

## Blended Week 1

### January 1: Genesis 1-2 and Matthew 1

Genesis opens with the line “In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.” The original Hebrew is in seven words. These seven words give us seven truths in which the rest of the Bible is based. 1. God exists. 2. God existed before there was a universe and will exist beyond it. 3. God is the main character of the Bible. 4. As Creator, God has done what no human can do. 5. God is mysterious. The Hebrew word for God used here is “Elohim”. The name used for God is plural, but the verb form is singular. This points to God’s triune nature. He is the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. 6. God is the creator of heaven and earth. He didn’t just find some unfinished works and form it the way He wanted it. Instead, He created it all. 7. God is not dependent on the universe, but the universe is dependent on Him.

After this opening line, we are treated to how God put it all together. He forms light first and separates the light from the darkness. Then He separated the waters making an expanse and calling it the sky. From there, He gathered the waters so that there would be dry land. Then He puts plants on the earth, then living things in the ocean and waters, then He makes animals to roam the earth. In His final act of creation, God creates man and woman.

Genesis two gives a second account on the creation of man and woman. It is not good for Adam to be alone. God forms Eve from Adam’s rib. It is interesting to note that God forms her from Adam’s rib. Some folks have used the creation narrative to try to put one sex over the other. Some will say that since man was created first, man is superior. Others will claim that since woman was created second, women are more refined than men and therefore are superior. However, the fact that God pulls the rib instead of anything else shows that the two are to be equal partners. He uses the rib, pulled from Adam’s side. God didn’t use Adam’s feet or part of Adam’s head to create Eve. Instead, He pulled from the side. They were to be side by side, not one above the other.

From Genesis, we go all the way to Matthew one. This chapter gives us the genealogy of Jesus. Matthew’s intent is to show us just how Jesus ties in with the line of David. God’s covenant with David ensured that one of David’s offspring would reign on the throne forever. Jesus traces His lineage back to David and even further back to Abraham. Mary, a virgin, become pregnant. Her fiancé Joseph is going to call it off, but he will do it in secret because he is honorable and does not want to dishonor Mary. Joseph is visited by an angel and he is told what is about to happen. Mary is going to give birth the long-awaited Messiah. He will be called Immanuel, meaning “God with us”.

### January 2: Genesis 3-5 and Mathew 2

Genesis three gives us the account of the fall of people. Adam and Eve had been given an easy set of commands. Be fruitful and multiply and DON’T eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. Some things to note about this encounter. The first thing the serpent does is question God’s commands. Eve tries to fight back, but she adds to God’s commands. He had told them not to eat from the tree. She added that they were not to even touch it. We don’t know

whether she was adding that or if Adam had added it. I think once Eve gave more to the command, the serpent knew that he had them. The enemy appealed to their sense of pride, telling them that if they eat the fruit, they would be just like God, knowing good and evil. Both Adam and Eve were culpable in the fall. Adam was there when the interaction with the serpent began. It's questionable why he didn't intervene. While it is easy to sit back and blame all the problems on these two, I am certain that even if Adam and Eve had not succumbed to the temptation, someone would have. Fortunately, God already had the salvation plan in place. We read the protoevangelium in Genesis 3:15.

Adam and Eve could not have known the consequence of their sin. They did not die physically, but their fellowship with God had been destroyed. They are banished from the garden and now they see just how terrible their sin was in Cain and Abel. Cain and Abel both take a sacrifice to God. Abel brings what is good to God and he is honored. Cain throws some stuff together and God does not have regard for him. God gives Cain the chance to do right and make a better sacrifice. Instead, Cain kills his brother. God gives Cain a mark and sends him on his way. Cain goes and establishes a city. One of his offspring is Lamech, the first ever recorded person in the Bible to be a polygamist. The line of Cain will prove to be a wicked group. Genesis five tells us about the line of Seth. Seth's line honors God. One person worth mentioning is Enoch. Enoch was so faithful and had such a deep fellowship with God that one day God took him. He was taken, body and all to heaven.

Matthew two talks about the Wise men seeking the newborn King of the Jews. They were astrologers. They knew nothing of Yahweh, but they knew enough to seek out the new king because of the new star. It took them approximately two years to get to Jerusalem. They ask Herod where the new king is. Herod is greatly disturbed because his kingdom was now threatened. The rest of Jerusalem was disturbed because they knew that Herod was one to fly off the handle and go to extremes to preserve his reign. In fact, he had murdered several family members, including some of his children. Herod asks that the Wise Men let him know where the Baby is so that he can worship Him. They are warned about Herod, so they divert. Joseph is warned about Herod and told to flee to Egypt. Herod has every boy in and around Bethlehem two years old and younger slaughtered. After Herod died, Joseph, Mary, and Jesus left Egypt and settled down in Nazareth.

January 3: Genesis 6-8 and Matthew 3

Mankind has been multiplying on the earth. The sons of God saw that the daughters of mankind were beautiful and took them as wives. This verse shows that something has gone terribly wrong from God's initial command to multiply. There is controversy around who the sons of God actually were. This is one of those things that we will not know the answer to on this side of heaven. There are three mainline ideas as to who these men were.

1. The sons of God refer to the sons of kings or aristocrats. The proponents for this interpretation argue that the word used for God in Hebrew is also sometimes used for people with strong social power.
2. The sons of God were the godly line of Seth.

3. The sons of God were actual angels that created offspring with women. The book of Jude refers to an incident with angels finding women attractive because of their long hair. Another argument for this interpretation are that this term is used solely for angelic beings in the Old Testament.

The world is in a sorry state. God decides that He is going to wipe away humanity from the earth. He tells Noah to build an ark so that he and his family can be spared. Noah is faithful and builds the ark. Once the ark is completed, he and his family enter the ark along with all of the animals needed to repopulate the earth when the flooding receded. Seven days went by when no rain happened. Then, in Noah's 600th year, the flood came. The water surged. Noah and his family floated along for quite a while before the flood recedes and they land on Mt Ararat. This narrative about the flood is often looked at as if it was mere allegory. However, many civilizations have some kind of an earthly flood narrative. There is the Epic of Gilgamesh and the story of Pyramus and Thisbe in Ovid's Metamorphoses. Further, Native American tribes have great flood stories in their folklore as well.

Matthew three introduces John the Baptist. John acts as an Elijah figure, proclaiming Messiah's arrival. John wore a camel hair coat and ate locusts and wild honey. The people in Jerusalem, Judea, and all the vicinity of the Jordan were flocking to him. In John's Gospel, we will see that these folks are flocking to him at first because they think he might be the Messiah. John informs everyone that he is not the Messiah, he is merely the herald. Jesus approaches John and is baptized by him. John protests at first, but ultimately performs the baptism. Jesus had no real need to be baptized. He was perfect in every way. Jesus is baptized because it was part of the Father's will. Jesus was following His Father's commands. He will spend all of His life upholding God's law.

January 4: Genesis 9-11 and Matthew 4

God establishes His covenant with Noah in Genesis Nine. He again tells them to be fruitful and multiply. God also informs them that the animals will be terrified of them. The animals are placed under their authority and they are now allowed to eat the animals. Prior to the flood, they were on a vegetarian diet. One caveat to eating the meat is that they are not allowed to eat anything with its blood still in it. God also promises that He will not flood the earth again. We certainly still deal with floods today. As bad as the flooding can be, it is not global. Genesis 10 provides us with the Table of Nations, explaining the descendants of Noah's sons.

We read about the Tower of Babel. The people had not spread out throughout the land like they were supposed to. They all shared the same language and enjoyed many conveniences of centralized. However, that ease of life leads them to some wayward thinking. Collectively, they decide that they are going to build a city with a tower that reaches all the way to heaven. Their intent is to make a name for themselves and not be scattered over the face of the earth. The LORD comes down and sees what the people are doing. He changes their language and they all scatter across the earth. Ironical since this is exactly what they did not want to happen!

Matthew Four deals with the temptation of Jesus. Jesus is led into the wilderness by the Spirit. He remains in the wilderness for 40 days and 40 nights. When he is hungry, the devil tempts Him to make some bread out of the stones. Jesus certainly could have done that. The enemy goes right after where he knows the most temptation will be, to fill a hungry stomach. Jesus does not give in to the temptation. Instead, He quotes Scripture to the devil to ward him off. Then the devil takes Jesus to a high point and tells Him to throw Himself down, citing Scripture trying to get Jesus to fall. Jesus fights back with more Scripture. Finally, the enemy takes Jesus and shows Him all of the kingdoms and promises them to Jesus if He will simply bow down and worship. Once again Jesus does not fall for it. The ridiculous part of this third temptation is that Jesus is already King of Kings. He has ultimate authority over them.

Some things we can learn about sin from here. In the first temptation, it is going to meet an immediate need. However, it would require Jesus to go against the Father's will. Sometimes we will be presented with the idea that we need something, there is something lacking in our lives that needs to be fulfilled, and we can be tempted to fill that void with sin. Sin over promises and under delivers. Another thing we learn is that sometimes folks will come along with Scriptures to try to justify sinfulness. As believers, we need to know exactly what the Word says so that when someone tries to bamboozle us we will know better. Finally, sin sometimes will tempt us to take the easy way. The easy way is not always the best way.