bark, in mineral.

It fills our hearts with wonder and praise--to think that for uncounted ages, before there was a human being on the earth--that God was thinking of us, that He foresaw our needs and began laying up goodness for us in the storehouses of nature. No one dare say that all this was a mere marvel of coincidences--there is proof of design in it; it could have been nothing else but the love of God planning and preparing for His children in long ages to come.

It is interesting to think of the creation of man, at the close of all this vast preparation. When his home was ready for him, then he was created. Man was made, too, in the likeness of God. Here we see his exalted rank in creation--he is not like any other creature. This likeness to God was not a physical likeness, however. We are like Him in immortality, in mind, in will, in heart, in hope and life.

This suggests man's pre-eminence among the creatures. Last of all to be made--he was also the noblest, the greatest of all. All the things that had been made were good and beautiful. But when man was made he was distinguished above all other orders of beings by having put upon him the image of his Creator. Man was God's child. Plants and trees and rocks and hills were things; beasts, birds, insects, and reptiles were living creatures; but man was a living soul, able to think and choose, to love and obey, to commune with God, to enter into close fellowship with Him, to be God's friend, God's child.

Man's body was made of dust. This showed his frailty; he was not made from the rocks, or from metal ores--but from the lowly dust. Yet into this frail body God breathed His own breath and man lived.

When God had made man, He gave him rule over all things. "Have dominion over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air, over the livestock, over all the earth, and over all the creatures that move along the ground." Thus man was made to be lord of the creation. Not only was he above all the other works of God in rank and dignity--but he was set to rule over them all.

All things were made for man, for his use and service. Man still has great power over the creatures. He uses them for his own purposes, making them help him in his work. He employs the animals in his work, and makes them serve him. Steam is made to turn his machines, propel his ships, draw his trains. The sea he has mastered, making it, instead of a barrier--a highway to all parts of the earth, on which he carries his commerce. The lightning, whose thunders are full of dread, he has tamed and taught to be a gentle messenger, doing his bidding and serving him in countless ways. The rocks he has made to yield to him their minerals, and from the dark depths of the earth he brings his fuel.

God created man "male and female." It would have been very desolate for man to live on this earth alone. No matter how beautiful the world had been made, beauty would not have satisfied him. Man has a heart and needs love, and only love could satisfy him. There were animals of all kinds in the lovely Paradise

which was given to man for his home--but man could not have found the companionship he needs among these. He was made immortal and only a being immortal like himself could answer his longing for fellowship. He was made to love, and only a being capable of loving could satisfy him.

It was a mark of God's thought for man, therefore of His love for him, that woman was made to be man's companion. They could talk together of the lovely things about them, they had minds alike and could think together and commune on the great things of God. They had hearts that beat alike, and could love each other. They could commune together on spiritual things and together enter also into communion with God.

We have here, too, the institution of marriage. God saw that man would be lonely, and that it would not be good for him to be alone, so He gave him a wife. Thus was she fitted to be man's companion, his helpmate, his inspirer. God Himself united this first pair in marriage. Heart clasped heart, and life was knit to life.

God bade our first parents to "replenish the earth, and subdue it." He gave the earth to man--but it was yet a possession for conquest, an inheritance that man must win for himself. At the very beginning, in the unfallen life, man was meant to work. He was to cultivate the soil that he might gather its fruits and harvests. He was to find and dig out the treasures hidden away in the rocks and hills. He was to master the forces of nature. The earth was his--but he must subdue it.

God made provision for man's sustenance. "I have given you every herb, . . . every tree, . . . for food." It is not God's intention that anyone shall ever lack food. Yet we must not make the mistake that even in man's innocence it was meant that he should have food without work. "If any will not work, neither let him eat," is a law of Providence which grace does not render inoperative. Sometimes a man says, "The world owes me a living." Yes, if he will by his own toil earn it! The prayer, "Give us this day our daily bread," teaches us to live by the day and to be content with the day's portion, trusting God for tomorrow; but it teaches another lesson in the word "our." It cannot be our daily bread until we have earned it. So we ask God to give us, with His blessing, the portion which our hands have gathered and prepared for the day.

From the beginning, too, God cared for animals and provided for their maintenance. "I have given all the grasses and other green plants to the animals and birds for their food." Does God care for oxen and birds and worms? Here is the assurance that He does. Then the Scriptures have other words which tell us of God's thought for all His creatures. Your heavenly Father feeds the sparrows, said Jesus. We are taught here a lesson of kindness toward dumb creatures. If God is so thoughtful in making provision for them, surely we must be gentle and humane in our treatment of them.

## The First Temptation

### Genesis 3

The story of the first temptation is intensely interesting. We do not need to perplex ourselves with its form. There is enough in it that is plain and simple and of practical value, and we should not let our minds be confused by its mystery. Whatever the broader meaning of this first temptation may have been, everyone must meet a like personal experience, and hence this Genesis story has for us a most vital interest.

Everyone must be tempted. Untried life is not yet established. We must be tested and proved. It is the man who endures temptation, who is blessed. Our first parents did not endure.

It was in the garden of Eden, with beauty and happiness on every side. But even into this lovely home, came the tempter! He came stealthily. The serpent is a remarkable illustration of temptation: subtle, fascinating, approaching noiselessly and with an appearance of harmlessness which throws us off our guard.

The tempter began his temptation in a way which gave no alarm to the woman. He asked her, "Has God said--You shall not eat of any tree of the garden?" The question indicated surprise that God should make such a prohibition. The tempter's wish was, in a quiet and insinuating way, to impeach the goodness of God and make Eve think of Him as severe and harsh. His purpose was to put doubt of God's goodness into the woman's mind. "If God loved you--would He deny you anything so good?"

The tempter still practices the same deep cunning. He wants to make people think that God is severe, that His restraints are unreasonable. He tries to make the young man think that his father is too stern with him; the young girl that her mother is too rigid. He seeks to get people to think themselves oppressed by the Divine requirements. That is usually the first step in temptation, and when one has begun to think of God as too exacting, he is ready for the next downward step.

Everything depends upon the way a person meets temptation. Parleying is always unsafe. Eve's first mistake was in answering the tempter at all. She ought to have turned instantly away, refusing to listen. When there comes to us a wrong suggestion of any kind, the only wise and safe thing for us--is immediately to shut the door of our heart in its face. To dally is usually to be lost. Our decision should be instant and absolute, when temptation offers. The poet gave a fine test of character when he said he would not take for a friend, the man who needlessly sets his foot upon a worm. With still greater positiveness should we refuse to accept as a friend, one who seeks to throw doubt on God's goodness and love.

When the tempter finds a ready ear for his first approach--he is encouraged to go on. In this case, having raised suspicion of the Divine goodness, he went on to question God's veracity. "The serpent said unto the woman--You shall not surely die!" He would not have said this at the first, for the woman would not have listened then to such an accusation against God. But one doubt makes way for another. She listened now, and was not shocked when the tempter went farther and charged God with insincerity.

The tempter still follows the same course with those he would draw away from God. He tells them that what God says about the consequences of disobedience is not true. He tries to make people believe that the soul that sins--shall not die. He is still going about casting doubt upon God's words and suggesting changes in the reading of the Bible. He even tried to tempt our Savior by misquoting and perverting Scripture! He sought to get Him to trust a Divine promise--when He had no Divine command to do the thing suggested. We need to be sure of the character of the people we admit into our lives as friends, advisers, or teachers. Jesus tells us that His sheep know His voice. They know the voice of strangers, too, and will not listen to them, because they will not trust the words of strangers.

The tempter now goes a step farther with the woman. "God does know that in the day you eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and you shall be as God, knowing good and evil." Instead of dying, as God had said they should, if they ate the forbidden fruit--the devil said the eating of this fruit would open their eyes and make them wondrously wise, even something like God Himself!

The tempter talks in just the same way in these modern days. He tells the boys and young men, that doing certain things will make them smart and happy. He taunts them also with the ignorance of simple

innocence, and suggests to them that they ought to see and experience the world. It will make men of them and give them power, influence and happiness. There is a great deal of this sort of temptation. A good many people cannot stand the taunt of being 'religious' or of being afraid to do certain things.

The temptation was successful. "When the woman saw that the fruit of the tree was good for food and pleasing to the eye, and also desirable for gaining wisdom, she took some and ate it." She listened to the cunning words of the tempter. Curiosity, ambition, and desire--all awoke in her. The one prohibited thing in the garden, began to shine in such alluring colors that she forgot all the good things which were permitted to her. It all seemed dull and poor, compared with the imagined sweetness of the fruit they were not allowed to eat. The commandment of God faded out of her mind--as she stood listening to the tempter and looking at the forbidden fruit before her. Then, fatal moment! She reached out her hand and took the fruit--and the doleful deed was done! We never know what a floodgate of evil and sorrow--one little thought or word or act may open--what a river of harm and ruin may flow from it!

When one has yielded to temptation, the next step oftentimes is the tempting of others. "She also gave some to her husband, who was with her, and he ate it!" Milton suggests that it was because of his love for Eve that Adam accepted the fruit from her hand. Since she had fallen, he wished to perish with her. Whatever the reason was for Adam's yielding, we know that the common story is--the tempted and fallen--become tempters of others! The corrupted become corrupters of others. One of the blessings of companionship should be mutual help. Mountain climbers tie themselves together with ropes that the one may support the other. But sometimes one slips and drags the other with him down to death. Companionship may bring ruin, instead of blessing!

However pleasant sin may be, when it has been committed, a dark shadow falls over the soul. "The man and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the Lord God among the trees." The first thing after sinning is remorse, and then comes the desire to hide from God!

There is a story of a young man who entered the house of one who had been his friend, to steal costly jewels which he knew to be in a certain place. He made his way quietly into the room, found the trunk in which the jewels were kept, and opened it. Then glancing up he saw a portrait hanging on the wall--the face of one he had known in years gone, in this house--but who was now dead. The calm, deep eyes of his old companion looking down upon him, witnessing his dark deed, made him tremble. He tried to keep his back to the picture--but he could not hold his gaze away from it. Yet he could not go on with his robbery. The steady looking of the eyes down upon him, maddened him. At length he took a knife and cut the eyes from the portrait and then finished his crime. If even human eyes looking down upon us make it impossible for us to commit sins--how much more terrible is the eye of God to the guilty soul!

But it is impossible ever to get away from the presence of God. While the man and his wife were thus trying to hide, they heard God's voice saying, "Where are you?" It was not in anger but in love, that the Father thus followed His erring children. He sought them--that He might save them. It is ever so. God is not to be dreaded--even if we have done wrong. We never should flee from Him. He follows us--but it is that He may find us and save us. Conscience is not an enemy, but a friend--the voice of God speaking in love. People sometimes wish they could get away altogether from God, could silence His voice; but if this were possible, it would be unto the darkness of hopeless ruin!

It is pitiful to read in the narrative how, when asked regarding their sin, the man sought to put the blame on the woman. "The woman You put here with me--she gave me some fruit from the tree, and I ate it." That is

the way oftentimes--when a man has done wrong, he blames somebody else. A drunkard said it was his wife's fault, for she was not sociable at home and he went out evenings to find somebody to talk with. A young man fell into sin--and said it was the fault of his companion who had tempted him. No doubt a share of guilt lies on the tempter of innocence and inexperience. It is a fearful thing to influence another to do wrong. Yet temptation does not excuse sin. We should learn that no sin of others in tempting us--will ever excuse our sin in yielding. No one can compel us to do wrong. Our sin is always our own!

At once upon the dark cloud--breaks the light! No sooner had man fallen, than God's thought of redemption appears. "So the LORD God said to the serpent--I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and hers; He will crush your head, and you will strike his heel." This fifteenth verse is the gospel, the first promise of a Savior. It is very dim and indistinct, a mere glimmering of light, on the edge of the darkness. But it was a gospel of hope to our first parents, in their sorrow and shame. We understand now its full meaning. It is a star-word as it shines here. A star is but a dim point of light as we see it in the heavens--but we understand that it is really a vast world, or center of a system of worlds. This promise holds in obscure dimness--all the glory of all the after-revealings of the Messiah. As we read on in the Old Testament, we continually find new unfoldings, fuller revelations, until at length we have the promise fulfilled in the coming of Jesus Christ!

This story of the first temptation and fall, is not the record of one isolated failure at the beginning of the world's history merely--it is a record which may be written into every human biography. It tells us of the fearful danger of sin, and then of sin's dreadful cost. What a joy it is that on the edge of this story of falling--we have the promise of one who would overcome! Now we have the story of one who has overcome, "strong Son of God," who also was tempted--but who did not yield, and now is the Mighty Deliverer. He overcame the world. And in Him we have peace and salvation!

## The Story of Cain and Abel

### Genesis 4

Cain was the first child born on earth. The coming of the first baby, is always an important event in a home--but the birth of the first child in the human family, was an event of peculiar importance. Mothers have many dreams and hopes for their babies. The first mother had her dreams. She seems to have been expecting that her son would be the "seed of the woman" referred to in the promise of the bruising of the serpent's head. When she saw the beautiful new-born child, she said joyfully, "With the LORD's help, I have brought forth a male child!" The mothers will best understand her glad hope, what expectations filled her heart. She forgot the pain of her travail--in her joy that a child was born. It is sad to think how this first mother's dreams were disappointed. Instead of becoming a godly man, his life an honor to his parents--he proved a wicked man, who brought sorrow to his home!

At the beginning of the story of the human family, we find both good and evil. Two children of the same parents, have in their hearts dispositions that differ in every way. They had different tastes, which led them to different occupations. One become a farmer, tilling the soil, and thus providing for his own necessities. The other, with peaceful tastes, became a shepherd.

The two sons differed still more radically in moral character. Cain developed wicked traits. He was energetic, ambitious, resourceful, a man who made his mark in the world, a builder of cities, a leader in civilization--but a man of bad temper, selfish, morose, cruel, hard, resentful. Abel was quiet, affectionate, patient. The world now would call him easy-going, not disposed to stand up for his rights, meek, allowing

others to trample over him and tread him down in the dust. Cain was the kind of man who today wins the world's honors, who gets on in the world, grows rich, is enterprising, becomes powerful and rules over his fellows. Abel was the type of man described in the Beatitudes, poor in spirit, hungering and thirsting after righteousness, merciful, a peacemaker, unresisting, bearing wrong without complaint, not striving for mastery. Abel was the kind of man that He was--who, at the end of the ages, appeared as the true Seed of the woman, whose heel was bruised by the serpent, but bruised the serpent's head, conquering by love.

Both the sons were worshipers of God, though here, too, they differed. Cain brought of the fruit of the ground for his offering; and Abel brought of the firstlings of his flock. Some suppose that Cain's offering was unfit in itself, inferring that God had already instituted the offering of blood, as the only acceptable worship. We do not learn this, however, from the Bible narrative; we are told only that the Lord had respect unto Abel and to his offering--but unto Cain and his offering He had not respect. Then in the Epistle to the Hebrews we are told that it was faith in Abel, which made his sacrifice more excellent than Cain's.

We learn at least--that God must be worshiped in the way He has commanded. We learn also that the acceptance of worship--depends on the heart of the worshiper. Cain's heart was wrong--and Abel's was right. The publican went down to his house justified, because of his penitence and sincerity; the Pharisee received no blessing, because there was no faith in his prayer. God cares nothing for forms of worship; He looks into the heart and is pleased only when He finds love, faith, and true devotion there.

"Cain was very angry." Why was Cain angry? Was he angry with God for not showing respect to his offering? Did he think God had treated him badly? If the anger was against God, how very foolish it was! What good could it do? It would be most silly for a man to be angry at the waves of the sea, or at the storm, or at the lightning. Would the waves, the tempest, or the thunderbolt mind his rage? It is infinitely more senseless, to be angry with God!

Or was Cain angry with Abel because he had pleased God--while he himself had failed to do so? It seems, however, from the record, that he was angry with Abel. Why? What had Abel done? He had done nothing, except that he was a better man than his brother. Was that reason enough why Cain should be angry?

Superiority always arouses envy, opposition and dislike. We must not expect to make ourselves popular--by being great or good. "To show your intelligence and ability, is only an indirect way of reproaching others for being dull and incapable." It was Abel's favor with God--that made Cain hate him.

Joseph is another striking example of the same hatred of the good--by the bad. It was not his pretty coat that made his brothers so bitter against him--but that which the coat represented, the superior qualities which had made Joseph the favorite of his father. Envy is a most unworthy passion. It is utterly without reason. It is pure malevolence, revealing the worst spirit. Cain was angry with Abel, because he was good.

"Cain attacked his brother Abel and killed him!" Genesis 4:8. See here, the fearful growth of the evil feeling in Cain's heart. It was only a thought at first--but it was admitted into the heart and cherished there. Then it grew until it caused a terrible crime! We learn here, the danger of cherishing even the smallest beginning of bitterness; we do not know to what it will grow!

Some people think lightly of bad temper, laughing at it as a mere harmless weakness; but it is a perilous mood to indulge, and we do not know to what it may lead. In His reproof of Cain, the Lord likens his sin to a wild beast lying in hiding by his door, ready to leap on him and devour him. This is true of all sin which is cherished in the heart. It may long lie quiet and seem harmless--but it is only a wild beast sleeping!

There is a story of a man who took a young tiger and resolved to make a pet of it. It moved about his house like a kitten and grew up fond and gentle. For a long time its savage, blood-thirsty nature seemed changed into gentleness, and the creature was quiet and harmless. But one day the man was playing with his pet, when by accident his hand was scratched and the beast tasted blood. That one taste, aroused all the fierce tiger nature, and the ferocious animal flew on his master and tore him to pieces!

So it is, with the passions and lusts of the old nature, which are only petted and tamed and allowed to stay in the heart. They will crouch at the door in treacherous lurking, and in some unguarded hour--they will rise up in all their old ferocity! It is never safe to make pets of tigers! It is never safe to make pets of little sins!

We never know what sin may grow into--if we let it stay in our heart. "It came to pass when they were in the field, that Cain attacked his brother Abel and killed him!" That is what came of the passion of envy in Cain's heart! It was left unrebuked, unrepented of, uncrushed--and in time it grew to fearful strength. Then in an evil moment its tiger nature asserted itself. We never know to what dreadful stature--a little sin may grow. It was the apostle of love who said, "He who hates his brother is a murderer." Hatred is a seed--which when it grows into its full strength--is murder!

We can easily trace the development of this sin in Cain. First, it was only a bitter and hurt feeling, as he saw that Abel's sacrifice was more pleasing to God than his own. But by and by in uncontrolled anger, Cain rose and murdered his brother!

We need to guard especially, against envy. Few sins are more common. One pupil recites his lesson better than another, and the less successful one is tempted to all manner of ugly feelings toward his fellow. Unkind things are said about the scholar who gets along well.

Envy is classed among the "seven deadly sins," and one has said that of all these, it most disturbs the peace of mankind. "All the curs in the street are ready to attack the dog that gets away with the bone!" "It is the tall cedar, not the tiny shrub, which will likely be struck by lightning. The sheep that has the most wool--is soonest fleeced! Envy follows every successful man--as close as his shadow. While David kept his father's sheep at home--he might sing sweetly to his harp in the fields without disturbance. But when he comes to court and applause and greatness caress him, malice and spite dog close at his heels wherever he goes. Let us guard against the beginnings of envy.

The Lord asked Cain to account for his brother. "Where is your brother?" We all are our brother's keepers, in a certain sense. In families, the members are each other's keepers. Parents are their children's keepers. The older brothers and sisters are the keepers of the younger. Brothers are their sisters' keepers--and should be their protectors and benefactors. Sisters are their brothers' keepers--and should throw about them all the pure, gentle, holy influences of love. Each one of us is in greater or less degree--a keeper of all who come under our influence. We are certainly each other's keepers--in the sense that we are not to harm each other in any way. We have no right to injure anyone; and we are under obligation to do as much good as possible to all about us.

We shall have to account for our influence over each other, and for all our opportunities of doing good to others. One of the most significant words in our Lord's parable of the Judgment, is that in which the king is represented as saying to those on his left, "Then He will also say to those on the left--Depart from Me, you who are cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the Devil and his angels! For I was hungry and you gave Me nothing to eat; I was thirsty and you gave Me nothing to drink; I was a stranger and you did not take Me in; I was naked and you did not clothe Me, sick and in prison and you did not take care of Me."

## Matthew 25:41-43

There is no more serious teaching in the Scriptures than this of our responsibility for the lives of others--not for members of our own families only--but for everyone who belongs to the human family.

After Cain had committed his crime, he thought of its enormity. "What have you done! Your brother's blood cries out to Me from the ground!" People do not stop to think beforehand, of the evil things they are going to do. They are carried away by passion or desire for pleasure, for power, or for gain--and do not see the darkness of the deed they are committing. But when it is done and they turn back to look at it--they see it in all its shame and guilt.

If the young man who is tempted to embezzle would go on and look at himself as a convict in prison, his name blackened, his family ruined--would he do the evil thing? The experience of Cain ought to teach everyone to ask before doing any wrong thing, "What is this that I am going to do?" Sin brings curse! Even the very ground is cursed, when remorse is in a man's heart. Even the flowers, the trees, the birds, and all beautiful and innocent things, seem to whisper shame and curse to his conscience.

"My punishment is too great to bear!" Sin is always a dreadful burden. It may seem pleasant at the moment--but afterward the bitterness is intolerable! A man gratifies his evil passions for a time and seems happy--but the result is shame and remorse--penalty greater than he can bear. Cain would have given all he had--to undo the sin he had committed--but he could not. He could not bring back the life he had destroyed. His dead brother would not answer his cry of grief. Though one suffers from the law, no punishment for his sin--he yet bears punishment intolerable in himself.

People say they do not believe in a hell of fire, that a God of mercy would not cast His children into such torment. But sin needs no literal flames, to make its hell. It brings its torment in itself. It is not that God is cruel--it is sin that is cruel. We cannot blame God for the punishment which our disobedience brings; we have only ourselves to blame.

Someone said in bitterness, "If I were God my heart would break for the world's woe and sorrow." God's heart did break--that is what the Cross meant. Sin is indeed a heavy burden. Many are driven to suicide by remorse. Some become hardened, all tenderness in them having been destroyed. But it will not be until the sinner gets to the next world--that he will know all the intolerable burden of his sin and its punishment. Then there will be no escape from the awful load, no hiding forever, and no getting clear of the terrible burden.

In this world, there is always a way of escape from sin's punishment. Christ bore sin and its punishment, and all who flee to Him will have the load lifted off!

## The Story of Enoch

### Genesis 5

The history of the world is not told in detail in Genesis. We have only a glimpse here and there of the life of the first days. But a few names are preserved from antediluvian generations. The people seem to have lived long--but not to much purpose. All we learn of most of them--is that they lived so many hundreds of years, and then died. The good seed seemed to perish in the death of Abel--but Seth was born in his place, and then men began to call upon the name of the Lord.

Some generations passed and in the scant record, we come upon one name that shines brightly in the story. "When Enoch had lived 65 years, he became the father of Methuselah. And after he became the father of Methuselah, Enoch walked with God 300 years and had other sons and daughters. Altogether, Enoch lived 365 years. Enoch walked with God; then he was no more, because God took him away." Genesis 5:21-24

God and Enoch were good friends. Their relations were intimate and familiar. The meaning is not that God appeared to Enoch in any visible form and walked with him about the country, as a man would walk with his friend. A little child, however, told the story thus. She had been to Sunday School, and when she came home her mother asked her what she had learned that day. She answered, "Don't you know, mother? we have been learning about a man who used to go for walks with God. His name was Enoch. He used to go for walks with God. And, mother, one day they went for an extra long walk, and they walked on, and on, and on, until God said to Enoch, 'You are a long way from home; you would better just come in and stay.' And he went in!"

The child's idea of the story was very beautiful. It was true, too--at least in a spiritual sense. The figure of a walk is used in the Bible many times for the course of life. When men are said to have walked in the ways of the Lord--the meaning is that they lived righteously, keeping God's commandments. When we read that the people walked in the way of Jeroboam, the thought is that they followed him in his idolatry. When it is said that Enoch walked with God, we are to understand that he obeyed God's commandments, so far as they were revealed to him, and that he lived in communion with God.

It was a walk of faith. Enoch did not see God. We do not know how much he knew about God. We must remember that he lived before the Flood, only a few generations from Adam. The race was in its infancy then, and only a few revelations from God had been made. There was no Bible. It was long before Moses received the ten commandments on Mount Sinai. But in whatever way and to whatever extent Enoch had been taught about God--he believed. God was as real to him--as if He had walked with Enoch in human form!

We all walk with God in a sense, for all our life. We never can get away from His presence for a moment. He is closer to us than our nearest friend. Wherever we go--He walks beside us. But the trouble with many of us is that we do not realize this presence. We never think of it. Faith is that exercise of the mind, which makes unseen things, real. God was real to Enoch. His walk with God--was as real as if he had seen God's face, and heard His voice and felt the touch of His hand!

We may walk with God as consciously and as familiarly as Enoch did, if we really desire. Christ told the disciples that He wished to make them His personal friends, opening His heart to them and giving them His full confidence. But how many of us are living in conscious communion with Christ? We sing Bernard's hymn,

"Jesus, the very thought of Thee

With sweetness fills my breast;

But sweeter far Your face to see,

And in Your presence rest."

But to how many of us, are the words really a true expression of our experience? We talk a good deal about God--but how many of us are actually walking with God? An eloquent preacher says, "A missing note of the religious life of today, is that of personal fellowship with the Creator. We are largely dependent on other people, not Christ--for our spiritual experience." Never have there been so many religious activities in which Christians take part, as at present. There are meetings, societies, brotherhoods, unions and all manner of organizations for the promotion of spiritual life and for the winning of souls. But is there not a lack of personal communion with Christ? We are depending more for the quickening of our spirits and for our religious interest and earnestness, on outside activities and on the influence of other Christians upon us--than on our own individual fellowship with Christ!

We need to learn anew to walk with God. We need to train ourselves to more personal communion with Christ, to be more alone with Him. We cannot get our religious life second-hand. None of us can give to another, what we have received from God, in our own communion with Him. The wise virgins could not give of their oil--to their sisters whose lamps were going out, and whose vessels were empty. Sometimes it seems to us as we read the story, that these virgins were selfish, unkind, ungenerous, in refusing. But the incident is meant to teach--that one cannot give the grace of God to another. Each must receive it directly from God for himself. If your friend walks with God--then in his hour of trial or need, he will have the comfort and strength he requires. But if you follow God afar off--then in your time of stress, you will find your lamp burning low and your vessel empty, and you cannot run to your friend for what you need. Each must know Christ for himself.

There are many blessings which come to him who walks with God. One is companionship with God. Human companionship is very sweet and refreshing. It makes the way seem shorter and easier. How could we live without friends? We never can be thankful enough for the companionships of our lives. It would be hard to live without our human friends. We need them, and they bring us cheer, comfort, strength, encouragement all along the way. But human companionships, as heart-filling as they may be--are not enough. Then they drop away one by one--we know not what morning, the dearest and most needed friend shall be missed from our side when we come out to begin our day's walk.

What would you have done if the Great Companion had not been beside you on that dark day when the human friend you had leaned on so heavily, was called away? What will you do when those who now make the journey so pleasant for you, slip away and leave you if, when you lift up your eyes through your tears, you do not see the Master still by your side? Then, even with the happiest and gladdest earthly companionship crowding our path, we need God too. Without Him--the dearest human love fails to satisfy.

But no words can fully tell of the joy and the blessing of Divine companionship. Think of the years when Christ walked with His personal friends, what His presence meant to them. And that short story of the Incarnation is not something past, which cannot be realized now. We may have those days over again, each one of us, with all their sweetness and helpfulness. Christ came down to earth, not to stay a few years only and then leave us--but to stay unto the end, and to walk with each one of us all the way home.

Another blessing that comes from walking with God, is the transfiguration of our common life. Many of us miss much of the beauty and the glory of life, because we do not know that God is with us. Life is all dark and mysterious, sometimes full of sorrow and disaster, when we know nothing of the love of God. But when His love fills our hearts--then all the world is changed. Even human love coming into a life, changes the aspect of all things. Only the other day a young friend came to tell of the coming of love, and the dear face was shining as if a holy lamp of heaven were burning within.

If human love brings such joy, the love of Christ brings infinitely more!

Enoch's walking with God was not interrupted by the common experiences of his life. "Enoch walked with God 300 years--and had other sons and daughters." Some people suppose they could continue to walk with God if they were engaged all the time in 'religious' work; but they do not suppose it possible to maintain a life of unbroken communion with Him, when they have to be at work in the shop, in the office, or in the kitchen. But the truth is, we may stay near Christ just as easily when at our daily duties--as when we are at our devotions.

There is a legend of a monk whose great desire was to see Christ and touch the hem of His divinity. At his monastery, he waited in prayer and penance before his crucifix. He had vowed that he would see no human face--until his prayer was granted. One morning he seemed to hear a voice which told him that his wish would be fulfilled that day. With eager joy he watched. There came a gentle tap upon his door, and the plaintive cry of a child was heard, pleading to be taken in and fed. But the voice of the cold and hungry little one, was unheeded. The 'saint' was busy with his devotions, watching for the vision of the Master, and must not be disturbed. The candles burned low and the monk grew dismayed. Why did not the vision appear? All he heard was, "Unhappy monk, you may pray on forever. The answer to your prayer was sent today--it lingered, then sobbed, then turned away."

God is quite as sure to come to walk with us, in the doing of some common task of love and kindness--as when we pray or sit at our Master's communion table. "For I was hungry--and you gave Me something to eat; I was thirsty--and you gave Me something to drink; I was a stranger--and you took Me in; I was naked--and you clothed Me; I was sick--and you took care of Me; I was in prison--and you visited Me." Matthew 25:35-36

To him who is walking with God--all life has glory. We do not know what we miss--when we fail to see the Great Companion who is ever by our side.

A little child was traveling with his mother over the sea. After a little while he asked, "Mother, where is the sea?" His mother said, "Why, we are on the sea. It is all around us." The child replied, "I see the waves--but where is the sea?"

Just so, we go through our days, all bright with the shining of God's glory, and ask, "Where is God?"

You remember how the disciples, going to Emmaus, talked with the Stranger who walked with them, about Jesus, telling how bitterly they had been disappointed, not knowing, not dreaming, that He who was walking with them--was the Master Himself for whom their hearts were breaking. So oftentimes, we walk on our ways in life with sadness, crying out for God, asking, "Where is He? Where can I find Him?" while all the time He is closer to us than our dearest friends. How a simpler faith would brighten all things for us--and reveal the Master to us!

Another blessing from walking with God, is a heavenly atmosphere. We know the value of atmosphere even in human friendships and associations. Everyone has an atmosphere of his own. With some people we feel ourselves in an atmosphere that is sweet, exhilarating, inspiring. All our life is quickened by their influence. With others we find a depressing atmosphere about us, when we enter their presence. Dr. Arnold used to say, "We too much live, as it were, out of God's atmosphere."

They used to build observatories in the heart of cities--but it was found that the atmosphere was unsuitable. It was not clear--but was full of smoke and dust which obscured the vision. Now observatories are built on the highest points that can be found, where the air is pure, so that observations can be made without hindrance. God walks always on the high levels--and those who walk with Him must leave the low valleys with their fogs and mists--and go up to the mountain-tops!

Another blessing from walking with God, is the cleansing of our lives. The influence of pure and good companionship is always transforming. John lay on Christ's bosom--and became like Christ. When two live together in close and intimate association, they grow alike. Intimacy with God, can result only in becoming like God.

Sometimes we want to run ahead of God--we cannot wait for Him. "Enoch walked with God." He waited for God--was not impatient when God seemed slower than he wished. We must trust God when He delays to answer our prayers. He knows when to answer.

Then sometimes we hold back when God wants us to move quickly. Walking with God means that we must never parley nor dally when God moves on--but must move promptly, never falling behind.

So let us walk with God--wherever He leads us. The way may not be easy--but that is not our concern; our concern is only to walk with Him--without question, unfalteringly. He always leads in the right way--He will lead us home!

That was the way He led Enoch. "Enoch walked with God; then he was no more, because God took him away." People missed him one day and saw him no more--but he was not lost. God had simply lifted him over the river of death, so that he missed dying, and had taken him home!

Christian life here is very sweet. It is a glorious thing to walk with God in this world. But only in heaven can we get the whole of anything good, which was begun here. We are going on into that land where all faith's dreams shall be realized, where all love's visions shall be fulfilled. Nothing beautiful shall be lost. We shall meet our Christian friends on the other side; dying is but parting for a little while.

A child, about to fall asleep, threw her tired arms around her father's neck and said, "Good-night, dear father; I shall see you in the morning."

She was right. When we die, we are only saying to our remaining Christian friends, "Good-night!" And in a fairer land, we shall say "Good-morning!"

## The Story of the Flood

### Genesis 6-9

Whatever the physical cause of the Flood may have been, the moral cause was sin! This is made clear in the narrative in Genesis. It was because of the wickedness of the people--that God determined to destroy the human race! The wickedness hinted at, was startling and vile. We cannot understand the connection between the Divine judgment and great natural catastrophes like the Flood and the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah.

A large question is opened when we begin to think of this matter. What shall we say of storms, earthquakes, volcanic eruptions, which often cause great ruin? Must we say that there is always a moral

cause? Jesus seems to have forbidden this, in His allusion to the falling of the Tower of Siloam. So we dare not say that it was sin that directly caused any great catastrophe in ancient or modern history. We can understand how cholera and yellow fever are the penalties of the violation of the physical laws of sanitation.

But we can find a connection between the sin of the antediluvians, and the Flood; and between the wickedness of the Cities of the Plain--and the rain of fire which destroyed them. In the case of the Flood we may say that it was purely a miraculous visitation of judgment for sin--for we have a distinct statement of the fact.

The Flood was a great parable of coming eternal judgment. The wicked were swept from the earth--not without warning, for ample time was given while the ark was being built. Noah was also a preacher of righteousness. No doubt, like Jonah at Nineveh, he warned the people of the coming destruction, and called upon them to repent. But they heeded not the calls to repentance, and the judgment was not stopped.

The ark was not a normal ship. It was a great vessel built for floating on the water. It had neither sail nor oar nor rudder, and it would seem that it must have been guided in some supernatural way upon the rushing waters. God is always in His world, and He always keeps His eye upon His children--and reaches out His hand to protect, to rescue, and to keep His own.

During one of the great floods in the West, a few years ago, when the river overflowed its banks and swept houses, barns, buildings, and fences on its wild current, some men in a skiff saw a baby's cradle borne along in the stream. Rowing to it they found in it, sleeping as quietly and sweetly as it had ever slept in its mother's bosom--a little baby! God had cared for it in all the perils of waters. So God cared for Noah's ark in the great flood which swept from the earth all the human race, except for this one family.

We are not told anything about the experiences with the ark during the long months; or of the way the great, undirected vessel went on its strange voyage. We can only imagine the life the family lived, while shut in those long months. Perhaps they could see a little of what was going on outside--the rising floods, the destruction of lives, the terror and agony of the people who were perishing. Not a word is told of this, however, in the description of the appalling scenes as the waters rose.

A modern newspaper writer would have dwelt at length, in graphic fullness of detail, upon the tragic elements of the story--but the Bible narrative has not a word upon this phase of the subject. Nor have we any description of the feelings of Noah and his family, shut in with the varied mass of animals that were in the ark. We can easily imagine that the life was far from ideal, in its comfort and delight. But there must have been a serene sense of safety in the minds of Noah and his household, as the huge vessel went quietly on the floods. Yet was there not also a feeling of distress--as the dreadful work of judgment went on?

The Chaldean legend of the Deluge speaks of the sorrow caused by the great calamity. Noah, when he looked out upon the great sea which had swept all humanity from the earth--sat down and wept. The sense of desolation must indeed have been indescribable. No mention of this is made, however, in the Scriptural account. The Bible tells its story simply, plainly, baldly.

"God remembered Noah." He did not forget him for a moment. For a whole year, this rescued family were in the ark. For five months, the ark was floating about in the waters amid countless perils before it

grounded--but it received no damage. So in all the wildest storms and floods of life--God cares for His children. He is Lord of all the forces of nature. Not a drop of water, even in angriest billows--ever breaks away from the control of the God who is our truest and most loving Friend!

At length, the appointed months had all passed. The provisions in the ark were nearly exhausted. The confinement must have grown more and more disagreeable, becoming almost unbearable. The family in the great vessel had been saved--but what was to be the outcome? We are not given any hint of the feelings of the imprisoned household during the long months. At length, however, the time of release drew near. The waters subsided, and at last were dried up. Noah and his family must have been happy when they left the ark. They went out at God's command. The earth had been cleansed of its sin. All the evil men had been swept away!

Noah's family were now the only human beings left. They were to begin life in the new world. We can think of the feelings of the little company--as they went out of the ark and stood once more on the dry ground. They had been spared from the universal destruction and they were grateful. They had been spared for a purpose, too--to start the human race again on a new plane. They must have felt a deep sense of responsibility as they stepped out and remembered that it was theirs now to possess the renovated earth for the God who had spared them for this very purpose. They were now to lead in a new trial of the human race. What would they make of the world which was now committed to them?

They began right. "Noah built an altar unto the Lord . . . and offered burnt offerings on the altar." Several things were implied in this devout act. It expressed Noah's gratitude to God, for the great deliverance he and his family had experienced. It put God first, in the new life on which they were now to enter. They acknowledged Him as their God.

It was really, a devotion and a consecration of Noah and his family to God. They really laid themselves upon the altar, their lives, their hopes, their hearts! Then it was the taking possession of the renewed earth for God, as when the discoverer of a new land hoists the flag of his country and claims the territory for his nation. It was a fit beginning of the new life they were to live. The race which had perished had desecrated the earth with their sins, and now this little company of redeemed ones were pledging themselves to keep the earth pure and holy.

This pious act of Noah has its suggestions also for us. After every deliverance from trouble, from danger, from sickness, from any trial; and after rising from our bed each morning, we should first of all thank God for His mercy. To Him we are indebted for every comfort, every blessing, and we should never fail to express our gratitude. Are we thoughtful as we ought to be, in thus recording our gratitude to Him from whom all our blessings come? We, too, should put God first in every new work or effort we make, in every plan, transaction, and undertaking, and at the opening of every new day.

"In the beginning God" should be the motto of all our life. "Seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness" is our Master's summing up of all practical duty. "Acknowledge Him in all your ways, and He shall direct your paths" is an inspiring rule of life with a wonderful promise added. We should renew our consecration to God at each new beginning. But are there not many who never think of God, nor give Him any honor anywhere, at any time in their lives?

We should claim for God--all that our feet stand upon. We are sent out by Christ to conquer the world for Him. Every advance we make, every gain of influence, every new success and prosperity--we should take possession of for our King.

God is glad to have us recognize and confess Him. It would have grieved Him, if Noah had come out of the ark after His great deliverance, set up his home, taking possession of the fields, and begun his work of tillage and building--with no word of thanks, no honoring of Him who had brought him through the terrible dangers. But Noah devoutly recognized the Divine hand, and God was pleased, and accepted the homage and the offering. "The Lord smelled the pleasing aroma." He was pleased with Noah's sacrifice.

In the ancient worship, incense was the emblem of prayer, and as the incense burned upon the fire--it gave out sweet aromas. True worship is fragrant to God. He smells a sweet aroma.

The Lord then made a covenant with Noah, saying, "Never again will I curse the ground because of man, even though every inclination of his heart is evil from childhood. And never again will I destroy all living creatures, as I have done." We live now under the blessing of this covenant and promise--that never again will He destroy all living creatures, and that "As long as the earth endures, seedtime and harvest, cold and heat, summer and winter; day and night will never cease."

This promise must have been a great comfort to Noah and his family, as they stood there and looked upon a desolated earth. Terrible had been the experiences through which they had passed. There must have been in their hearts--a dread that this catastrophe might be repeated. But here was the promise of God that it should never be. "I confirm My covenant with you--that never again will all flesh be wiped out by the waters of a deluge; there will never again be a deluge to destroy the earth."

As the little company of saved ones stood there, this assurance must have been a great comfort to them. Ever since that day, too, this same promise has been a ground of confidence to the dwellers on the earth. Floods have left devastation in many places--but there has always been the abiding assurance of a "Hitherto shall you come--and no further; and here shall your proud waves be stayed!" as this ancient covenant has been remembered.

This Divine word is another illustration of the truth, that all nature's forces are under the control of God. He gathers and holds the winds of heaven in His fists! The waters He measures in the hollow of His hand. The Scriptures everywhere represent God as thus directly holding and controlling all the powers of nature, so that no tremendous energy of the elements can ever break from His grasp or go a hair's breadth beyond the bounds He sets for it!

Science now explains so many things which devout people in the past have loved to look upon, as the very 'acts of God', that some have begun to wonder whether, after all, our Father really has anything to do with nature. But what is nature? It is all God's handiwork. What are the "laws of nature"? They are nothing but God's ways of working. The powers that work so mightily in earth and air--God put there! Can these powers be greater than He who lodged them in His works? We need never fear that any scientific discovery shall show us a world beyond the control of God. We know, too, as Christians, that the God who made all and controls all--is our Father! And we are sure that we shall be securely sheltered and guarded in every danger.

The blessing of God makes rich. He accepted the consecration of Noah and his family, and then sent them out to possess the new earth for Him. They were to replenish it, starting a new human family that should be holy and pure. They were also given authority over the beasts, the fowls of the air, the fish of the sea, and over all life. It is a beautiful thought, that God's covenant with Noah included every living creature. It is astonishing how God's care extends even to the beasts. Think of God making a covenant with the cattle that roam the valleys, the sheep that graze in the meadows, the birds that fly in the air, and

even with the insects that chirp in the fields. We know, too, that this care is real. There are promises in other parts of the Bible, which contain the same assurance.

"He feeds the wild animals, and the young ravens cry to him for food!" Psalm 147:9

"He makes grass grow for the cattle!" Psalm 104:14

Then our Lord said, "Consider the ravens: They do not sow or reap, they have no storeroom or barn; yet God feeds them!" Luke 12:24

There is even a promise for the flowers. Our Lord says, "Consider how the lilies grow. They do not labor or spin. Yet I tell you, not even Solomon in all his splendor was dressed like one of these. If that is how God clothes the grass of the field..."

Of course the lesson for us from all this is the one which Jesus taught. If God cares for birds and flowers, how much more will He care for His own dear children!

God deals with His children in a most simple and gracious way. We see it in His gentleness to Noah and his family, after they left the ark. After their terrible experience they would naturally be in dread every time there was a continuous rain. But God assured them that He never would again destroy the earth with a flood. Then, to make their confidence still stronger--He made the rainbow, which probably was then appearing, to be a seal or pledge of His promise.

"And God said--I am giving you a sign as evidence of my eternal covenant with you and all living creatures. I have placed my rainbow in the clouds. It is the sign of my permanent promise to you and to all the earth. When I send clouds over the earth, the rainbow will be seen in the clouds, and I will remember my covenant with you and with everything that lives. Never again will there be a flood that will destroy all life!" Genesis 9:12-15

It is a beautiful thought that God allows Himself to be reminded of His covenant. He says that when He sees the rainbow in the cloud--He will remember His covenant. Every time we see a rainbow--we can look at it and think that God is looking at it at the same time and is remembering His ancient promise.

The Lord's Supper is another beautiful token of a Divine covenant. Christ wants us to receive it and by it to be reminded of His love and sacrifice and of His blessed covenant of redemption. It thus becomes to us--a pledge that all His promises will be sacredly fulfilled. It is a sweet thought that Christ, as He looks upon the same emblems also remembers--thinks o

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