

Prelude To Teaching Genesis

Understanding How The Bible As A Whole Fits Together

The Bible is unified and is one book from Genesis to Revelations. Jesus is the subject of the entire Bible. One unifying thread in the Bible is the authorship of God. Every word of the Bible is God's word. The Bible contains all that God wants us to know about Him. Every word written is for our instruction, Romans 15:4 *"For whatever was written in former days was written for our instruction, that through endurance and through the encouragement of the Scriptures we might have hope."*

The Bible makes it clear that God has a unified plan for all of history. He has a purpose--a plan for the fullness of time, to unite all things in him (Christ), things in heaven and things on earth. He has a purpose for doing this—Ephesians says 1:12 *"so that we who were the first to hope in Christ might be to the praise of his glory."* God created us for His glory. This plan He has always had Isaiah 46:9-10, *"remember the former things of old; for I am God, and there is no other; I am God, and there is none like me, declaring the end from the beginning and from ancient times things not yet done, saying, 'My counsel shall stand, and I will accomplish all my purpose.'" This plan is on His time Gal 4:4-5* But when the fullness of time had come, God sent forth his Son, born of woman, born under the law, to redeem those who were under the law, so that we might receive adoption as sons.

The Promises Of God

The work of Christ on Earth is the most important event in history. We look back to the cross and also forward to the second coming of Christ to the finish of His work. 2Peter 3:13 but according to his promise we are waiting for new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells. The unity of God's plan causes Him to make predictions of future events and for these promises to be fulfilled such as the coming of the Messiah. Isaiah 9:6-7 *"For to us a child is born, to us a son is given; and the government shall be upon his shoulder, and his name shall be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. Of the increase of his government and of peace there will be no end, on the throne of David and over his kingdom, to establish it and to uphold it with justice and with righteousness from this time forth and forevermore. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will do this."* There is one future prediction still to come see 2 Peter 3:13 above.

Christ In The Old Testament

Since God's plan focuses on Christ and His glory, it is natural that all the Old Testament points toward Jesus 2 Cor. 1:20 *"For all the promises of God find their Yes in him. That is why it is through him that we utter our Amen to God for his glory."* Jesus spent time teaching that the O.T. does point to Himself. Luke 24:44 *"Then he said to them", "These are my words that I spoke to you while I was still with you, that everything written about me in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms must be fulfilled."* Luke 24:45-48 *"Then he opened their minds to understand the Scriptures, and said to them, Thus it is written, that the Christ should suffer and on the third day rise from the dead, and that repentance and forgiveness of sins should be proclaimed in his name to all nations, beginning from Jerusalem. You are witnesses of these things. "* He God opened their mind to understand the Scriptures Luke 24:45. The Old Testament as a whole looks forward to the actual accomplishment of salvation that took place once-for-all in the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

In what ways does the OT look forward to Christ? There are specific promises in the OT directly pointing forward to the coming of Christ as the Messiah. (Micah 5:2, Isaiah 7:13-14 & 9:6-7 & 40:3-4 & 53:1-4 & Psalm 45:6-7 & 2:7 & Psalm 22:1-21 & 78:1-2, Jeremiah 31:15, Hosea 11:1, Zechariah 9:19. The whole Bible points to Jesus. The Old Testament points forward and the New Testament points back to Jesus.

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Genesis

For around 2500 years God's story was an audible story told over and over down through the generations. This was a very reliable way to keep history, and this way still survives in societies without written languages. The first five books of the Bible were written by Moses. They are a section of the Old Testament known as the Pentateuch (five books) or the Torah (law).

Genesis tells how God created everything, and that His creation was very good because there was no sin. Soon Adam and Eve sinned and all the troubles of the world came from that first sin. After the first sin, man could not stop sinning which brought God's punishment on man. We learn that God punishes sin with fierce punishment. We also learn that as soon as man sinned God started the process of saving man from his sins and restoring a good relationship with man. God announces in Genesis 12 that He is going to work His plan of salvation through Abram (Abraham) and his descendants, who include Jesus.

Scientists and many people who call themselves Christian say that some of the Bible, especially the creation story in Genesis is just a myth. We humans are not able to pick and choose what we want to believe from the Bible. We must believe all that the Bible says or we don't need anything from the Bible. The Bible says in 2 Timothy 3:16 that, "All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness." We must believe that God created everything.

The beginning of time Genesis chapters 1-11 contain the first two thousand years. There are four main events in these eleven chapters. First is the creation story found in Genesis chapters 1&2. It is very important that we understand this creation story—why? The world teaches evolution which is the idea that everything was created by just happening without God doing the creation. This is clearly wrong. The Bible says God spoke and created everything out of nothing which is correct. John 1:3 tells us that nothing was created without Jesus. He is our creator and also He keeps everything working.

First Main Event:

1. There are many lessons from the first verse of the Bible.
 - A. The Bible begins with the statement, "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth." The question we should have is what beginning. Where did God come from to create the heavens and the earth?
 - B. Psalm 90:2 and Revelation 1:4 tell us that God has no beginning and that He has no end; that God is eternal. God has always existed.
 - C. As a human being we can't fully understand the idea of God always existing and not having a beginning. We can understand that God and we humans have no ending, and we know when we humans had our birth-date. Our brains just don't understand that God has always existed and has no beginning.
 - i. There are a couple of Bible verses that help us understand that we are not supposed to understand everything in the Bible. These verses are Deuteronomy 29:29 and Isaiah 55:8-9. They explain that God has his secrets and that He thinks differently than we do. The things we don't understand from the Bible are not the important things. The Bible makes the important things such as salvation by faith alone and not by works very easy to understand.

D. Again we ask is the creation account of Genesis fact or fiction?

- i. Other parts of the Bible say Genesis is true. Psalm 136:5-9 tell how God created everything.
- ii. Jesus showed that he believed the Genesis story of creation by quoting the Genesis account about how God created man and woman. He quoted Genesis 1:2 and 2:24. He also said in Mark 13:19 that God was the creator.

E. The statement that, “In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth” tell us that God created everything at once and he created everything from nothing. In other words, there was nothing and all at once the heavens and the earth were created. It did not take a long time as the evolutionist say it took for life to begin; rather it was done all at once in a few days time.

F. We must consider how great God’s creation is. Remember as Revelation 4:11 says, God created everything by His will; it was easy for God. As you look in the sky at night you see more stars than you can count. The actual number of stars is many billions and they seem to go on forever. We can’t even imagine how big the universe is, but yet the bible tells us in Psalm 147:4 that, “He determines the number of the stars; he gives to all of them their names.” Just think about how great our God is, He made and named all the stars.

2. Evolution is believed to be how most people think life developed. This theory doesn’t believe in God it believes that life just started out of various chemicals, and we humans developed out of lower life forms such as monkeys.

A. There are problems with the evolution fiction.

- i. One problem with this idea is where did everything come from if God did not create everything? The evolutionist has no answer for this.
- ii. Another problem is that there is no evidence showing how one animal or plant can change into another type of plant or animal.
- iii. Another problem is that all life is too complex for it to have just happened.
- iv. Why do people believe in evolution? It is because enemies of God want to believe in anything besides God even when it makes no sense, and evolution makes no sense.

3. Genesis 1:3-23 tells the story of the first five days of creation. I will talk about the sixth day of creation separately because it was on the sixth day that He created man. Man is special and I want to separately discuss man’s creation. There are three main things I want to point out about creation.

A. First is the point that God stands behind all creation.

- i. God is the One through whom all came into existence. In other words, God created everything. In John 1:3 we are again told that God (Jesus) created everything. God without any help made everything. Note that God created everything out of nothing.
- ii. It is important to notice that God created everything just by speaking. It was an easy thing for God to make everything and He did this all by Himself.
- iii. Knowing that God created everything we should be pleased with creation and we should praise God for His creation. We must be careful to praise God and not creation. We must praise the creator and not what He created. Most pagans worship something which they themselves created which is clearly wrong; this is idolatry.

- iv. Since God by His will made everything including man we should give God our undivided obedience and devotion. We should give Him all our praise, all our worship, all our service, and all our love. We should be completely devoted to God.

B. The second point about creation is that God created everything in an orderly way over a six day period. God likes order and we should live orderly lives.

C. God announces the judgment about His creation in verses 10, 12, 18, 21, 25, and 31 that His creation is good. We must also acknowledge that His creation is good. We should;

- i. We should be thankful for His creation and praise Him for it. We should value creation because God made it.
- ii. We should delight in creation. This means we should enjoy His creation. Look around and see the beauty of what he created.
- iii. We should act responsibly toward creation. We should try to preserve God's creation. For example, we can cut trees down to use them for building or firewood, but we should replant them. We should never cut them down just to destroy them. We should not throw our trash all around us. We should not kill animals just to kill them. We should not exterminate animals, such as elephants, just to sell their ivory. We should respect the world God created.
- iv. Finally, we should look at creation and think about it which should cause us to value it. We should look to God who made everything and trust Him. Trusting God is what Matthew 6:26 & 30 teaches us.

4. The fifth day of creation as reported in Genesis 1; 24-27 is a special day of creation. God created the land animals including man who is the pinnacle or top of God's creation man is different from all the rest of creation. There are two things different in the creation of man from everything else God created.

A. The first difference is listed in verse 26 where God gives all of creation to man to be the ruler of God's creation. God gave man a lot of responsibility when He made man ruler of the earth. Going back to what we said earlier, we should respect and take care of the world God created.

B. Genesis 1:27 Man was created in the image of God. This means that:

- i. We have personality just like God has a personality, and nothing else has a personality. Personality means we have knowledge and feelings such as religious feeling. We are able to reason and create things. We have a will which allows us to choose right and wrong behavior. Our personality allows us to worship God which no other animal can do.
- ii. All other animals are controlled by instinct and they can't choose to do right; the other animals can only do what their instinct tells them to do. Only man knows the difference between right and wrong.
- iii. Being created in the image of God means that humans have spirituality. This means we can have communion or spend time with God because we have a spirit just as God is a spirit. John 4:24 tells us that, "God is spirit, and those who worship him must worship in spirit and truth." Humans alone out of all creation can worship God. This means that God loves us in a special way that He doesn't love the rest of His creation. Our spirit is eternal unlike animals who die and are totally finished.

5. Genesis 1:26-28 God tells Adam that he is to rule over the earth. 1 Cor. 6:2-3 says the saints will judge the world. We are not just animals; we are rulers because we have a special relationship with God as a result of being made in His image.

A. The passage teaches us that we humans are created special; in the image of God. Because of this, we are given responsibility for ruling the earth. We have already mentioned that man is to rule the earth properly. We are to treat God's creation with respect.

B. The question often asked in Uganda is whether family planning or birth control is wrong because of Genesis 1:28. While this is an important question in Africa, it does not appear to be important in the west. I say this because the commentaries I read about this passage do not mention the part about filling the earth at all. Instead, they stress the role we humans play in ruling over the earth.

- i. I think we must interpret this passage as a whole starting in verse 26 and concluding in verse 28.
- ii. At the time this order was given, there were only two people on this whole earth, and obviously the earth needed to be filled with people in order for them to rule. Are there now enough people to rule over the earth? Let me share my opinion about this. I say we humans have fulfilled the commandment to fill the earth and that family planning is not a sin because there are enough humans to rule the earth.
- iii. Following are some reasons that I say this:
 1. The population of the earth has increased from the original 2 to over 7,000,000,000 people today.
 2. Today, there are more than enough people on earth to rule the earth. We see evidence for this statement by observing how man has caused many animals either to become extinct or almost extinct. Many parts of the earth are ruined because of man's actions such as the earth slides off mountains because of what man has done.
 3. Many parts of the world experience hunger and famine because there are more people than food in these areas. The earth has too many people.
- iv. While it is not for any of us to say how many children people should produce, I can say, based on 1 Timothy 5:8, that God only wants you to have as many children as you can provide for. You must provide food, shelter, clothing, medical care, parent's time, and education for each child you produce.
- v. Families in most western countries only have two children per family. They have reasons for this such as:
 1. There are enough people in their countries.
 2. Raising children is expensive and unlike Uganda, western countries will make parents pay for their children. You cannot just abandon the children. Failure to pay to support your children in the United States will result in the parents being put in jail.
 3. Christian culture requires that parents provide for their children.
- vi. The type of family planning which prevents conception is not a sin. The type of family planning which kills the baby after conception is murder. Because of modern medicine safe and effective birth control is available.

6. Gen 1:31 it was a perfect creation. Why? Because there was no sin just like in heaven.

7. Genesis 2:1-3 God establishes the seventh day as a holy day as a day of rest. During Old Testament time the Law required the Sabbath to be followed. It is still important today to set a day aside for worship and rest from our daily work. Mark 2:27 gives us a good guide about what our heart attitude should be about observing the Sabbath. Mark says, "And he said to them, "The Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath." What should we do about setting a day apart, what should our behavior be?

A. Christians should gather together in corporate worship. We worship on Sunday instead of Saturday like the Jews mostly because it was on Sunday that Jesus rose from the grave.

B. Humans need a day away from work each week. God designed us to need a day to rest and relax and spend time with family. We work much better if we take a day off and we get more total work done if we work six days per week than if we work seven days a week.

C. What is a Christian to do on Sunday?

- i. The Christian day of worship is not a day of forced rest like the Sabbath day in the Old Testament. Sunday, for the Christian, is a day of joy. It is a day we rejoice in worship and fellowship with other Christians.
- ii. Sunday is a day of activity for the Christian. He goes to worship, he visits the sick and elderly, and he spends time with his family.
- iii. Sunday is a good day to tell others about Jesus and about the salvation found through him.

8. Genesis 2: God repeats the creation story to speak more about humans who are the most important part of creation. This is not a separate creation account rather as I said it allows God to tell more about the pinnacle (top) of His creation which is humans.

A. Chapter 2 tells us more about the creation of man.

- i. Verse 7 is a detailed report about how man was made by God. This story shows that God was very careful about how He created man. He took the effort to carefully form man. God then breathed life into Adam. This is very intimate. God only did this for man because He loves man so much. Even now our life continues only because God gives us each breath of air we breathe. God thus shows that He has a special interest in man; that he doesn't have for other creatures. We will see in chapter three that God even communicates face to face with man.

B. Chapter 2 also tells us more about how God provided, in a special caring way, for man.

- i. Verse 8 reports that God showed His love by preparing a special garden for them to live in. This was a special place to live in where everything man needed was provided for him.
- ii. He also gave Adam the special work of naming all the animals. It is a pleasure to do the work assigned by God.

9. Chapter 2:8-17 tells us about Eden which is a real place. Many enemies of the church tell us that Eden is not a real place and that Eden is just a fable and we should not believe the stories the Bible tells us about what happened there. I am a Christian and so I believe that the stories about Eden are true.

A. Moses, who wrote the book of Genesis, even tells us the location of Eden. When Moses wrote the book he was wandering in the Sanai desert and so Moses said in verse 8 that Eden was in the east.

B. Then in verses 10-14 Moses gave us place names such as the names of rivers. Today we don't know where all these places were located but we do know where the Tigris and Euphrates rivers are located today. So it is important to believe that Eden was a real place where the events Moses tells us about such as the fall of man happened.

10. Verses 15-25 tell how God give Adam work to do and a helper. He also tells Adam that he was not allowed any contact with one tree in the garden.

A. God tells Adam the jobs he is to do, and the work is responsible work. He tells Adam to take care of the plants in the garden and to name every animal. It is plain that man is supposed to work. Verse 18 tells that God gave man so much work to do that Adam needs a helper, and so God decided to create a helper.

11. Verses 21-25 talk about the creation of a woman called Eve and tells us about the special relationship man has with woman.

A. Chapter 2 verse 18-24 also gives details about the relationship men and women have through the creation of Eve. Verse 18 teaches us that woman was created to be a helper to man and verse 24 gives us the basis for godly marriage which is that we become one person when we marry and since we would never abuse ourselves we will never abuse our wives.

- i. The Bible tells us that woman was made to be a helper and not a slave. Husbands and wives are to work together to raise their children.
- ii. We will also never divorce because once we are married we become one person and we can't truly be divided. God hates all divorce.
- iii. Also, marriage is to be between one man and one woman only.

II The second main event of the first eleven chapters is the fall of man.

1. Gen. 3:1-6 Sin enters the world—man had free will to choose to obey God or to disobey God; Adam chose to disobey and this is the first sin. Man has been choosing to sin ever since. All the troubles of the world come from this one act. Romans 3:23 says all people sin.

A. Humans like to blame someone else for their sins but who is really guilty? Often, humans try to blame Satan but both Adam and Eve chose to sin. No one made them sin just as we choose to sin each time we sin; no one makes us sin. We must accept responsibility for our own actions.

B. Many people blame Eve because she sinned first, but the Bible says the sin is the responsibility of Adam. Read 1 Corinthians 15:21-22 and Romans 5:12, 17, And 19 to see that the responsibility for the first sin is Adam's. This is because God placed Adam in full charge of the garden. Adam should have stopped Eve from sinning. However, Eve did choose to sin so she is also guilty.

2. The result of this sin is that man becomes separated from God; he lost his close relationship with God and death enters the world. All the troubles of the world such as disease, wars, famine, murder, etc. begin. Genesis 1:31 told us the earth was a good place but with sin this changed. Every bad thing in the world came from this one sin. All life suffers from this sin.

A. We became enemies of God see Romans 5:10. Ephesians 2:1 tells us we are dead to God in our sin. Up until this sin Adam and Eve had a good relationship with God which now ended because of this sin. Romans 5:12 says that death came to all men because of this sin.

3. Now in verses 7 we see that Adam and Eve know they are guilty and their reaction is to try to hide their sin. They look for ways to hide the sin.

A. The first way they tried to hide their sin was that they tried to deny their guilt. They tried to shift the blame away from themselves. Adam tried to blame Eve and Eve tried to blame Satan. This practice of blaming others for our sins continues today; often we blame something else or someone else for our sins.

- i. This constant denial of our guilt causes people to do worse and worse sins as time goes on. We convince ourselves that what we are doing is not really sin or it is not our fault so we keep sinning and doing worse sins.
- ii. This is what Paul is talking about in Romans 1:21-32. Let's see what Romans 1 says about the steps of sin.

- ◆ *. Verse 21-22 says that when men and women reject the knowledge of God they become foolish or stupid.

- ◆ *. Verse 26-27 says that God therefore allows them to increase in being sinful. God is now talking about unnatural sex such as homosexual behavior, adultery, fornication.

- ◆ *. Verse 28 tells us that because of their sinful behavior God allows their whole being to do the things they really know are wrong, and they do their sins without even thinking they are doing wrong. Verses 29-31 tell us that it is not only sexual sins that they are guilty of. These verses list many sins.

- ◆ *. Verse 32 tells us that the people sinning know they are doing wrong but they continue to sin and they even encourage other people to join them in their sins.

B. We see here that eating forbidden fruit seems like a small sin and should not cause a big problem. The problem is that small sins grow into big sins and the sinner soon gets used to sinning and he forgets that he is sinning and the sins keep getting worse.

C. An example is how the first time a husband hits his wife he is overwhelmed with his sin and wishes he could undo it. The next time he hits his wife it doesn't bother him so much. Soon he is seriously beating her and it doesn't bother him at all.

D. Their sin also caused them shame and so they tried to hide their sin. At the end of chapter 2 they were naked but they had no shame, however, now their sin causes shame so they tried to make clothes for themselves.

E. Another futile way to try to hide sin is by allowing time to go by so that the sin could be forgotten in time and the sin would go away.

F. Another way to try to cause sin to go away is by finding safety in numbers of people. Many times people see other people sinning so they feel it is all right to do what other people are doing and the sin will go away. This will not work. The only thing that can make sin go away is, according to 1 John 1:7, the blood of Jesus.

4. Verse 8 reports that because of their sin Adam and Eve tried to hide from God. They are not the last ones to try to hide from God. Thousands of years later Jonah tried to hide but he couldn't. There are some lessons to be learned by trying to hide from God.

A. First, it is futile; it is impossible to hide from God. We need to understand that there is no place where we can hide from God. Psalm 139:7-12 says God is everywhere; there is no hiding from Him. Trying to hide from God is foolish.

B. Second, hiding from God increases our misery; after all we are hiding from the one who gives us good things. See James 1:17. The prodigal son in Luke 15:11-32 suffered when he left his father. Life became good when he returned to his father. If you are hiding from God and suffering, return to Him; come to Him to receive His blessings.

C. The third reason to stop running away from God is that you are running from someone who loves you and cares for you even when you run away. Read the story of Hosea to see this. We should come running to God who offers us salvation through Jesus.

5. Genesis 3:9-14 tells of the meeting between God, Satan, and Adam and Eve.

A. We see in verse 9 that God is asking where Adam and Eve are. Actually, God already knows where they are; He is calling them to come forward and be examined about the sin.

B. Verse 12-13 both Adam and Eve admit to sinning but again they try to blame someone else for their sin. It is best that we confess our sins and not try to shift blame. Every person is responsible for his own sins.

C. God quickly pronounces His sentence on Satan, and in a few verses we will see Him pronounce punishment on Adam and Eve.

6. Genesis 3:15 is one of the most important verses in the Bible. It is the first Messianic prophecy; the first of many Old Testament prophecies about the coming of the Messiah and the work He will do. As we look at the verse we see that God announces first that there will be enmity or hatred between Satan and Adam and Eve and also all their offspring which means all people.

A. God here is looking forward to the cross or the crucifixion of Jesus. When God talks about Jesus bruising the head of Satan, God is saying that Jesus will defeat Satan on the cross; Satan loses the war with Jesus. When God talks about Satan bruising the heel of Jesus, it means that Jesus will be injured on the cross, but Jesus wins the war and defeats Satan. A head injury will kill a person quicker and more certainly than a heel injury.

B. Verse 15 shows us God's grace. God's grace is defined as God providing for us in every possible way, both physically and spiritually, in spite of the condemnation we deserve. In other words, we humans don't deserve anything from God except punishment, but Jesus even gives us His righteousness which saves us from our sins and allows us to be at peace with God. Romans 5:20-21 tells us that it God's grace which saves us.

7. Genesis 3:16-19 are a lesson in punishment. There is much to learn here. We learn that all life suffers from this first sin see Romans 8:22-23.

A. First we look at Eve's punishment. God says that women will suffer in childbirth. This means not just the painful act of giving birth, but also all the suffering she will endure raising the child who will be born with a sinful nature.

- i. Verse 16 is often misunderstood to mean that the husband is like a king and that the wife must submit to him without question even if he is abusive or stupid. The idea of the wife submitting to the husband is not a new idea that came after the fall. Chapter 2 :18 & 22 tell us that Eve was made to be a helper for Adam and she was given to Adam. However, she was given to Adam in a time when there was no sin in her, so her obedience to Adam was perfect. However after the fall she behaved in a sinful way to Adam and he also treated her in a sinful way.
- ii. Ephesians 5:22, 25 give us insight into how this obedience and submission should be done. Verse 22 says a wife's obedience should be modeled after her obedience to the Lord, and a husband's rule should be modeled after the rule of Jesus over the church. A practical way for this to work out is that the husband will love his wife and treat her in love just as Christ loves His church. It will be easy for the wife to submit to the husband if she knows that everything the husband does toward her is done in love.

B. Now we look at Adam's punishment which has three parts.

- i. The first part, verse 17, says that the ground is cursed because of Adam's sin. Before sin, the ground easily produced good things to eat. Now the ground produces things such as thorns and weeds which make it harder to grow food.
- ii. The second part of Adam's judgment is that the work Adam has to do to earn a living is difficult; while before the fall the work was easy. We see in our lives today that we must work hard to earn our living.
- iii. The third part of Adam's judgment, verse 19, is that the end of all his work and suffering is death.

C. Because there is much misunderstanding about punishment for sin, we will study this subject further. Sin is very serious and God punishes all sin. There are two types of punishment for people.

- i. First is earthly punishment which is given to all people whether they are Christian or not. An example is that any person who commits adultery with an HIV infected person can get aids and suffer and die. We must understand that God punishes Christians for their sins while they are still living.
- ii. Then there is eternal punishment. The non-Christian or unsaved person goes to hell when he dies and he is punished forever for his sins. Meanwhile, the Christian person has the penalty for his sins paid for him by Jesus, and so he goes to heaven. Remember, Jesus was punished on the cross for every sin ever committed by every Christian. We can only go to heaven if our sins are forgiven because we are Christian.

8. Verse 21 says that God killed animals and made clothes for Adam and Eve. This killing of animals and covering Adam and Eve showed that:

A. Man must be clothed to stand in the presence of a holy God. We must be clothed in the righteousness of Jesus. Our sins must be covered by His blood.

B. Man can't by his own action clothe himself and make himself acceptable to God; it takes the action of God to make man acceptable to God. God is the one who made the clothes.

C. God will provide what is necessary to be acceptable to Him. He provided Jesus.

D. God killed the innocent animals to show that the shedding of blood is necessary to regain paradise. This act of shedding the blood of these innocent animals pointed ahead to the coming perfect sacrifice of Jesus when His blood was shed for the forgiveness of our sins. Hebrews 9:22 tells us that the shedding of blood is necessary for the forgiveness of sin.

9. We see at the end of chapter 3 the banishment of Adam and Eve from the garden. They started this chapter having peace and fellowship with God and now there is a divide between man and God which results in their losing their home in the garden.

10. Genesis 4 reports the birth and life of Cain and Abel; the first birth of human babies. We see how evil man is because Cain kills his brother Abel. There are two main teachings in the Old Testament. One teaching is that man is sinful and lost in his sins. Man continues to sin over and over again. He continually disobeys God who continues to punish man. It becomes clear that man can't save himself; so man is headed for hell. The other main teaching is that God has a plan to redeem man from his sins so that humans can be at peace with God and go to heaven. We see God working His plan to save man all through the Old Testament along with the stories of man's sinfulness. At the end of the Old Testament it is clear that man can't save himself and that he must have a savior. Jesus is this savior.

A. Verses 3-5 report that the brothers each brought a sacrifice to God. Cain's sacrifice was rejected by God who accepted Abel's sacrifice. We see that this made Cain very angry.

B. The big question here is why didn't God like Cain's sacrifice? God talks about this in verses 6&7. We know that God gave orders concerning how He wanted sacrifices to be given to Him, and in verse 7 we learn that Cain did not exactly obey God's rules. The lesson is that God will only accept us if we come to Him through faith in the shed blood of Jesus. This is by faith in Christ alone and not by any work of our own.

i. God also gives a warning to Cain in verse 7. The lesson is that sin is always waiting to trap us so we must always be on guard to avoid sin.

C. Cain is so jealous of Abel that he ignores God's warning, and verse 8 reports that he kills his brother.

D. God immediately confronts Cain over his sin just as He did Adam in the garden. When God questioned Adam and Eve they tried to shift the blame, but they did not lie to God. Now we see that sin has grown in the world and Cain lies to God in verse 9. Lying to God is a serious mistake and a stupid one. Ezekiel 11:5 tells us that God knows our thoughts. God knew that Cain knew exactly where Abel was.

- i. Just as sin grew in the world so sin grows in individuals. We often begin with small and infrequent sins, as time passes our sins become worse and more frequent. We must avoid becoming comfortable with our sins and flee to God whenever we are tempted to sin. We must pray and ask Him to help us to not sin.

E. Verses 10-16 report that Cain is punished for the sin of murder. This is another frequently repeated story in the Bible where man sins and God quickly punishes man for the sin. The saddest part of this is that Cain never repents. Verse 16 reports that Cain went away from the Lord.

F. Verses 17-24 are about living without God which is the lifestyle of Cain and his descendants.

- i. We see in the story of Lamech, the great grandson of Cain, how sin continues to grow. Lamech is even boasting of his sin of murder. He acts as if there is nothing wrong with murder. We see several generations of Cain's descendants here and after Lamech we hear nothing more about Cain's wicked family.

G. Now in verses 24-26 the story turns away from the godless line of Cain to the godly line of Seth. We don't hear any more about Cain's descendants but they continue to increase in numbers and in sinfulness until they are all killed in the flood.

11. Genesis chapter 5:1-20 is a genealogy of the godly line of Seth. While Cain's line all dies in the flood, Seth's descendants live today; we are all descendants of Seth.

12. Verses 21-24 is a story about a very special man who receives special treatment from God. Even though Enoch was an Old Testament person we learn more about him from the New Testament than from the Old Testament. We know that Enoch was a godly man who lived in a sinful time just before the flood. This is a different Enoch than the son of Cain reported about in Genesis chapter four.

A. We know from the Genesis account that Enoch was a father and when he was 365 years old he was taken to heaven by God without dying. The Bible tells us only two people went to heaven without dying. The other one is the prophet Elijah.

B. Hebrews 11:5-6 tells us that Enoch was a man of great faith which pleased God. What does it mean to walk by faith?

- i. It means to trust God for everything. We must believe in God enough to follow and obey Him in everything.

- C. Jude 14-15 tells us that Enoch was a prophet and preacher with two messages.
 - i. He warned that the Lord's judgment or punishment was coming. He seems to be predicting the judgment of the flood which came soon after his life. He is also predicting the second coming of Christ when He returns in judgment. We know that His judgment is fierce according to the Bible. Isaiah 63:1-3 is an example of this.
 - ii. The second message was that the Lord was coming to execute judgment on the ungodly sinners. Enoch was preaching a message that we need to hear today. We live in a time of terrible sin. We only have to look at what is happening all around us such as tribal warfare, robbery, sex crimes, etc. Our preachers today need to preach the message that severe judgment is coming for unrepentant sinners.

13. Genesis 5: 25-26 tells us about Methuselah the oldest man who ever lived.

The third main event in the first eleven chapters of Genesis is the flood. Genesis chapters 6-9 report the story of Noah and the flood.

1. Genesis 6:1-4 are mostly transitional verses going from the pre-flood time to the flood. There is much disagreement about most of their meaning. There are no important doctrines in these verses.

- A. In verse 3 we are told that the days of man are 120 years. The meaning here is that all the people alive at this time except for Noah and his family are going to die in 120 years. This will be when the flood starts.

2. We learn in Genesis 6:5-7 that since the original sin in the garden man has become increasingly evil until now God is so disappointed that He considers destroying all humans. A lesson is that man is basically evil. Non-Christians say that "man is basically good and improving all the time." This is a lie; man is totally sinful without the restraint of God the Holy Spirit. The only hope for humans is Jesus.

- A. Verse 5 tells us that the heart of man is evil and man wants to do what is wrong. In Jeremiah 17:9 we read that the heart is deceitful all the time and the heart is sick. In other words the heart is sinful, and our sin is not just external; it is all through us.

- i. We also learn in verse 5 that man sins constantly, and not just occasionally.

3. We study Noah in verses 8-10.

- A. Verse 8 tells us that one person named Noah found favor, or in some translations Noah found grace in the eyes of God. Noah was a sinner but God extended favor or grace on him. God did this for no other family living at the time of Noah.

- B. Verse 9 tells us that Noah was righteous in God's eyes. Being righteous means in God's eyes the person has no guilt. This means that even though verse 8 tells us that Noah was a sinner; God saw him as blameless. Let's study God's grace to see how this is possible?

- i. God's grace (verse 8) always comes before a person becomes righteous (verse-9).
 - ii. We see in Deuteronomy 7:7-8 that God chooses the people He will love and then God extends grace to them so that they can believe and become Christians.
 - iii. God loves Christians in a special way and He gives us His grace and we become righteous in his eyes. His seeing that a person being righteous means that in God's eyes the person has no sin and is forgiven and will go to heaven.

C. We see that God gives us His grace and it is a free gift from Him. We do not earn our righteousness, our salvation. Ephesians 2:8-9.

4. Genesis 6:11-22 tells us about Noah's Ark (boat).

A. God is going to destroy all the people on earth except Noah and his family, and He is going to do it by sending a flood.

B. Verse 18 introduces the word covenant to us for the first time in the Bible. This is a very important word and is used more than 200 times in the Bible. A covenant is a promise or agreement from God to His people with whom He is dealing in a special way.

- i. There have been earlier covenants but the word covenant was not used. The earliest covenant was in the garden when God in Genesis 2:15-17 told Adam what Adam could eat and what he was forbidden to eat.

5. Genesis 7 is the story of God sending the flood.

A. Noah is mentioned in Hebrews 11:7 as having faith which caused him to build the ark. Consider that it took Noah around 120 years to build the ark. Remember it had never rained before and there was no sign of rain, but by faith Noah persisted and built the ark. This is a story of great faith.

B. There are several lessons for us here.

- i. The first is that God provided complete security; even during all the storms and floods that came. Jesus provides complete security for us throughout all the trials and storms of our lives.
- ii. There is also a lesson about God's great grace. God kept the ark open for seven extra days for people to come in and be saved. The way is open for every sinner to come to faith and trust in Jesus as long as the person is alive.
- iii. There is an end to God's grace. In Noah's time this end came after the week was over, and the door to the ark was closed. After this nobody else could come into the ark and be saved. Today the end of God's grace comes at the time of death or when Jesus returns again. This is the lesson we find in Matthew 25:1-13. After the door is shut it is too late so believe as it says in Acts 16:31, "Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved, you and your household."

C. Many people including people who claim to be Christians think the flood story is just a story and it is not real. It is true. Either you believe all the stories in the Bible or there is no reason to believe any of them. We can't pick and choose what we want to believe. A Christian must believe and trust all the Bible. We don't understand everything in the Bible but we trust that everything is true.

- i. Jesus believed the flood story. He talked about Noah and the flood in Matthew 24:37-41 and again in Luke 17:26-27.

6. Chapter 8 tells the story of Noah living in the ark and then leaving the ark.

A. Verse 1 tells how God remembered that Noah was still living on the ark. The lesson here is that God always remembers us and never forgets us. Sometimes when we are suffering and depressed, we might think God has forgotten us. God promises in Hebrews 13:5 that He will never leave us or forsake us. When we are going through difficult times we can always be reassured that God is there with us. Isaiah 43:2 reassures us of this.

B. Verse 20 tells us that Noah remembered God and he made an offering that was pleasing to God. This gives us an idea of the kind of man Noah was because he remembered to thank God after God saved him. Often people ask God for something and as soon as God gives them what they ask for, they forget to thank God. It is normal for a Christian to thank God for their meal before they eat when they are still hungry. Some Christians wait and thank God for their meal after they have eaten and are satisfied. 1 Timothy 5:18 tells us to always give thanks to God.

C. This is the background for the covenant that God now gives to Noah beginning in verse 21. The covenant actually begins in chapter 6 verse 18 and concludes in chapter 9 verse 17. There are three part to this covenant:

- i. God promises to never again destroy the earth by flood. Genesis 8:20-22.
- ii. Capital punishment is part of this covenant. Genesis 9:1-6.
- iii. God gives the rainbow as a sign of His promise. Genesis 9:8-17.

D. There are three features in this covenant and these features are also found in most of the other covenants.

- i. God does all the speaking and He says the things He wants to say according to His pleasure.
- ii. The second feature is that the covenant will last as long as the conditions that caused God to make the promise last. In this case God is saying that as long as the earth last He will not curse the ground and destroy every living thing by flood. God says the seasons will continue, He will not again destroy all the living things, and the days and nights will continue. In other words, life on earth will continue until as Revelation 21:1 says the first earth has passed away.
- iii. The third feature of covenants is grace. Despite Noah's sins God will continue to save him and never again destroy humanity. God's grace means that even though we Christians continue to sin God will continue to save us. God's grace will never end and He will carry us through this life and into heaven.

7. The second part of this covenant is found in chapter 9:1-7 and introduces human government with laws and penalties. God gives the penalty of death for murder. Previously in the case of the murderers Cain and Lamech God did not order them to be punished. Now we see that God gives authority to the government. We are to obey our government. However, there is one time according to Acts 5:29 when we are to disobey our government and this is when our government orders us to disobey God. We must never disobey God's laws even if the human government punishes us for this.

8. Romans 13:1-5 gives us four ways we are to understand government:

A. Government operates by using its strength, in other words, government uses force to rule its people.

B. Government can't develop morality; in other words government can't make people believe something is wrong or right. The idea of what is wrong, for example, comes from what the people think is wrong and not the government. The government can enforce its will on the people but it can't force people to change its mind about obeying laws. For example, the government says the speed limit for a road is 50 kilometers per mile, but the people think this is wrong, and they drive at 60 kilometers per hour so the government uses its force to make people drive 50 kilometers per mile.

C. Citizens develop morality so it takes healthy citizens to have healthy government. We see this in 2 Chronicles 7:14 where God says that if the people will humble themselves then God will heal the land. God does not say a new leader is needed; rather God says it's the people who must repent and be renewed.

- i. The reason much of the world has such bad government is that the rulers are not Christian and they don't have Christian morality. Often our the rich only take care of themselves; they seal so much that there is not enough left over for the poor to survive. Christians are supposed to make sure other people are taken care of. Look at Mark 12:31 to see that we are to love others. James 1:27 says to provide for the widows and orphans. Leviticus 19:9-10 says to leave food for the poor.

D. God established governments so the governments are responsible to God. It was God who gave Noah rules for government and Romans 13:1 also tells us that government authority comes from God. This means that God gives the government its authority and the government in turn should obey God. The citizens need to remind the government that they are responsible to God. To do this:

- i. We citizens must truly understand that God is in charge of everything including our government.
- ii. We must also understand the Bible and what it teaches us.
- iii. We citizens must be willing to sacrifice everything to see that we live the way Christians should. An example of sacrifice is found in America where the government says homosexual marriages are legal. There are places, in America, where Christians have lost their businesses and homes because they refuse to cater for these homosexual weddings.

9. God, in chapter 9:13, show His love by giving the sign of a rainbow to Noah. Noah must have been frightened by the powerful flood which killed all other families on earth so God promised that He will never send a flood to drown everybody again.

10. Genesis 9:18-29 talks about Noah's sin.

A. The fall of Noah. Noah's sin proves that despite all the good things we have read about him that he is human. Noah is a sinner just like all other people; Romans 3:23 says, "For all have sinned and come short of the glory of God." Even after Noah has seen God's terrible judgment on sinners, he still can't avoid sin and so in Genesis 9:21 we read how Noah got drunk and lay naked in his tent. Romans 3:10-12 again states the fact that every human falls into sin at times. Throughout the Old Testament we learn that man is sinful and can't stop sinning; the lesson is clearly taught that man can't save himself; a savior is needed.

B. The sin of Ham. It is difficult to understand what Ham did that caused Noah to curse Canaan the son of Ham. There are many different ideas about what Ham did that was so bad. I think it is safe to say that the sin was dishonoring his father. Ham should have covered his father, and not told anybody about what he had seen.

- C. The prophecy found in Genesis 9:25-27 that comes from these verses has three parts:
- i. A curse on Canaan. There is disagreement about what the curse was.
 - ◆ I believe the curse was that the Hebrew people would capture the land of Canaan when the Hebrews returned from Egypt.
 - ◆ An example of how people misinterpret the Bible to serve their own purpose is that many people used to say the curse was being a black person and that verse 25 of chapter 9 makes it all right to make slaves out of black people and that it is all right to mistreat black people. For centuries Arabs, Europeans and the South African government misused this verse to abuse black people. This is a terrible sin. God does not judge people by the color of their skin. God judges all people based on whether their sins are covered by the blood of Jesus or not. God loves black people the same as he loves other people.
 - ii. A blessing for Shem. Actually, Noah pronounces the blessing on God. This blessing on Shem is fulfilled in his descendant Jesus.
 - iii. The second blessing from Noah is for Japheth. First he is told his descendants will extend his territory which happens. His descendants are great prosperous nations such as America. The second part of the blessing is being spiritually blessed, and this is a greater blessing than being prosperous. Japheth living in the tent of Shem in verse 27 means that many of the descendants of Japheth will be blessed by the descendant of Shem named Jesus.

11. Chapter 10 tells us where the sons of Noah and where they went to live on the earth. This settling in various parts of the earth probably took place after the tower of Babel which is reported about in chapter 11.

A. History records that the sons of Japheth went north and settled Russia and Europe.

B. Verse 6 begins telling us that the sons of Ham went south and they settled in Africa. Cush, the name of a son of Ham is also the Bible name for modern Ethiopia.

C. The last son reported about is Shem who is the most important one because he is the father of the people of Israel who are the Jews. Jesus is a Jew.

IV. The fourth main event of chapters 1-11 is the tower of Babel. This story is told in Genesis 11:1-9. The number of men grew after the flood and so did their sins. They forgot the lessons about sin taught by the great flood.

1. Genesis 11:1-4 tells how most of the people disobeyed God and did not fill all the earth. They settled together and worked together to rebel against God. Verse four tells how they disobeyed the command God gave Noah in chapter 9:1 to multiply and fill all the earth. God told Noah the same thing He had earlier told Adam. Humans are to fill up the earth and rule the earth.

2. God examines the situation in verses 5-9 and He stopped the people plotting together against Him by sending them all over the earth. He also gave them many different languages to keep them from plotting against Him. God made sure the people filled the earth.

3. The rest of chapter 11 takes us from Noah to the coming of Abram.

The rest of Genesis beginning in chapter 12 is the story of how four men were used by God. These men Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and Joseph are known as the patriarchs or fathers of the Jews.

I. Abram or Abraham. The first of these patriarchs is Abram who was later called Abraham. (Abraham was called Abram until the birth of his son Isaac). He is the father of the Hebrew nation; the father of the Jews.

1. Gen. 12:1-3 is the call of Abraham.

A. In verse 1 we are introduced to one of the most important people in the Bible.

B. Some of the things we know about him:

- i. He was a man of great faith.
- ii. He was a friend of God. 2 Chronicles 20:7, Isaiah 41:8, and James 2:23.
- iii. He was a coward; two times he gave his wife to another man to save his own life.
- iv. He was a sinner and probably he worshiped idols. We know from Joshua 24:2 that his father worshiped idols.

C. Verse one tells us that God called him to leave his home and go where God told him to go. Often God calls us to leave our home and families and follow Him wherever He leads us no matter how good the place we leave is or how bad the place we are going to is. This was the first act of faith we see from Abram as he did what God told him to do.

D. In these verses God makes seven promises to Abraham:

- i. He promises to show Abram a land. Later in verse seven God promises to give this land to Abram's offspring.
- ii. God promises to make Abram a great nation. This is a remarkable promise because Abram was 75 years old with no children.
- iii. God promised to bless Abram. God went on to bless Abram with wealth, family and faith.
- iv. I will make your name great and you will be a blessing. Abraham's name is very great. He has been a blessing through Jesus his offspring.
- v. I will bless those who bless you. An example of a blessing is that Rahab and her family were spared because they befriended the Hebrews.
- vi. Whoever curses you I will curse. An example of a curse is the destruction of Pharaoh's army during the Exodus.
- vii. In verse 7 God tells Abram that He will give the land to his offspring. The land He promised is the "promised land" in Canaan which the Hebrew people took possession of during the time of Joshua.

E. Genesis 12:3 is the second messianic promise. The first one was found in Genesis 3:15. This prophecy goes far beyond any promise of material blessing because the blessing being promised to us is the promise of Jesus Christ, the messiah. The promise of Jesus is the most important promise ever, and Genesis 12:1-3 should be memorized.

2. Genesis 4-9 tells about Abram's great faith and how his faith was great enough to cause Abram to follow and obey God.

A. Abram was 75 years old when he obeyed God's call and moved to Canaan from Haran. He, in faith, moved from his home to live in a strange land.

B. Faith is the most natural thing in the world; especially faith in natural things. Our everyday life is full of acts of faith, for example, every time we sit in a chair we do this because we have faith the chair will hold us up. We have faith that the driver of our automobile will safely deliver us where we want to go.

C. However, most people do not want to have faith in God. They will do all they can to deny faith in God and not obey Him.

D. Abram's faith is shown in four steps. Often our faith just like Abram's faith has to be developed in steps as we mature in our relationship with God.

i. Abram's first act of faith was to leave his home.

ii. His second act of faith was to live with foreigners; in unfamiliar tents instead of in a city with houses.

iii. By faith he trusted God and even though he thought he was too old he fathered Isaac the son of promise.

iv. Later Abram by faith offered Isaac to God as a sacrifice.

E. All Christians must pray and seek faith enough to do whatever God calls us to do; even when it calls for great personal sacrifice, or puts us in great danger.

3. Genesis 12:10-20 tells the story of Abraham's trip to Egypt where he travelled to so that he could escape a famine. There are a couple of lessons here.

A. It appears that Abram goes to Egypt without asking God if he should do this. We should always ask God to direct us before we make any major moves. Egypt is a place which will cause Israel trouble throughout history; even in modern times. Egypt stands for the world and God is teaching Abram that he and his descendants are to be different from the world, and Israel must trust God for its help in times of trouble.

B. Abram gets frightened in Egypt and shows that even though he is a man of great faith there are times when his faith weakens. While in Egypt Abram's faith weakens and he gives his wife to Pharaoh to protect himself. The lesson for us is that there are times when our faith will be weak, but when we think about what the Bible teaches us about God our faith gets strong again. The way to keep our faith strong is to really get to know God well which we do by studying the Bible, and praying frequently and passionately.

4. Genesis 13 reports that Abram and his nephew Lot had become so prosperous with large herds of animals that they were forced to live in separate places to have enough grass to feed all the animals.

A. We see that Abram has a generous heart because he allowed Lot to take first choice of the land. It is good that they didn't fight over the land.

B. Lot chose the richest looking land and moved into it. Verse 13 tells us that Lot moved into a land close to Sodom which was inhabited with very sinful people. Later this choice of land causes trouble for Lot when God destroys Sodom.

C. In verse 14 God tells Abram to look up which is good advice for us. We need to look up to God and trust Him. God continues the promise of a future that He first mentioned in chapter 12.

- i. When we are troubled we must learn to look up and trust God. We should think about the wonderful relationship we have with God and remember the wonderful future we have waiting for us in heaven.

5. Chapter 14:1-17 reports about the first war that is reported in history. Abram became involved because his nephew was captured and Abram went to war to save his relative. We read that God gave him complete victory.

6. Chapter 14:18-20 introduces us to Melchizedek a most interesting person. He is only mentioned in three verses in Genesis but we can see that he is a very important person. Who is Melchizedek?

A. Genesis 14:19 tells us that Melchizedek blesses Abram which makes Melchizedek more important than Abram; this is confirmed in Hebrews 7:4-7 which states that the inferior is blessed by the superior. When God blesses us He gives us good things such as our salvation.

B. Verse 20 confirms the importance of Melchizedek when Abram gives him a title of everything.

C. Psalm 110 is a Messianic Psalm and verse four links Melchizedek to Jesus.

D. Verse 18 tells us that Melchizedek was a priest of God. He is the first person in the Bible called a priest.

E. The name Melchizedek means “king of righteousness”. He was the king of Salem; Salem means peace.

F. The relation between Melchizedek and Christ as type and anti-type is made in the Epistle to the Hebrews to consist in the following particulars: Each was a priest, (1) not of the Levitical tribe; (2) superior to Abraham; (3) whose beginnings are unknown; (4) who is not only a priest, but also a king of righteousness and peace.

7. Chapter 15:1 begins with God coming to Abram in a vision where He promises to be Abram’s defense and his great reward. During Bible times God still spoke to people in visions and dreams; God no longer does this because the Bible is completed. `God now speaks to us through His word—the Bible.

A. Here in verse one of chapter 15 God tells Abram that He will be Abrams’ protection and that God will also give Abram a great reward. God had just protected Abram when as chapter 14 reports Abram defeated an army bigger and more powerful than his own small army of 318 men.

B. God is the Christian’s protection against many things such as:

- i. Human enemies. The Bible has many stories reporting how God protected His people. For example, often God protected King David when King Saul was trying to kill him. Read 2 Samuel 22:2-3 to see what David says about the protection of God.

- ii. God protects us against Satan by controlling him and Satan can only do to us what God allows him to do. We read this in the story of Job. When we feel Satan is attacking us we must pray and look to God for protection. This is the lesson Ephesians 6:10-18 teaches.
- iii. Temptation. God protects us against temptation. Paul says in 1 Corinthians 10:13 that God will protect us so that no temptation will come to us that we are not able to resist. He also tells us that God will provide a way for us to stand up to the temptation. We must look to God in prayer and trust to be able to say no to any temptation. Remember, we people are always responsible when we choose to sin.
- iv. Bitterness. Paul says in Philippians 1:12 that he rejoiced in his suffering because his suffering advanced the gospel. Often God's kingdom is advanced through the suffering of God's people. Remember the great comforting message from Romans 8:28 that says, "And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to his purpose." "This means that your suffering is for your good. A person with strong faith believes this and is protected from becoming bitter.

C. The reward God is talking about is the reward of living a blessed life belonging to Jesus and also the promise of eternal life. We Christians look forward to these rewards. It is a fact that the places where people live the most comfortable lives are in Christian places or places which were formerly strongly Christian. An example is the United States of America. Our hope for Africa is that Africa will soon become Christian.

8. We have a few lessons in verses 2-5.

A. It is all right to ask God for something and if we don't get our wish it is all right to ask again. We must do this respectfully and not complain because God has not given us what we want. In this case Abram was asking for children which was something God had already promised to give him, see Genesis 13:15-16.

B. We also learn that God has His own timetable and we need to wait for God to act in His own perfect time. We must also accept it when God says no to our request.

- i. An example of this happened to me. In 1986 I felt called to be a foreign missionary, but God said what I thought was no. Actually God was saying wait because in 2005 when I thought I was too old to begin as a missionary God called me to full time missions and He brought me to Uganda. I was 62 years old when I started as a full time missionary.

9. Next is Genesis 15:6 which is one of the most important verses in the Bible. For the first time we are introduced to the doctrine of justification by grace through faith. Justification means that God judges a person as not guilty of all his sins when he is justified. When a person is justified by God it means that all his sins are forgiven and He will go to heaven.

A. We are justified by our faith in Jesus Christ. Note that we are not saved by faith itself, but by our faith in Jesus who is the object of our faith.

B. Abram and the other Old Testament believers were saved by their faith in the Messiah who was to come. We read this in Galatians 3:8-9 which says And the Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, preached the gospel beforehand to Abraham, saying, "In you shall all the nations be blessed." So then, those who are of faith are blessed along with Abraham, the man of faith.

C. What exactly did Abram believe in?

- i. First Abram was justified by believing God's word. Remember the promise found in Genesis 12:3 when God promised that all families on earth would be blessed through Abram. Hebrews 11:10 says, "For he was looking forward to the city that has foundations, whose designer and builder is God." This tells us that Abram was looking forward to the New Jerusalem which is in heaven.
- ii. Abram believed in redemption from his sins. This redemption means that Jesus delivered us from the bondage of sin at the cost of His own life because He loves us. This means that everyone who is redeemed and justified is free from all sins and they are forgiven. We who are redeemed will enjoy the promises of heaven that were given to Abram
- iii. Abram also looked forward to the coming of Jesus. We are told this in Galatians 3:16 which says, "Now the promises were made to Abraham and to his offspring. It does not say, "And to offsprings," referring to many, but referring to one, "And to your offspring," who is Christ."

D. Salvation is a gift to us. We don't do anything to earn it. God picks whoever He wants to pick to save so there is nothing for us to boast of. There is nothing we do to be proud because we didn't do anything.

10. Chapter 15:7-21 tells us about the covenant God made with Abram. Abram was very troubled because he had no children which was a terrible thing in his culture. It was considered to be a sign that a person had no favor with God if he had no male children.

A. God in verse four had promised children to Abram and in verse seven God promised land to Abram.

B. In verse eight Abram asked God for a sign to show him that this would happen. Later Gideon in Judges 6:36-40 and King Hezekiah in 2 Kings 20:8-11 also asked God for a sign and God gave them a sign. Asking God for a sign is acceptable.

- i. Today we Christians sometimes ask God for a sign. For example when I was considering if I was called to come to Africa as a missionary I asked God for a sign. Money was the sign. I knew how much it would cost for me to be a missionary. The sign was that I needed a certain amount of money to be a missionary and the sign to me that I was supposed to come to Africa was God giving me the needed money.

C. God reacts to Abram by giving him a sign; a covenant. Remember, God gave a covenant to Noah. A covenant is a promise from God. A covenant has three parts:

- i. First, covenants come only from God to man. Covenants totally depend on God, and God will make sure the covenants are done.
- ii. Second, they are forever and can't be changed. They are eternal.
- iii. Third, covenants are based on God's grace alone. God gives them to us at no cost and He gives them to people who have done nothing to deserve them.

D. In Abram's day an agreement was signed and sealed by cutting animals into two parts and placing the parts in two rows. Then the people making the agreement walked between the parts. Since God is the one who made the covenant by Himself, only God walked between the animal parts. The blood of the animals made the ceremony sacred.

E. Verse 17 reports the Lord appeared as a smoking firepot, and “a blazing torch.”

F. While Abram is sleeping, God tells him that his offspring will spend 400 years living in a strange land. He also tells Abram that He will bring Abram’s descendants out of this foreign land with great possessions. Later the Bible tells us the story about how the Hebrews travelled to Egypt where they lived for four hundred years. We will also read that 400 years later the Hebrews came out of Egypt with many possessions taken from the Egyptians who willingly gave their riches.

G. God in verses 18-21 tells Abram the boundaries of the land He is giving to his descendants.

11. Genesis 16 is the story of Abram’s unbelief and how he and his wife conspired and how Abram produced a male child through his servant which resulted in the birth of Ishmael. Even though Hebrews 11:8 calls Abraham a man of faith; we see that at times his faith, like everybody’s faith, weakened. Abraham’s son Ishmael was born and he is the father of the Arab nations which produced the Muslims who are the enemies of Israel today. This act of unbelief by Abram caused Israel’s terrible enemy to be founded.

A. We, Christians, must always trust God. This means that even if God is not doing what we think is right or what we want; we must follow His rules and accept whatever He orders.

i. An example is a person who wants to pass a test so that he gets a new job with increased salary. It is wrong to cheat to pass the test. Trust God and accept it if He allows you to fail the test and not get the job. Do not ever cheat.

B. In verse 7 we are introduced to the “angel of the Lord”. There are strong arguments that the “angel of the Lord” is not a created being and is actually Jesus who shows himself before his later physical birth. The word angel means messenger so Jesus is the messenger. Look at the following two verses where the angel of the Lord says, “I will” this can only mean that the speaker is God because only God can do these things. Genesis 16:9 says, the angel of the LORD said to her, "Return to your mistress and submit to her." Genesis 16:10 says the angel of the LORD also said to her, "I will surely multiply your offspring so that they cannot be numbered for multitude."

12. In chapter 17 Abram is sixteen years older than he was in the last chapter, and he is now 99 years old and this is much too old to be a father and his wife is too old to be a mother. Genesis 17:1-8 contain a promise from God that Abram is to be renamed Abraham because he is promised a male heir and will as God promised earlier be the father of a multitude of nations. In the following year Sarai gives birth to Isaac who was the son of promise and an ancestor of the Lord Jesus Christ.

A. In verses 1-8 God changes the name of Abram to Abraham as He reminds Abraham of his previous promise of an heir. This name, Abraham, means father of many nations.

B. Next in verses 9-14 we have the covenant of circumcision where the Hebrews are set apart as God’s special people. Circumcision is a symbol which set God’s people apart from all other people just as baptism does to Christians today. This is the teaching also of the New Testament that we Christians live in this world but we do not belong to this world. Our real home is with God in heaven. See John 17:14-16 and 18:36.

- i. This covenant of circumcision is very serious. This is the first covenant where God requires the people to do something. Failure to obey God in this matter was very serious. See Exodus 4:24-25 to see how serious God treated the failure of Moses to obey the covenant.
- ii. Circumcision was a sign to the Jew that a person belonged to God; that he identified himself as a Jew. Baptism is a sign to the Christian that he belongs to Jesus; that it identifies him as a Christian.

C. In verses 15-19 God promises to bless Sarai, even though she is 90 years old, with a child and she is to be renamed Sarah which is a fitting name meaning princess because she is to be the mother of kings.

- i. Verse 17 reports that Abraham laughed with joy over the promise of a son; an heir. He is overjoyed with this news.
- ii. In Genesis 17:18 Abram shows he is a man who takes care of his responsibilities when he asks God to make Ishmael his heir. Abraham doesn't really understand God's plan when he asks God to make Ishmael his heir.
- iii. In verse 19 God makes it clear that Sarah is to be the mother of the heir named Isaac and that God's covenant shall be established through Isaac.

D. God promises to provide for Ishmael in verse 20 where He says, "As for Ishmael, I have heard you; behold, I have blessed him and will make him fruitful and multiply him greatly. He shall father twelve princes, and I will make him into a great nation.

13. Chapter 18:1-8 deals with Abraham's friendship with God. God comes with two companions to visit His friend Abraham. There are three times in the Bible that Abraham is identified as God's friend; 2 Chronicles 20:7, James 2:23, and Isaiah 41:8.

A. We learn from this visit God makes with Abraham that God wants to be a friend to us and to have us be friends with Him. It is comforting to know that we can look forward to spending eternity with God our friend.

B. There are three ways that God provided friendship to Abraham.

- i. God was a companion to Abraham. At this point in Abraham's life, he really only had one companion; his wife. God is always there to be our companion, see Psalm 146:9. He will never leave us even if everybody else does.
- ii. God is always ready to communicate with us. We can talk to God anytime we desire and He is always waiting to listen to us. Proverbs 18:24 tells us that God is closer to us than a brother.
- iii. God always has compassion on us. He showed this compassion by giving Sarah a son.

C. Jesus called Christians friend see John 15:12-15. Let's study this friendship and note that it is different; it is greater than His friendship with Abraham.

- i. The companionship Jesus offers us is longer even as Matthew 28:20 says to the end of the age.
- ii. Abraham had communications during a couple of times in his life, but we have the complete Bible which gives us communication with God whenever we want it. We can communicate with God at any time by praying.
- iii. There is no greater compassion than the compassion Christ showed by dying for sinner.

D. Jesus wants to be our friend. Are you His friend? John 15:14 tells us we are His friend if we obey Him. To obey Him we must know Him and do what he wants us to do. The only way we can do this is by learning all we can about Him. We learn about Him when we study the Bible. Psalm 119:11 says, "I have stored up your word in my heart that I might not sin against you."

14. Genesis 18:9-15 talks about something being too difficult for God to do, and Sarah's believing that something is too difficult for God to do.

A. We read here that Sarah hears God promise that in a year Sarah will give birth to a son. Sarah doubts God because she is only thinking about this as a human being, and a human is limited in what they can do. She forgets that with God all things are possible. Read Luke 1:34-38. God is not limited in what He can do; after all He is omnipotent which means there is no limit on His power.

i. Late in 2013 this writer was diagnosed by doctors with terminal lung/liver cancer, and there was no treatment for this. I was told to go home and die. However, God had other plans and as I write these notes it is June 2016 and I am still alive and the cancer is gone. Just like God giving Sarah a son; God acted in a miraculous way to deliver me from cancer.

B. Sarah's laugh was the laughter of complete unbelief, and it was the laughter of sin. Let's study Sarah's sin of unbelief.

- i. First, unbelief is sin. She is calling God a liar because earlier in chapter 17:15-16 God promised a son to Sarah. 1 John 5:9-10 tells that anybody who does not believe God calls God a liar. We must not treat unbelief lightly because calling God a liar is a very stupid thing to do. We must believe and trust God in all situations.
- ii. Second, like all sin, unbelief leads to other sins. In this case the sin of unbelief led Sarah to the sin of lying. It is best to not commit the first sin, but when you do sin you should immediately fall on your knees and admit your sin and ask forgiveness. Don't try to fool God because He is omniscient and knows everything.
- iii. Third, God does not treat unbelief lightly. He treats all sin as very serious. We must also realize that all sin is very serious and we must avoid even what seems to us a small sin because even one small unforgiven sin is enough to send a person to hell.

C. There is also a lesson in God's grace here in these verses. God forgave Sarah for her sin and gave her a son. We must forget our circumstances and look to God in faith knowing that His grace is greater than our circumstances.

15. Next in chapter 18:16-33 we read the story of Abraham interceding for the people of Sodom. This is a lesson for us about intercessory prayer which is the kind of prayer where you pray for someone else's benefit. There are some lessons here which apply to us.

A. God uses the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah just as He used Noah to show that He will judge all sin and sinners. This judgment will be very fierce. One of the main messages from the Old Testament is that God will punish all sin. The New Testament also teaches the same lesson' read 2 Peter 2:4-9 to see this.

B. Let's study and learn lessons from the intercessory prayer of Abraham's so that we might be able to properly intercede for others.

- i. First we learn that Abraham's prayer is for other people and not himself. It is good to make praying for others a regular part of our prayers.
- ii. Second it is all right to present arguments to convince God to grant your request. Note how Abraham in verses 23-33 ask God questions which are designed to cause God to spare Sodom. Abraham is humble and he respectfully pleads with God.
- iii. We see other people argue for God to spare people such as Moses in Exodus 32:11-12.
- i. A few days ago I was made aware of a fellow missionary who was very sick with malaria. The malaria had gone into his lung and his life was threatened. I have prayed, many times, for this man to recover. I have asked God to allow this man to live so that he could return to his missionary work. I gave God another reason to restore this man's health by mentioning that his wife and children need him. It is all right to pray this way.

C. Often, unrepentant sinners will benefit because of God's protection of the righteous person; an example of this is found in Acts 27:24 where God allows everybody on the ship with the Apostle Paul to live along with Paul.

- i. Here is another example of unrepentant sinners being spared from judgment by association with Christians while they are living. God sometimes spares the unrepentant sinner to protect the righteous person. However, the unrepentant sinner will not permanently escape judgment. Matthew 13:24-30 shows how the weeds are allowed to grow along with the good wheat, but in the end the weeds will be gathered up and burned.

16. Genesis 19:1-29 tells about sinful Sodom, and how Lot who was the nephew of Abraham became part of sinful Sodom, and how God destroys sinful Sodom and Gomorrah.

A. We want to study Lot to show how a person can gradually move from living the way he should to living a sinful lifestyle. Lot moved to Canaan with Abraham and for a time was close to Abraham. He then made choices which led him away from living close to his righteous uncle Abraham to living as a part of sinful Sodom. We see these bad choices he made in several verses:

- i. The first bad choice is mentioned in Genesis 13:10 where Lot looked at sinful Sodom. Just a quick look at Sodom was not the such bad choice. The bad choice was looking at Sodom for a long time and thinking about how he would enjoy the attractions of living in a big city even though he knew Sodom was a wicked city.
- ii. The next bad choice is reported in Genesis 13:12 when he moved close to the city. He moved close to the temptation of Sodom.
- iii. By the time of Genesis 19:1 Lot had moved into the city.

B. Often people get involved into a sinful life style by doing just what Lot did. They look closely at a sinful attraction. Then they get closer to this sin, and finally they get involved in the sin. The best thing would have been for Lot to have avoided looking over and over again at Sodom, and not looked at the city for long periods of time. The way to avoid getting trapped in sin is to flee from sin the first time you see it; flee the first time you come into contact with it.

C. We see in verses 1-3 that Lot still is not as sinful as the other men in the city and he offered sanctuary to the angels. However, Lot appears to have been affected by his living with these sinful people. This is the only way I can explain him offering his daughters to the men for their sexual pleasure. This shows that it was not good for Lot to live in Sodom; offering his daughters to these men was a very evil thing.

D. The Bible in several places tell us that Sodom was sinful in many ways. Isaiah 1:9-10, Isaiah 3:9, Jeremiah 23:14, and Ezekiel 16:49 make it clear that Sodom and Gomorrah were known for being evil. Sodom was not destroyed just for the sin of homosexual sex but for all the many sins put together.

- i. However, the sin that Sodom is best known for is the sin of homosexual sex. God makes it clear that this sin is particularly hateful to Him. It is an attack on the family which God wanted people to have where a man and a woman join together and become one person.

E. Ecclesiastes 3:1 tells us, “For everything there is a season, and a time for every matter under heaven. For Lot and his family it is the time when the only wise thing a person can do is to flee from the place they are.

- i. Beginning in verse 12 the angels warn Lot to gather his family and flee the city before they are all destroyed. Lot has been so changed by the sinful city that he has been living in that he hesitated and the angels had to take his hand and lead him out of the city. This shows how easy it is to be trapped by sin and perish. We must flee all temptations and ask God to help us avoid the sinful temptations of life.

F. In verses 18-26 we see Lot continuing to act stupidly and sinfully as he continues to argue with the angels that God sent to save him and his family. Psalm 107:17 tells us that people become fools because of their sinful ways and they suffer because of this. It is difficult to understand why Lot argues with the angels that God sent to save him but he did. This shows that Lot was so trapped by his sin that he couldn't make himself leave it all behind.

- i. Lot's wife disobeyed the instructions to not look back at Sodom which brought instant judgment when God turned her into a pillar of salt.
- ii. Verses 24-26 report that God's judgment was very fierce with the cities being destroyed, along with the people, and even the things growing on the ground.

G. Next in verses 27-28 we read how Abraham got up in the morning and looked toward the cities and he saw their total destruction. God's judgment was both fierce and also very quick in being delivered. It was just the evening before that Abraham had pleaded with the Lord for the cities to be spared. Many people are waiting until later to become a Christian; the warning here is to not wait until tomorrow because you might not have tomorrow. Hebrews 10:31 tells us, “It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.”

- i. You can turn to Jesus in belief and repentance only while you are still alive so don't wait any longer.

17. Genesis 19:30-38 reports a shameful story about Lot and his two daughters. It is a story of how the daughters did not trust God so they got Lot drunk and then they slept with him to have children; this is incest which is a terrible sin. Each daughter had a son who became the fathers of two nations; Moab and Ammon. These two nations became enemies of the Jews.

A. We learn, from Lot's story, that what begins as temptation becomes sin if the person allows himself to indulge in his desires. Once sin gets ahold of a person it becomes difficult; even impossible to escape. The cure for this problem is to flee the temptation. If you start living a lifestyle of sin then stop. The only sure way to escape from the trap of temptation and sin is to turn to God and ask His help to overcome the problem.

18. Genesis 20 is a story about value of prayer in God's eyes. We read here how Abraham to protect his own life gave his wife to Abimelech. However, before Abimelech could have sexual relations with Sarah God warned Abimelech and told him he would die unless, Abimelech had Abraham pray for him. In other words God required prayer before He would act for Abimelech. A powerful story here about the sovereignty of God and the power and importance of prayer.

A. There are other lessons in this story for us. One is that we people who belong to God must have a good testimony to the world. We must act in a morally correct manner at all times. Here the pagan king Abimelech does the right thing and Abraham does the wrong thing. In verses 9-10 Abimelech questioned Abraham about why Abraham did this terrible thing of giving his wife to Abimelech.

B. There are three characteristics of Abraham's sin that we will look at.

- i. First is that it was a cowardly sin. Abraham should have been willing to die to protect his wife. This lesson is clearly taught in Ephesians 5:25 where we men are told, "Husbands, love your wives, as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her."
- ii. The second characteristic about the sin is that it was an old sin repeated. Remember when Abraham was in Egypt years earlier he gave Sarah to Pharaoh. We must also guard ourselves from old sins coming back. The way to do this is to pray and ask God to protect us from this sin. We must avoid situations which would tempt us to repeat this old sin. An example of this is alcohol and being drunk. If you have earlier had a problem with drinking alcohol stay away from alcohol. Don't ever go into a place where it is served; cross the street to avoid walking by a tavern which would tempt you. Pray whenever you feel any temptation and ask God to protect you from this temptation.
- iii. The third thing this sin showed was the lack of faith of Abraham. Even though Abraham was known as a man of great faith at times his faith fell short. We must learn from Abraham and we must remain humble and trust God when danger threatens us.

C. We learn a lesson about God's grace from this story. God forgave Abraham and God continued to use him. Many characters of the Bible such as the Apostle Peter fell into sin but God picked him up and restored him to service. Let God pick you up from your sin and remember God can restore you to and use you for His service.

19. Chapter 21:1-7 is the story of the birth of Isaac. The name of Isaac means laughter. Sarah and Abraham are overjoyed with the birth of Isaac and Sarah rejoiced with laughter. Isaac was the son of promise.

A. There are a number of lessons for us in this passage.

- i. One lesson is that God is always faithful to His promises. This means that every promises in the Bible will happen. This includes the promise of heaven for the redeemed person and the promise of hell for the unrepentant sinner.
- ii. We learn that God is all powerful and He is able to do all that He promises. God not only gave a son to Abraham after Abraham was considered too old to have a son, but later, after Sarah died, Abraham fathered six more children. Don't ever hesitate to do whatever you feel God is calling you to do because you feel you are not able to do the job. I was 62 years old when God called me to be a fulltime missionary and I was not in good health. Remember it is God who makes something successful and not the individual person's ability or effort.
- iii. Another lesson is about time. God will do things when he wants to and not according to when we want them done. I felt called to be a fulltime missionary in 1986, but I was turned down by the mission board. 19 years later God ignored my age and health and made me a full-time missionary. God has faithfully provided all that I need to be a missionary.

B. There are many comparisons between the birth of Isaac and the birth of Christ. We call this Isaac foreshadowing Christ. In the next chapter 22:14 we will see this when Abraham almost sacrifices Isaac. Some of these comparisons are:

- i. Both men were both promised seed and son. Isaac was promised by God before he was born and Jesus was promised thousands of years before He was born. The first time was at Genesis 3:15.
- ii. There was a delay between the promises of the sons and the deliverance of the sons.
- iii. Both mothers had some doubt about a son actually being born to them. Genesis 18:13 tells that Sarah doubted because she thought she was too old and God answered her, verse 14, by asking, "is anything too hard for the Lord?"
- iv. God named both of the sons before they were born. The name of Jesus signifies that he will save his people from their sins.
- v. Both births came at God's appointed time.
- vi. Both births required a miracle. Isaac's birth required God to make it possible for two people who were too old to have a baby. The birth of Jesus required a miracle for a virgin to give birth.
- vii. The birth of both Isaac and Jesus caused great joy; Sarah even laughed. Mary broke out in joyful song, Luke 1:46-47. Even though the birth of Jesus was in a very poor place under poor circumstances the birth of our savior was a very joyful occasion.

20. Genesis 19:8-21 is the story of how Hagar and Ishmael permanently separate from Abraham.

A. We aren't told all the reasons why Hagar and Ishmael had to leave but one reason maybe because of friction or fighting between Hagar and Sarah, this friction is reported in chapter 21:9-10 and earlier in chapter 16. Friction is another good reason that a family should only have one husband and one wife.

B. Verse 9 gives us a reason that Hagar had to leave. It says that Ishmael was laughing or mocking Isaac.

C. We see that Abraham loved his son Ishmael and he didn't want to be separated, however, God in verse 12 tells Abraham to send Hagar away as Sarah wanted.

D. God provided for the immediate needs of Ishmael and Hagar in verse 19. God also promised that Ishmael would have success in life.

21. The rest of chapter 21 tells how Abimelech and Abraham are able to work together peacefully even though they are such different people.

22. Chapter 22 tells us the story about the testing of Abraham. We see why Abraham is called a man of great faith. This is a very important story and is one of the most preached about stories in the Bible.

A. The first part of the story takes place in verses 1-12 which is where Abraham was tested about sacrificing his son Isaac. Many preachers use a lot of imagination when they teach about this story. We will stay close to the facts and let them speak for themselves.

- i. We know for sure that Abraham was ordered by God to sacrifice Isaac and Abraham followed God's order. He went to the designated place and prepared Isaac for the sacrifice. He was beginning the move to sacrifice Isaac when God stopped him.
- ii. There were surely a lot of conflicting thoughts in Abraham's mind. After all, Isaac was the son of promise who was to be the link with Christ. Isaac was the one who was to be the one through whom God would fulfill the promise of blessing for all people earlier promised to Abraham.