

**RUNAWAY
WORLD**

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Contents

Introduction	7
1. In the Beginning	9
2. Day Seven	17
3. A House Called Eden	21
4. What Have You Done?	31
5. Among Thorns and Thistles	35
6. Beyond Eden's Gate	41
7. My Brother's Keeper	45
8. A Boy Named Seth	49
9. The Rest of the Family	51
10. Noah's Big Boat	55
11. And Now, the Flood	61
12. A New World	71
13. A Family From Ur	77
14. To Egypt and Back Again	81
15. A Rescue and a Promise	87
16. Ishmael, Sodom, and Isaac	93
17. Let's Go Home	101

In the Beginning

This chapter is based on Genesis 1.

Have you ever gone to heaven? If you answer yes, I won't believe you. But the Bible promises us that someday we can do just that.

That word *someday* is the hard part because, if you are anything like me, you want to do things right away. But since we can't make the trip to heaven now, we'll just have to wait.

While we're waiting to go to heaven, let's look at a few things God did a long time ago. This includes—well, you'll see; just don't rush me. Be patient, and we'll both find out what He did. But remember, it was long before you were born.

First, imagine a special door that, if we have the right key, will open to show us a time without the sun or moon in the sky. And the earth we live on? Well, it was very different.

Let's go exploring!

But wait; hold on. We will need the key. Now with our Bibles in hand, let's use them as our keys to open the door. Here we go!

Great, our keys work! The door is open. And would you look at what's on the other side? God went to a spot in space where He could do the work He had in mind. It was really dark. The Bible tells us in Genesis 1 that the first thing God did after He got there was to look that spot over. It says He hovered over the place and didn't touch it.

Why did He hover? Did He have a reason to do that? I think so.

Runaway World

The word *hover* means to float slowly over something or just stay in one place and not move around. I think God was looking the place over to find the right spot to make His move. He had a plan in mind, and He was in no hurry.

The first thing He saw was water—lots of water. It was all over the place, swirling around in a big pool. Something was keeping it in place so that it wouldn't fly off, but what was it? Today, we call that something gravity.

This is where my first question for you from the very beginning of this book comes in: God was about to do something without touching it; how could He do that? Well, He just opened His mouth and said a few words. That's all. It was no problem for Him!

He wanted light. So all He did was say, "Let there be light," and there it was—light everywhere. Brightness shone in all directions.

God stopped working right then to take a look at what He had done. When He did, He was really happy and satisfied with His job. So He decided He had done enough work for that day. He called it day one.

Now what do you think, do you want to go back and watch what God did after that? I do. Let's keep reading in our Bibles.

The next thing God did was consider the water. It was just floating around with nothing in it. Then God spoke to it. And when He did, the water began to move around in strange ways. Some water started to rise upward. The rest stayed right where it was.

The water had separated, leaving a space between. The water that went into the sky spread in all directions. When it finally stopped, it was like a great ceiling over the water below. This made the water below look like a giant, wet ball. After separating the waters, God ended His work for that day and called it day two.

When day three came around, God started working again. After He spoke this time, a loud roar gradually filled the silence. Water was on the move again! Flowing slowly at first, it was calm, clear, and smooth as glass. Then it began to leap and swirl wildly. To this wild water, God added something new. He made dry spots with rocks called land (which you might call dirt or solid ground) right in the middle of all

In the Beginning

that wet stuff. Hills appeared, and God made some of the water run into the lower dry places. These waters He called streams, rivers, and lakes. The remaining water He gathered into large areas called seas. Low mountains and flat places appeared as the water kept leaping, splashing, and plunging above and around other land areas, causing rising clouds of thin, wet spray.

Then words, more words, and lots of words came from the mouth of God. And as they did, trees popped up. Some were small. Others were big, tall, and wide. Many grew high into the air, where their tops could hardly be seen. On the ground around the trees, flowers suddenly sprang up. Then, on some of the smaller trees, oranges, apples, figs, pears, and all kinds of fruits grew from strong branches.

What a place! But God wasn't finished yet. There was more to do.

God kept on speaking, and as He did, whole hills were covered with a blanket of flowers. Then came ferns and cacti with brilliant flowers of their own. But God didn't stop there either. He was having a good time!

Soft carpets of grass, silky and green, unrolled. And the more they spread, the faster they went until they stretched out of sight, past the horizon—there was no end to the green grass. The new land was covered with living beauty. The grass spread under trees and around bushes. It wrapped God's globe like a tight-fitting glove.

Green must be one of God's favorite colors. He sprinkled it on tall, short, and shiny plants, on trees of all shapes, and across the ground. The green grass waved in the wind, and seeds spread by the millions. Flowers big and small, tall and short, glowed with green leaves, mingling with the grass in large numbers. The flowers' bright colors—red, yellow, blue, orange, pink, and purple—sparkled. Each petal seemed to dance with the gentle breezes. There were bushes too. Many had sweet-tasting, juicy berries hanging from their branches.

Other surprises came on the fourth day. This time when God spoke, a gigantic, round ball of fire appeared high above the earth. It was the sun, whose light is so blinding that we can't look at it straight on. God made it powerful and brilliant so that it would light up everything He

Runaway World

had made. The sun's warm light still touches every field and stream. Flowers open their faces and stretch in its bright glow. Trees, touched by the wind, sway while their leaves shine with the sun's gentle touch.

God knew that when the sun shone on one half of the earth as it turned, the other half would have no light at all. This half would be in the dark. What did He do about that? He spoke more words, and another light appeared on the dark side of the sky. But this time the light was not as bright as the sun. It had a soft glow instead. It was round like the sun but not as big. Its light touched things on the earth with a soft, silvery shine. We call this the moon.

So, you see, when the sun is shining on one half of the world, the moon is doing the same thing on the other half. We are never in total darkness. God thought of everything.

Do you know that the earth never stands still—not ever? It moves and spins in space as it goes around the sun. And the moon moves around the earth.

God made the earth and moon this way so that we would have morning, daytime, evening, and night. And days turn into weeks, weeks pass into months, and months become years. This is God's great clock.

Wow! Day four was quite a day, and God saw that His new world was very beautiful.

But day five was coming up fast. God must have smiled as He thought about His plans for the fifth day.

Once again, when the new day arrived, God's voice was heard all over the earth. Only this time, things began to happen as never before, because strange-looking creatures began to swim in the streams, rivers, lakes, and oceans. These were fish—thousands, even millions and millions of them.

Some were big and fat. Others were so small they were almost hidden among the plants growing in the water. There were blue, silver, gold, and even yellow fish. There were giant whales too. They leaped out of the water and swam. They made great waves when they chased each other and played in the waters of the earth.

And God had more things in mind for day five. Just you wait and see!

In the Beginning

He looked at the sky, and as He did so, He said something, and the sound of His great voice reached deep into the heavens. Then, before His words began to fade away, great flocks of birds began flying about. Their quacking and honking noises filled the air, along with their songs. God had made millions and millions of birds. They came swooping down across the ground as they landed in trees, under bushes, on water, and on dry land. Some ran, while others waddled or hopped. Their glowing colors in stripes and spots were like small rainbows of red, blue, green, purple, orange, white, yellow, and black. There were tall birds, short round ones, and a few with long necks. Many lived on the water. Many made homes in tree branches or in the grass. They had short feathers, long feathers, and flat feathers too. Some feathers were shiny and fluffy.

The sound of the birds was music for all the earth to enjoy. Things were not quiet anymore, and I am sure God smiled when He saw all the things He had made.

What a week this had been so far!

As day six came around, we may have wondered whether there was anything left for God to do. Just you wait and see.

Something was missing, and God knew it. His bright new world was not yet finished, so once again the thunder of His voice was heard. At His word, camels suddenly appeared. Next came strange-looking creatures called elephants, and as He spoke, more and more odd creatures popped up. Warm rays of sunshine made these new animals do all kinds of things. They leaped, ran, crawled, hopped, swung, or climbed.

There were big creatures, and there were small creatures—tall ones and short ones too. Many had wet noses, while others had cold ones. The animals were everywhere.

Some walked or hopped on four legs, and others on two. There were big eyes, tiny ears, long necks, and short legs. Some had claws, while others did not. Each one was different from the other. No two were alike.

They walked over hills and through wide fields, their voices and cries echoing and reechoing across the land. In forests and valleys, barks,

Runaway World

squeaks, howls, and trumpet calls were heard.

As the hours of day six stretched toward evening, an exciting thing took place: God started working on His greatest creation. But He didn't use His voice this time. Instead, He bent way down, touched the ground, and began moving dirt around with His hands. What was He doing? Was He writing?

It looked like He was making a statue. There were hands, feet, two long legs, and if we took a closer look, we could see a handsome face.

God stood and gazed down at what He had just made. It was not moving or alive like the other things He made, but He smiled. Then He bent over for a closer look at what lay at His feet. Was He going to make a change?

What He made was nothing like the fish, animals, or birds He had already created. Did He forget something? No! God never forgets anything.

Tell me if I am wrong—I don't think I am—but doesn't what God made look just like Him? So why does He want a closer look?

Well now, can you believe your eyes? God blew His own breath right on the head of that stone-like statue. Wow! The statue opened its eyes and started to move. The first thing it saw was the smiling face of God.

This living being was God's crowning gift to the earth. With His fingers, God had shaped, from the ground itself, a stunning form that looked like Himself. And He named this creature—the first man—Adam.

Adam began to talk. Words spilling from his mouth, he talked and talked as God patiently listened. God answered every question, one after another.

Finally, God said, "I have something I want you to do."

"I'll do whatever You ask," was Adam's answer.

God motioned and said, "Let's sit under that tree so that we can talk."

Adam followed, and when they were seated, God called in a loud voice, "Come, all of you!" Immediately, the animals appeared in front of them.

In the Beginning

“This is your job, Adam. I want you to name every one of the animals for Me.”

So the parade began: deer, dogs, cats, bears, lions, squirrels, monkeys, elephants, giraffes, tigers, and birds too. Adam’s job seemed endless as more and more animals came.

At last, when it was finally over, Adam seemed to have a question.

“What’s on your mind?” God asked.

Adam wasn’t quick to answer. “I . . .,” he finally said. “I saw that every creature had a partner. There are two of every kind; they are not alone.” He hesitated and then added, “Why is it that I don’t have someone for myself?”

Instead of answering him outright, God asked Adam to lie down on the ground. Once Adam did this, God put him into a deep sleep. Why did He do this? Wait and see; just be patient.

Next, God did something strange. He operated on Adam and removed one of his ribs. Then God healed the wound and restored Adam to normal. From that rib, God created another human form—only it was different from Adam in many ways. When He finished, it was time for Adam to wake up.

Adam stretched and yawned as God helped him to his feet. But in the middle of a second yawn, he froze. He gasped in disbelief, and his mouth dropped open. He rubbed his eyes several times and blinked, for there, standing in front of him, was the most magnificent sight. What he saw was dazzling and had a covering of soft, golden light—God was leading this stunningly beautiful creature right up to him.

This was the companion Adam had wanted: someone to walk and talk with him, to always be at his side, and to be a part of him forever. This was his wife, Eve.

Whenever I think of those fantastic six days of Creation week, I am amazed, and I haven’t even mentioned day seven yet. God saved a magnificent gift for last!