

From the Beginning to Judgment (Gen. 1-19)

In the Beginning (Gen. 1-3)

Genesis is the book of beginnings, but before anything material existed, there was God (Gen. 1:1; John 1:1). God created the heavens and the earth, which includes all things visible and invisible (Col. 1:16; Heb. 11:4). The universe, and life itself, did not happen by chance (Acts 17:25). Humans are not the products of naturalistic evolution. Rather, God created. He spoke, and everything came into existence and is upheld by the word of His power (Heb. 1:3).

On the sixth day of creation, God made man in His own image (1:26-27). Adam and Eve were placed in the Garden of Eden and told to tend it. He gave them much freedom, but did place one restriction on them: they were not to eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. If they did, they would die.

The devil, in the form of a serpent, deceived Eve, and she ate the fruit of the forbidden tree. Then Adam ate with her. They knew better, and when they realized it, they tried, unsuccessfully, to hide from God. As a result of their sin, curses were placed upon man, woman, the ground, and the serpent. Sin had entered the world, and death, physically and spiritually, came as a result. However, God did leave one ray of hope by saying that the seed of woman would crush the head of the serpent (3:15).



Cain, Abel, and Seth (Gen. 4-5)

Cain and Abel were sons of Adam and Eve (Gen. 4). Abel was a shepherd and Cain a tiller of the ground. They both brought a sacrifice to the Lord. Abel brought the the

best of his flock, and Cain brought an offering from the fruit of the ground. God respected Abel's offering, but did not accept Cain's. Cain was angry because of this, and he killed Abel. For this, he was cursed and became a wanderer. Eve had another son, named Seth, who would preserve a lineage through which God would work. Chapter 5 follows this line of people. Since the consequence of sin was death, Genesis 5 stresses this by repeating the phrase, "And he died."

Noah, the Flood, Babel, and the Nations (Gen. 6-11)

People were becoming so evil and corrupt that God decided it was time to bring judgment. The "sons of God," by marrying the "daughters of men," were corrupted. God determined that He would destroy the wicked and start over through Noah, who had found God's favor. God's method of destruction was a massive flood.

God told Noah about His plans and commanded Noah to build a huge ark (like a big box) in order to save his family and

preserve animal kinds on the earth. Noah followed God's instructions exactly; and while building the ark, he preached. No one listened.

Noah, his wife, his three sons and their wives, along with various animal kinds, were saved through the flood. Through them, God would populate the earth once again. The account of Noah is a wonderful example of how God's grace works with man's faith and obedience. Noah is an example to us of one who, through faith, persevered in doing what was right, though so many around him continued to do wrong.

As the population grew, nations began to separate and become more distinguished. However, there was resistance to this, and the efforts at the tower of Babel demonstrate efforts to build a unified mankind by making a name for themselves and essentially trying to become their own gods. God would not let this happen, so He saw to it that they were scattered.

Abraham (Gen. 12-19)

Abraham was chosen by God to be the one through whom He would carry out His plan for mankind's salvation. God called Abram to leave his home and go to a land that God would show him. By faith, Abraham went (Heb. 11:8). God made several great promises to him (Gen. 12:1-7), and these promises are the foundation for following the rest of the Bible story. God promised Abraham that his descendants would become a great nation (Israel). God promised that these descendants would be given the land (vs. 7). Most importantly, it would be through Abraham that "all the families of the earth" would be blessed (see also Gen. 22:18). This seed would be Jesus Christ, and the blessing is the removal of

sins through Him (Acts 3:25-26; Gal. 3:16).

Abraham struggled with knowing how God would fulfill the promise, and even had one child (Ishmael) through Hagar. This did not turn out as planned. However, God reaffirmed the promises, and Isaac would be the child of promise.

In the meantime, Abraham showed great faith. For example, we see this in his going after the kings who took Lot (Gen. 14). We see it in his pleading with God over the fate of Sodom and Gomorrah, where Lot lived (Gen. 18-19). Even so, throughout these chapters, we find how serious God is about the problem of sin. Where sin is, judgment is sure to come.

In these opening chapters, we find great lessons about faith, grace, obedience, and judgment.

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