

Bible Study Guide: Genesis 1–6

Overview

Genesis 1–6 introduces God as Creator, humanity as image bearers, and the entrance and rapid spread of sin. These chapters establish God’s design for relationships and reveal how quickly humanity turns from Him, while also pointing forward to His plan of redemption.

Opening Question

What stood out to you most about God, humanity, or sin in your reading this week?

Genesis 1

Genesis 1 presents God as the intentional and sovereign Creator who brings order and structure into existence through His word. The Hebrew word *yom* is translated into our English Bibles as “day.” *Yom* can refer to a general period of time, but within the Old Testament, *yom* consistently refers to a literal 24-hour day outside the account of creation. In Genesis 1:26, God says, “Let us make man in our image,” which points to plurality within God’s nature and serves as an early glimpse of the Trinity. Humanity is uniquely created in God’s image, setting humankind apart from the rest of creation.

Read Aloud: Genesis 1:1-5. Genesis 1:26-27

Discussion Questions

1. What patterns do you observe in how God creates in Genesis 1?
 2. What do you think it means for humanity to be made in God’s image?
 3. How does this chapter shape your understanding of where we came from and why we exist?
-

Genesis 2

Genesis 2 provides a more detailed account of the creation of humanity. God’s rest on the seventh day does not indicate that He was tired, but that His work was complete and fully sufficient. This establishes a pattern of rest that is later reflected in the Sabbath. The detailed description of the Garden of Eden, including specific rivers and geography, suggests that this is a real, physical location, reinforcing the historical nature of the account. This chapter records the order of human creation. The man was created initially, then the woman was created from man as a suitable helper/companion. This establishes a distinction in role, without negating the equality that exists between the two genders, as both men and women are equally loved by God, and are equally valued by Him.

Read Aloud: Genesis 2:7. Genesis 2:18-24

Discussion Questions

1. What does God's rest on the seventh day teach us about Him and about us?
2. What significance might there be in the detailed description of Eden's location?
3. What does the creation of woman from man reveal about God's design for relationships?

Genesis 3

Genesis 3 introduces the serpent, identified by the Hebrew word *nachash*, which can refer to a literal serpent, or it can figuratively describe deception, whispering, enchantment, and even a "shining" or attractive appearance. This highlights the deceptive nature of temptation, which often presents itself as appealing while distorting truth. The serpent's strategy centers on undermining trust in God's word and character. Eve is drawn to the fruit primarily because the serpent had told her that it would make her like God. Adam's lack of intervention, and later participation, suggests a failure to lead and protect. Together, their actions reveal that the root issue of sin is not merely disobedience, but a desire to be God-like. Genesis 3:16 states that Eve's desire will be for her husband. This is traditionally understood to mean that the woman's desire will be to rule over her husband, or that the wife will desire to hold the husband's leadership role. In Genesis 3:21, God makes garments of skin for Adam and Eve, implying the death of an innocent animal. This introduces the concept of substitutionary covering and foreshadows the sacrificial system and ultimately the atoning work of Jesus Christ.

Read Aloud: Genesis 3:1-7. Genesis 3:16. Genesis 3:21

Discussion Questions

1. What do you notice about how the serpent approaches Eve?
2. Where do you think Adam was during Eve's temptation, and what does that imply?
3. In what ways did both Adam and Eve fail in this situation?
4. What does Genesis 3 reveal about the deeper nature of sin?

Genesis 4

Genesis 4 reveals how quickly sin spreads through humanity. Cain and Abel both bring offerings to the Lord, but their sacrifices differ in both quality and heart posture. Abel brings the firstborn and the best portions of his flock, demonstrating priority and devotion, while Cain's offering lacks that same emphasis. This establishes an early pattern of giving God the first and best, which is later reflected in the principles of first fruits and tithing. Before Cain sins, God graciously warns him that sin is crouching at the door and desires to control him, but that he must rule over it. Rather than receiving correction, Cain

resists and allows sin to take hold, resulting in the murder of his brother. This account demonstrates how deeply rooted sin is in the human heart and how quickly it escalates when left unchecked.

Read Aloud: Genesis 4:3-8

Discussion Questions

1. What do Cain and Abel's offerings reveal about their attitudes toward God?
 2. What do our modern-day offerings reveal about our attitudes toward God?
 3. What does God's warning to Cain teach us about the nature of sin?
 4. What can we learn from Cain's response to correction?
-

Genesis 5

The genealogy recorded in Genesis 5 demonstrates continuity in the human line from Adam to Noah, reinforcing that these are real people within a real historical timeline. Methuselah's long lifespan places him within both the lifetime of Adam and Noah.

Read Aloud: Genesis 5:21-24

Discussion Questions

1. Why do you think the phrase "and he died" is repeated so often?
 2. What is significant about Enoch's life compared to others listed?
 3. Why would it be important for Moses to include this genealogy?
-

Genesis 6

Genesis 6 describes a world that has become deeply corrupted by sin. The time span from Adam to the flood, approximately 1656 years, allows for significant population growth, cultural development, and technological advancement. The global flood would have wiped out most, if not all, of the infrastructure on the planet and set back technological advancements. Based on the average lifespan at the time, and the proliferation of the human race, it is estimated that the population of the Earth before the flood was at least hundreds of millions and potentially as high as 17 billion. Moderate estimates cite the population ranging between 1 and 4 billion. The passage introduces the phrase "sons of God," which is usually a reference to angels, in this case fallen angels. The text describes them taking wives, suggesting unnatural and forceful unions. The Nephilim mentioned in Genesis 6:4 are commonly understood as the offspring of these unions. While our understanding of the Nephilim remains somewhat clouded, the emphasis of the passage is clear: humanity is descending further into corruption and violating God's created order. The flood account is presented as historical in Genesis 6 and is referenced throughout the Bible as a

historical event. Modern geological findings have been interpreted by many as supporting the biblical claim of a global flood.

Read Aloud: Genesis 6:1-5. Genesis 6:13-14

Discussion Questions

1. What does Genesis 6:5 reveal about the condition of humanity?
2. Why do you think references to the Nephilim are included in this passage?
3. Why is it important that the flood is treated as a real historical event?

Seeing the Gospel

In these early chapters, the need for redemption is clear. Humanity rejects God's authority, bringing sin and death into the world, yet God responds with both justice and grace. In Genesis 3:21, God provides a covering through the death of an innocent animal, pointing forward to the need for substitutionary atonement.

This pattern continues throughout Scripture and is ultimately fulfilled in Jesus Christ, whose sacrifice provides the final covering for sin. The preservation of Noah in the midst of judgment also reflects God's pattern of rescuing those who trust Him, pointing forward to the salvation offered through Christ.