

Beginnings

UNDERSTANDING GOD, OURSELVES,
AND THE WORLD AS WE KNOW IT

GENESIS READING GUIDE

Dear Providence,

We are preaching through Genesis 1-11 this summer. We are calling this series, “Beginnings” because these chapters are foundational in helping us understand God, ourselves, and the world as we know it. They reveal the goodness of God’s design and decrees, the glory and sin of humanity, and the only hope for a fallen world.

We would love for you to read along as we go through this series and dig deeper into each chapter. That’s what this guide is about: a simple plan for reading, studying, and reflecting on the scriptures.

We have divided these chapters into seven weeks, which represent different sections/movements of the narrative story. For each week, we have given you four days (or touch points) of guided content. The first day is geared towards helping you read and make observations of the text. The next three days are about helping you study and reflect on the passage in a personal way. Go through things at your own pace—the purpose is to think deeply about the scriptures and to take them in.

We pray that this guide helps you meditate on the Word of God this summer and that the story of Genesis would be read/seen in a fresh way.

- The Providence Staff

**Special thanks to Laura Goddard for her tireless effort in putting this guide together.*

Day One: Read Genesis 1:1-2:3



Scan to watch the Bible Project's visual commentary on Genesis 1, and learn how this key chapter is designed to show us God's purpose.

1. As you read, take note of key words. There are a lot! Here are some to get you started: *said, let, saw, separate, made, called, good, evening, morning, day, rule, blessed, fruitful, multiply*. What else do you see?
2. Notice the symmetrical pattern of Days 1-6 of creation. Use the space below to write down what is created each day, what is said about it, and any blessing given to it. Both repetition and contrast are used to highlight important ideas and themes.

Day 1	Day 4
Day 2	Day 5
Day 3	Day 6
3. Every word in Genesis 1:1-2:3 is carefully chosen and placed to foreshadow the whole story of the Bible. With that in mind, before we get into more specifics, what stands out to you? What feels significant? What seems confusing?

Day Two: Who Is God? (Genesis 1:1-2:3)

1. How does God create? What repeated words describe how God creates?
2. How does God interact with his creatures and creation?
 - For example, what does God provide and how?
 - What does He delegate?
 - What sort of blessings does He give and to whom?
3. What big claims is the author of Genesis making about God's creative power?

WEEK ONE / CREATION, PT. 1

4. For an extended meditation from later biblical authors on Genesis 1, read through Psalm 104. Think through these questions as you read:

- Is creation a one-time event or ongoing?
- How does God relate to His creation?
- Write down as many words as you can think of that describe how God both creates and cares for creation.

5. Read Colossians 1:15-17. How does Paul describe Jesus? How do these claims challenge your perception of how God's creative power is at work in your day-to-day life? How do they encourage you?

6. Based on what you have studied this week, take some time to praise Jesus for who He is and what He is doing in the world and in your life.

Day Three: Who Are We? (Genesis 1:1-2:3)

1. According to Genesis 1, what sets humanity apart from other creatures God has created?
2. What is similar about the blessing God gives to human beings and the blessing He gives to all other creatures? What is different?
3. Which other creatures are also given a commission to rule (in some translations, “govern”)? What are the similarities and differences in God’s commission to the two kinds of creatures he calls to rule?

WEEK ONE / CREATION, PT. 1

4. In Exodus 20:4, God tells the Israelites “You shall not make for yourself a carved image, or any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or what is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth” as an image of God to worship.

- In what ways does this command relate to Genesis 1:26-27?
- What does this connection tell us about what it means to be made in an “image of God”?
- What would it mean for you to view your coworkers, roommates, spouse, or children this way?

5. How is being an “image” connected with God’s command to “rule”?

WEEK ONE / CREATION, PT. 1

6. Read Colossians 1:15-17 again.

- How does Paul describe Jesus?

- How is it good news that Jesus is both the true image of God (that we were meant to be and yet never fully realize) and He is also truly human?

7. Think about how Jesus rules His creation. What is an area of your life where you could live into your calling to “rule” in a more Jesus-like way?

Day Four: Where Are We? (Genesis 1:1-2:3)

1. How does God repeatedly describe his creation?
2. On which day does he say things are “very good”? What do you think makes this day different than the others?
3. What refrain occurs on days 1-6 but is significantly absent on the seventh day?
4. Temples in the Ancient Near East were often dedicated in a 7-day ritual, and many contained real gardens. See the descriptions of the Tabernacle (Exodus 36-39) and Israel’s temple (1 Kings 7:13-8:66) as examples.
 - With that in mind, what claim is the author of Genesis making about all of creation?
 - How does this challenge and encourage you in your own relationship to the rest of creation?

WEEK ONE / CREATION, PT. 1

5. Read Hebrews 4:1-10. As we noticed in our study questions, the repetition of “and there was evening and there was morning” doesn’t occur on Day 7, which the author of Hebrews picks up to make a point about who we now are in Christ.
- What do you think it means that “there remains a Sabbath rest for the people of God”? (Note that Hebrews 4:11 goes on to say “Let us therefore strive to enter that rest”—so it means something both active and restful. For Jesus’ teaching on Sabbath, see Mark 2:23-28, Matthew 12: 1-14, Luke 6:1-11.)
 - What does it look like to live into God’s Sabbath rest that never ends?
 - How does this both give you hope and challenge you?

Day One: Read Genesis 2:4-25

1. As you read, take note of repeated words and themes. Especially:
 - **Trees and water:** When and where do they appear? What significance is attached to them?
 - **Problems and how they are resolved:** Highlight when something is mentioned as lacking, not being present, or not being good.
 - **What other key themes, words, and ideas do you see?**

Day Two: Who Is God? (Genesis 2:4-25)

1. Where does the river originate? Where does it eventually end up?
2. In verse 15, the word translated “put” more accurately means “rested”. Describe the place where the human is rested and how he is rested.
3. What is the sequence of God’s command in verse 16 to the human? What does He say first? What is second?
4. Read Revelation 22:1-2—it is the culmination of the theme of the water of life that begins in Genesis 2.
 - Where does the river of life have its source?
 - The river that flows from God’s presence in Genesis 2 waters not only the garden, but the lands of all the nations, including those who will be hostile to Israel (and her God) throughout the rest of the Old Testament. What does this tell us about God’s character?

5. Read John 4:11-14.

- How does Jesus see Genesis 2 as talking about Him?
- What does it mean for Jesus to be the source of living water?
- How does this encourage you and challenge you as you think about what sources of water you turn to for life?

6. We often focus on the confusing restriction that God gives about “the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.” But as a whole ...

- How does the author of Genesis represent God? As withholding or generous?
- How does this representation of God compare with your own idea of Him?
- How does this passage challenge you? Encourage you?

Day Three: Who Are We? (Genesis 2:4-25)

1. How is the creation of the human being described? What is he created from? How does he become “a living creature” (ESV)?

2. Genesis 2:15 seems to be a restatement of 2:8, but with key variations. We already noted that the verb translated “put” in 2:15 (ESV) is actually a different word than the one in 2:8, and more accurately means “rested”. What else is different about this verse?

3. A problem is presented in the narrative in 2:18.
 - What is the problem?

 - How does this problem relate to Genesis 1:27?

 - Who solves the problem and how?

4. Read 1 Corinthians 15:42-49.

- How does Paul use Genesis 2 to talk about who we were, who we are, and who we will be as Christians?
- Reread verse 45. Paul makes the connection that it is Jesus's life-giving spirit that animated the first human so that he "became a living creature". What does that mean for you who, as a Christian, are now the place where the Spirit of Jesus dwells?

5. The Hebrew words translated "work" and "keep" in Genesis 2:15 are primarily used elsewhere in the Old Testament to describe what the priests and Levites do in the Tabernacle and Temple.

- A priest is a mediator between the divine and the "not divine." They often do this by blessing and interceding. How does Jesus fill this role perfectly for us?
- How can we, as Jesus' Spirit-empowered body, carry on this work? (Recall the grand scope of a flourishing world seen in Genesis 1-2).
- Remember that this work is not an individual calling. What does it look like to contribute corporately?

WEEK TWO / CREATION, PT. 2

6. The word translated “rib” in English in 2:21 is used elsewhere in the Old Testament to describe a side of something (especially the ark of the covenant and the Tabernacle in Exodus), not a body part.
 - The lone human, which is “not good”, is split into two distinct parts and the ideal is for those two distinct parts to ultimately become what again?

- Read Ephesians 5:31-32. Paul says that the mystery of the distinct and diverse parts becoming one – that we get a picture of in the marriage of a man and a woman – is actually about what?

- This passage is about God’s goal for all of humanity to become one—through the church, who is one with Christ. Whether you are married or not, how does this vision of humanity encourage and challenge you? How does Jesus’ life, death, and resurrection make this possible for you to live out?

Day Four: Where Are We? (Genesis 2:4-25)

1. Read 1 Kings 3:5-14. This is one of a very few other places in the Old Testament where knowing “good and evil” is described using the same language as Genesis 2. It is helpful to set this story alongside Genesis 2 to illuminate what is actually going on in the passage.
- How does Solomon describe himself in verse 7? How might this relate to the human in Genesis 2?
 - What does Solomon ask for? Note that an “understanding mind” means literally in the Hebrew, “a heart that [listens] intelligently”. How does this relate to the narrative in Genesis 2?
 - What is God’s response to Solomon? Is he pleased or displeased? How does this relate to the narrative in Genesis 2?
 - Focusing on Genesis 2 now, what other tree is specifically mentioned besides the tree of “the knowledge of good and evil”?

2. After reading 1 Kings 3 alongside Genesis 2 ...

- What is the author of Genesis 2 trying to say about humanity?
- Was everything in the garden “perfect”—in the sense that the first humans were perfect moral beings and created to be eternal? Or are the first humans presented more like children—with the potential to attain both moral goodness and an eternal life that isn’t intrinsic to them, but offered as a gift, so long as they listen well?
- What are some of the ramifications these readings have for how we think about God, ourselves, and what the rest of the Bible is about?

3. In 1 Kings 3, Solomon asks for a heart that hears or listens intelligently.

- How is the Genesis narrative similarly setting up a story about how humans will listen?
- What do the humans have access to if they will listen?

WEEK TWO / CREATION, PT. 2

4. Read John 15:1-12. Jesus is equating himself with the tree of life in this passage—the vine without which the branches wither and die.

- How does Jesus say we abide in His love?
- What does it mean for Jesus to be the tree of life?
- What does it look like to live this out practically in your daily life, both acknowledging that Jesus is the tree of life and abiding in Him?

Day One: Read Genesis 3

1. As you read, take note of repeated words, phrases, and themes. Here are some to get you started: *eyes, sight, opened, good and evil, fruit, pain, dust, cursed*.
 - What other key themes, words, and ideas do you see?
- The whole story from 2:4-3:24 is designed as one literary unit—the chapter break is not original to the text. Pay special attention to words or phrases that are repeated with slight variation—the variation is often the key to understanding what the authors are trying to communicate. Mark down words, phrases, and themes that are repeated from Genesis 2.
- What questions do you have about this chapter?

Day Two: Who Is God? (Genesis 3)

1. Compare the serpent's words, the woman's words, and God's original command from 2:16-17. Write down all things you notice.
2. Describe how God approaches the humans after they have failed.
3. Who or what does God call "cursed"? Who or what does God not call cursed? What stands out to you about that?

WEEK THREE / HUMANITY'S FAILURE

4. Compare this passage again with 1 Kings 3:5-14.

- Is the knowledge of good and evil something the humans will need if they are to “rule” (Genesis 1:28)?
- How else is the tree described?
- In light of the things you answered above, how is the serpent portraying God? How does it compare to how the author of Genesis portrays God?
- Think about your current circumstances. Are there ways you see God that are more in line with the serpent’s portrayal than the author of Genesis portrayal of God?
- John 1:18 says “No one has ever seen God; the only God who is at the Father’s side, he has made him known.” How does Jesus’ life, death, and resurrection reorient you to an accurate picture of who God is?

WEEK THREE / HUMANITY'S FAILURE

5. Reflecting on God approaching the humans in their hiding ...

- What is his first response to their failure?
- Do you think these words are spoken with accusation or a desire to draw the humans back into relationship? Why or why not?
- How does Jesus' life, death, and resurrection help you reflect on what God's response was like?

6. It is significant that, while God gives the humans consequences, he never calls them cursed. What does this tell us about God's character and His commitment to humanity?

Day Three: Who Are We? (Genesis 3)

1. What does the serpent say will happen if they eat the fruit from the tree?
Compare this to Genesis 1:26.
2. What do the humans do in 3:6-7? Write down all the verbs.
3. How do both the man and the woman respond to God's questions?
4. What does God say will exist between the woman and the serpent? How does he say it will end?

WEEK THREE / HUMANITY'S FAILURE

5. We looked yesterday at how the serpent misrepresents who God is. How does he misrepresent who the humans are?
6. Instead of “hearing intelligently” (1 Kings 3:9), what do the humans in Genesis 3 do instead?
7. In what ways are you tempted to “take” things you feel you need or you feel God is withholding from you? How would it feel instead to listen to and trust God with those things?

WEEK THREE / HUMANITY'S FAILURE

8. Both humans avoid taking responsibility for their sin when God confronts them.

- In what ways do you see this pattern reflected in your own life?
- How is this tendency rooted in an inaccurate view of who God is?
- Read 1 John 1:9. What is God actually like and how does that give you hope and boldness in confession?

9. Read Matthew 26:36-46. The Old Testament replays humanity's failure at the tree of testing over and over again – we'll see some of these later in Genesis – without a single character passing it completely. In this passage from Matthew, we find Jesus, in a garden, with a choice about a tree (the cross).

- Luke 22:44 says Jesus, "being in an agony prayed more earnestly; and his sweat became like great drops of blood falling down to the ground." Take some time to think about Jesus' choice and what it cost Him. Thank Him for what He chose to do!
- How is Jesus' faithfulness at the tree of testing good news for us? How does it bring you hope in your circumstances and struggles?

Day Four: Where Are We? (Genesis 3)

1. Look again at the serpent's words, the woman's words, and God's original command from 2:16-17. Write down anything that strikes you.
2. Describe the consequences the humans receive and the place they are exiled to.
3. Read Romans 1:18-25.
 - How is what Paul writes here a meditation on what happened in Genesis 3?
 - How do you see yourself in what Paul describes?
 - Do you feel like Paul is exaggerating, or do you feel like it is an accurate assessment?

WEEK THREE / HUMANITY'S FAILURE

4. The same Hebrew word is translated “pain” in both 3:16 and 3:17. Its meaning is “emotional pain” or “grief”. God isn’t talking about labor pains in 3:16 (there are several different Hebrew words for that, none of which are used here) and the words translated “childbearing” and “bring forth children” in 3:16 cover the whole scope of having children—from conception to birth.
- With this in mind, how do the consequences for the humans in 3:16-19 relate to each other, and to God’s blessing from Genesis 1:28-29?
 - Read Matthew 5:2-11. How does Jesus see God’s blessing at work in the world outside the garden?
 - How does Jesus’ vision of God’s blessing relate to the circumstances humanity finds itself in based on Genesis 3:16-19?
 - Is this picture of God’s blessing jarring to you? How does it give you hope?

Day One: Read Genesis 4-5

1. Take note of repeated words, phrases, and themes. Here are some to get you started: *named, brother, offering, angry, do, ground, fathered, died*. What other key themes, words, and ideas do you see?

2. Chapter 4 is divided into 5 sections. Use the space below to write a short description of each section, or anything that stands out to you.
 - 4:1-2

 - 4:3-16

 - 4:17-18

 - 4:19-24

 - 4:25-26

3. Write out the two genealogies side by side—one from Adam through Cain to Lamech and one from Adam through Seth to Lamech.

Day Two: Who Is God? (Genesis 4-5)

1. What does God say to Cain in 4:6-7?
2. How does God interact with Cain after he murders his brother?
3. Compare this with how he interacted with Cain's parents in the garden. List the similarities and differences.
4. Look at the lists of genealogies you made in Day One. How do they relate to Genesis 1:28?

WEEK FOUR / HUMANITY SPIRALS OUT OF CONTROL

5. An offering from the fruit of the ground is a legitimate offering to God. The focus of the Cain story, however, is not the offerings, but what Cain will do.
 - What do we learn about God from how he speaks to Cain after (literally in the Hebrew) “not gazing on” Cain’s offering?
 - Do you find yourself able to trust in God’s character, even when it seems like he is withholding his favor or favoring someone else? Or do you find yourself quick to doubt his goodness?
 - How does God’s response to Cain encourage you?
 - How does Jesus’ exchange with Peter in John 21: 20-22 help us reflect back on Genesis 4?
6. Genealogies in Genesis are used for many things, but one is a narrative illustration of the continuation of God’s blessing from Genesis 1:28. What does it say about God that despite what Cain chose and its consequences, this blessing is not taken away?

Day Three: Who Are We? (Genesis 4-5)

1. How is sin described in 4:7? How does this relate to the previous chapters?

2. How does Cain respond to God in 4:9? Compare this with how his parents responded in 3:9-13. List the similarities and differences.

3. Both Cain and his parents allow themselves to be mastered by animals (a snake and sin “personified”), though the commission God gave in Genesis 1:28 was for humanity to have mastery over the animals. How is “animal-like” or “bestial” a good analogy for sin?

4. In Genesis 3:15, God says there will be “enmity between you (the snake) and the woman, between your offspring and her offspring”. In Genesis 4, we get the first picture of how a human being, though the offspring of the woman, becomes an offspring of the snake.
 - How is this an accurate picture of human experience?

 - Specifically, how is it an accurate picture of your own life?

WEEK FOUR / HUMANITY SPIRALS OUT OF CONTROL

5. Read 1 John 3:1-16.

- How does John say we “purify” ourselves?
- What does John say hoping in Jesus looks like practically?
- How does Jesus’ life, death, and resurrection, and his Spirit within us, enable us to live the way John is calling us to?
- How do these verses challenge and encourage you today?

Day Four: Where Are We? (Genesis 4-5)

1. Make a list of any details in the Lamech story (4:19-24) that repeat, with variation, something from the previous chapters. What trend do you see?
2. In ch. 5, what repeated phrase ends every account of a person's life (but one)?
3. Compare the genealogy from Cain with the one from Seth. What do you notice about the names?
4. The author breaks the patterned phrasing of the genealogy in 5:22 to tell us something specific about Enoch. What is it?

WEEK FOUR / HUMANITY SPIRALS OUT OF CONTROL

5. Lamech's story is intentionally compared with Cain's story in the literary design of the text.
 - In what ways in Lamech's story an exaggeration or amplification of Cain's?
 - In what ways are these two stories a profound commentary on the state of humanity?
 - How do you see these tendencies reflected in your own life?
6. In chapter 5, what does the repetition of "and he died" at the end of every generation remind us about where we are in the story?
7. What does it mean to have this phrase end every generation, which we already noted as being a narrative reminder of God's continued blessing?

Day One: Read Genesis 6-7

1. Take note of repeated words, phrases, and themes. Here are some to get you started: *saw, took, flesh, walked with God, male, female, forty, prevailed, blot out*. What other key themes, words, and ideas do you see?

Day Two: Who Is God? (Genesis 6-7)

1. At the beginning of chapter 6, what words are used to describe how God feels about the state of creation?
2. In 6:11-13, the Hebrew words translated “corrupt” and “destroy” (ESV) have the same root—they are synonyms. Compare where they occur in the narrative.
3. The NASB translation of 6:13 is closest to the literal Hebrew: “Then God said to Noah, ‘The end of humanity has come before me...’” What other passage have we read where something has come to God’s attention from the ground?
4. Who is described as righteous? Who is allowed to enter the ark?

WEEK FIVE / HUMANITY'S VIOLENCE & GOD'S RESPONSE

5. While God's wrath becomes a prominent theme later in the Bible (and is used later in reference back to the flood), wrath does not appear in the description of how God feels in chapter 6. How are the authors depicting God in this passage?

6. What connection are the authors making between what humanity has done to the ground and what God does with the ground? In other words, is the flood portrayed as a judgement from God beyond what humanity has been doing on the land, or is the picture we get that of God bringing to completion what humanity has already begun?

7. Does it comfort you to know that the God portrayed in Genesis will not let violence and bloodshed go unanswered? Why or why not?

8. Though Noah alone is said to be righteous, those who are connected to him (his family) are also saved. The God of the Bible is willing to allow the righteousness of one person to rescue many people who are connected to that one.
 - How is this theme developed in the NT by Jesus and the apostles?

 - How is this significant for understanding God's character? How is this good news for you today?

Day Three: Who Are We? (Genesis 6-7)

1. The “mighty men” (this term primarily refers to warriors) in verse 4 are connected to the description of the land in verse 11. How they are related?
2. Are the “mighty men” a positive or negative thing in the story?
3. How is the human heart described?
4. In Gen. 1:28, God commissions the humans to fill the land. In Gen. 6:11, humanity has filled it, but with what? What does the author attribute this reality to?

WEEK FIVE / HUMANITY'S VIOLENCE & GOD'S RESPONSE

5. In other ancient Near Eastern cultures (especially the Babylonian), the founders of the great empires are revered warrior kings, often considered to be half-human, half-divine.
- How is Genesis 6 commenting on that cultural setting?
 - In many ways our culture also reveres powerful figures who fight to establish some kind of “kingdom”. In what ways do you find yourself revering power the way it is described in Genesis 6?
 - Read John 18:33-36 and 19:9-11. How does Jesus respond to this kind of power?
 - Read Phil. 3:8-11. What sort of power do Christians get to participate in?
 - Take some time to confess the ways that you have revered the wrong sort of power and ask Jesus to show you how to live into the power of his kingdom.

Day Four: Where Are We? (Genesis 6-7)

1. Reread the passage, highlighting again the places where you notice words, phrases, or ideas from the previous chapters.

2. Which previous stories are being drawn on in the narrative? Write down as many connections as you can find.

3. Read 7:11, 20-24.
 - How does the description of the world given here relate to Gen. 1?

 - How does the description of the ark relate to Gen. 1 and 2?

WEEK FIVE / HUMANITY'S VIOLENCE & GOD'S RESPONSE

4. In the strange story about the “sons of God” in Genesis 6:1-4, the language of humanity’s failure in Eden is replayed, but now with an even greater scope. The sons of God “saw” something that was “good” (translated “attractive” in the ESV, this is the same Hebrew word as Genesis 3:6) and they “took”.
 - Revisit Romans 1:21-32. How is Paul’s description of humanity a recounting of what we have seen in Genesis so far?
- Genesis 1-7 is an exploration of what happens when creatures choose to define good and evil on their own terms. In what ways are you tempted to do the same?
- Read Romans 12:2 and 1 Corinthians 2:6-16. What is God’s promise and our hope in Jesus? Take some time to thank God for the ways in which you see Him working this out in your life.

**Note: By the end of Genesis 7, God has allowed the whole creation to collapse back in on itself, and we find ourselves again in a world “without form and void, and darkness ... over the face of the deep” (Genesis 1:2), except for a miniature garden of Eden boat floating on the waters, where the many have been rescued by the righteousness of the one.*

Day One: Read Genesis 8-9:17

1. Take note of repeated words, phrases, and themes. Here are some to get you started: *remember, waters, subside, sent, beast of the field, livestock, birds, life, covenant, month, day*. What other key themes, words, and ideas do you see?

Day Two: Who Is God? (Genesis 8-9:17)

1. Compare God's blessing in 9:1-7 with his blessing in 1:28-30.
 - What is similar?
 - What is different?
 - In the verses preceding 9:1, what is given as the reason for the differences?

2. Describe the covenant (9:8-17).

- Who is it between? What are the terms?
- What does God say is the sign of the covenant?
- How is this metaphor significant in light of Genesis 6-7?

3. The reinstated blessing in 9:1-7 is a far cry from God's original ideal in Genesis 1. What does this tell us about God and his commitment to work with humanity?

4. Read Romans 8:11-17.

- How does God continue to work with and through humanity?

- How is this good news for you today?

5. This is the first of many covenants God will make throughout the story of the Bible. Some will have terms for the other party to adhere to (see Exodus 19:3-6), but many like this one, do not (Genesis 15, 2 Samuel 7).

- What does this tell us about who God is?
- How can we understand Jesus as the ultimate expression of God's faithfulness?

WEEK SIX / RECREATION & COVENANT

6. Read Matthew 26:26-29.

- How does the sign of the covenant from Genesis 9 relate to the sign of the new covenant? Keep in mind the passages in John we read last week (18:33-36 and 19:9-11).

- What does this tell us about the kind of God we worship?

7. Take some time to praise God for who he is. Confess any areas where your view of God is not consistent with who the Bible reveals Him to be, and ask Him to help you know what it looks like practically to believe He is who He says He is.

Day Three: Who Are We? (Genesis 8-9:17)

1. What is Noah's first act after leaving the ark?
2. Despite this, what is still true of humanity? How does this relate to the description of humanity in 6:5?
3. Despite Noah's obedience in building the ark, and his act of complete surrender in offering sacrifices after God brings him safely through the waters, God still sees that the human heart is "evil from his youth". What does this tell us about the pervasiveness of sin?
4. Read Hebrews 10:11-14. What hope do we have in Jesus? How is this good news for you today?

Day Four: Where Are We? (Genesis 8-9:17)

1. The Hebrew word translated “wind” in 8:1 (ESV) also means spirit and breath—it is used interchangeably as spirit/wind/breath throughout the OT. In what previous passage was a spirit/wind/breath over waters?

2. Make a list of all the references you see in this passage to the order of the days of creation from Gen. 1. How long does it take for the waters to subside? When do the humans and animals emerge from the ark?

3. Take some time to imagine what Noah and his family must have felt like as they waited in the ark. Then read Psalm 40.
 - Are there any places or areas of your life where you feel like Noah and his family, waiting on the ark? Maybe where you feel forgotten by God, or unsure if he will act?

 - Jude 20-21 says, *“But you, beloved, building yourselves up in your most holy faith and praying in the Holy Spirit, keep yourselves in the love of God, waiting for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ that leads to eternal life.”* Waiting on God is a common theme throughout the whole Bible, but how does Jude tell us to wait? What does that look like?

4. Genesis 8-9:17 is a recreation story.

- Why is it essential for us to remember that this is the story that follows the flood narrative?
- What does it tell us about who God is and what his purposes are in the world?
- Read Romans 8:18-23. How does Paul see Jesus' death and resurrection as a part of this same story?
- How might you live into this hope throughout your day?

Day One: Read Genesis 9:18-11:32

1. Look for the ways in which the stories from Genesis 2-7 are replayed with variation. Write down the similarities and differences.

- 9:20-21 and The Garden of Eden

- 9:22-28 and Cain and Abel

- 10:9-12 and Lamech

- 11:1-5 and The Sons of Elohim & The Mighty Men

- 11:6-9 and The Flood

- 11:10-32 and The Election of Noah and Recreation

Day Two: Who Is God? (Genesis 9:18-11:32)

1. Why do the people decide to stop and settle in the plain of Shinar in Gen. 11:1-9?
2. What does God do and say?
3. Compare this to Genesis 3:22-23. What is similar and what is different?
4. What is God's act of judgment on the city?

WEEK SEVEN / THE STORY REPEATS

5. Read Genesis 18:20-21 and Exodus 3:7-9.

- When God “comes down” in the Bible, what is he coming down to do?
- What picture do these three texts give us about the judgments of God? What kind of a judge is God?
- How does the connection back to God’s interaction with Adam and Eve in Genesis 3 help you fill out this picture?

6. God “coming down” to both judge and deliver becomes an important theme throughout the Old Testament. Isaiah 63-64 offers just one poignant example where the author, in Babylonian exile after the destruction of Jerusalem, longs for God to return to his people and bring justice and salvation. With all this in mind, read John 1:9-13.

- How is Jesus the ultimate instance of God “coming down” for both judgment and mercy?
- How is this a challenging word? How is it good news?

Day Three: Who Are We? (Genesis 9:18-11:32)

1. What is the first thing that happens in the story after recreation?

2. What is the explicit desire of the next people who build a city? How does this desire compare with God's intention for humanity in 1:28?

3. The Bible often gives us a stark portrait of the human condition. The first story we get after God's recreation and covenant is a failure in a garden and an allusion to some sort of sexual abuse.
 - When you are faced with the painful realities of our world, how do you usually respond?

 - When you are faced with the painful realities of your own sin, how do you usually respond?

 - What would it look like to accept Jesus' prayer on the cross – "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do" – as prayed for you in these moments?

WEEK SEVEN / THE STORY REPEATS

4. The Bible's depiction of cities is complicated. Revelation ends with the new Jerusalem as the dwelling place of God and humanity. However, Cain builds the first city, desiring protection apart from God's promise (Gen. 4:17). And the second city in Gen. 11 is built with an explicit desire to resist God's mandate from Gen. 1:28, with an implied desire to reclaim heaven for themselves.
- What is it about human civilization, both ancient and modern, that can make it easier for us to live as if we are our own gods?
 - Read Lk. 12:13-21. What does Jesus call our tendency to find security by "storing up"? How do you see this tendency in your own life?
 - A city is a place where security can be found in the number of people (relationships) as well as material wealth. Which are you more tempted to find your security in?
 - What would it look like to live out Jesus' words that "one's life does not consist in the abundance of possessions" (or in the abundance of relationships), but rather to be "rich toward God" (v.21)?

Day Four: Where Are We? (Genesis 9:18-11:32)

1. The genealogy in Genesis 10 lists nations that Israel will encounter through the rest of the Old Testament. What claim is the author making about the relation of all the different nations to one another?
 - How does this set us up to see later conflicts between these nations as replaying the Cain and Abel story over and over again?
 - How does looking at your life through this lens help you understand your own experiences? In what ways can you relate to this depiction of humanity?
 - Read Matthew 5:21-25. How does Jesus pick up on this theme from the Old Testament and expand on it?
 - According to Phil. 2:1-11, how do brothers and sisters in Christ live in unity?
2. Abraham's family is depicted as a part of the scattering out of Babylon ("Chaldean" refers to Babylonians throughout the rest of Bible). What does this tell us about how God works in the world? How does this give you hope for yourself and those around you?



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