

THROUGH THE BIBLE

September 13, 2017

Assignment

Lesson 1 in the Workbook

- 1) We often read the Bible in bits and pieces. This can result in confusion over the overall intent of Scripture, disagreement as to its meaning (without the benefit of looking at the broader context), and theological misunderstandings. We tend to interpret the Bible to fit our needs and/or we read the portions of the Bible that are familiar to us. An overview of the Bible will help us understand the mind and will of God which will lead to healthy and faithful lives.
- 2) Some things that hinder our reading and understanding of the Bible include not dedicating personal time for prayer and reflection, reading on our own starting from Genesis through Revelation without guidance (which makes it easy to quit as soon as we read Leviticus), and not wanting to deal with those passages that are more challenging to our understanding of God.
- 3) The Redemption of Humanity
- 4) The Old Testament lays the groundwork for why God sent his Son into the world to save and redeem us. God has loved us since the time of creation and God will always love us. In the New Testament we are introduced to God through Christ who shows us (in concrete ways) how to be in relationship with God and neighbor.

What did you learn about the nature and will of God in Genesis?

What characters / stories did you relate to the most in Genesis?

What messages found in Genesis challenge you?

What messages found in Genesis offer you comfort and strength?

GENESIS

Genesis – Greek word means *beginnings*

the beginning of the world and the human race

the beginning of sin and the promise of redemption (Genesis 3:15)

the beginning of family life and the nations of the world

In Genesis we learn more about the character of God than in any other book in the Bible.

God is sovereign (supreme) and God is in control of the world he created.

Anthropomorphism – God is given human traits and emotions.

God reveals both his grace and judgment when he interacts with people.

In Genesis *faith* is defined for us – belief in the Lord (Genesis 15:6).

Hebrews 11 is the great *faith* chapter of the New Testament.

Half of the references are characters found in Genesis.

Genesis sets the stage for all the rest of Scripture. In Genesis we read about creation, the fall of creation, and the beginning of God's plan of redemption and restoration of fallen humanity.

Nowhere does the Bible attempt to prove or defend the existence of God.
It is self-evident and assumed that God exists.

In Genesis 1:31 God looked over all that he made and saw that it was very good.
By the time that we reach Chapter 6, God is grieved that he made humans.
Between Chapter 1 and 6 the Bible recounts how we went from perfection to devastation.

The event that changed the course of history is the sin of Adam and Eve.
The sin was threefold – doubting the word of God, disobeying God, desiring God's power.
From this one story we learn the consequences of sin:
A loss of our innocence
A change in our relationship with God (spiritual death)
A limit is placed on our time on earth (physical death)

In Genesis 3:14-19 God immediately pronounces judgment on Adam and Eve and the serpent.
Yet in the midst of God's judgment, God gives the promise of redemption (3:15).
It is the first prophecy that a Redeemer will come to crush the head of Satan.
The sin of Adam and Eve was great but the grace of God was greater.
Even in the pain of judgment we find the promise of redemption.

In Genesis 3:21 God made garments of skin for Adam and Eve (something dies to clothe them).
Where there is sin, there is always judgment and the shedding of blood.
In the Old Testament there were sacrifices of animals to atone for the sins of the people.
In the New Testament Jesus Christ sheds his blood as the atonement for our sins.

The sin found in the story of Cain and Abel is that of the heart and not the actual offering to God.
Jealousy turned into hatred and hatred turned into murder.
Sin brought a spiritual death in altering his relationship with God.
It also resulted in physical death for Cain (and for all of us).

The story of the flood was an opportunity to start anew.
But sin still lurked within the hearts of humanity.
Instead of submitting to God, the people constructed the *tower of Babel*.
In order to make a name for themselves
In order to build a tower high enough to reach God and assume his power

Redemption

God inaugurates his plan by calling a righteous man named Abram.
All of salvation history stems from the covenant God made with Abram in Genesis 17:1-11.
It is a conditional covenant (blessings are contingent upon obedience)
Condition – Walk before me and be blameless (17:1) (Good works and faith)
Promise – You will be the father of many nations
Sign of the covenant – Circumcision

Obedience is a result of faith and not a replacement for it.

In Genesis 22, God tests the faith of Abraham by asking him to sacrifice his only son. Abraham models unquestioning obedience and is willing to offer everything he has. The very last words of Genesis tell us that the bones of Joseph are placed in a coffin in Egypt. The book that begins in a garden ends in a graveyard. Genesis is a record of human failure but even in the midst of all this failure there is a promise.

In Genesis alone we learn that God ...
is the sovereign creator
created humankind with a free will even though God knew we might choose not to obey him
is both holy and just and has made death the penalty for our sins
establishes the first covenant with Abram
is a God of justice but also a God of grace and mercy
has a plan that is just beginning to unfold

Assignment

Lesson 2 in the Workbook

Read Exodus

Substitute these questions for *Personal Reflection*:

Why is it so important to us as Christians that God created the world?

Reflect on how our sins have affected the lives of others.

How do we relate to the three parts of the original sin – doubt, disobedience, desire?

In what ways do we experience our punishment for sin?

How has sin personally affected our relationship with God?

Prayer for this week –

What needs redeemed (changed) in our personal lives?

What needs redeemed in this world?