



# Genesis

## Beginnings

Week 2  
Chapters 3 - 11



## *The Bible as a six-act unfinished play!*

*Act One*      *Act Two*      *Act Three*

Genesis will take us  
well into Act 3!

Creation → Fall → Israel →

*Act Four*      *Act Five*      *Act Six*

Jesus → The church → Renewal of creation



## Rebellion in the Kingdom

- ❖ All is good in the garden. Man and woman as partners. One flesh. Working. God would come to walk with them in the evenings. A life of *shalom*. Then the serpent enters the story.
- ❖ Desiring to be like gods themselves, to know what the gods know, the man and woman eat from the forbidden tree.
  - They have chosen to be autonomous (“own law”). They have chosen *freedom from* versus *freedom for*.
  - They immediately start blaming someone else. The man blames the woman. The woman blames the serpent.
- ❖ It is impossible to overstate the significance of this to the story of humankind.
  - The relationship between the humans and God is torn apart. They hide from God in fear and shame! All of the cosmos is damaged – even the ground becomes difficult to work. (See Romans 5:12-21 & 8:18-25)

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## A few thoughts

- ❖ It isn't *knowledge* v. *ignorance* at question here. It is *knowledge* v. *trust*. Faith is all about trust – and Adam and Eve proved to be unfaithful, with terrible consequences.
- ❖ The humans were created mortal but had access to eternal life. When they sinned, they were sent away from the garden and away from the tree of life. Death is the enemy. Salvation can be thought of as the restoration of access to eternal life.
- ❖ The relationship between the man and the woman was created to be mutual and equal. But after they sin, a consequence is the entrance of hierarchy and oppression.
  - Adam names Eve – this is about control and dominion, just as Adam named the animals. Adam is to “rule over” Eve. This is part of the distortion of God's creation.
- ❖ Despite their rebellion, God still takes care of them. He finds them. He clothes them. But the consequences are serious – they must leave the garden and never return – *exile*.

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## **The darkness spreads**

- ❖ Eve gives birth to two sons: Cain and Abel. Cain is a farmer and Abel is a shepherd.
- ❖ When Cain and Abel bring offerings, God accepts Abel's but rejects Cain's – without explanation.
  - Resist trying to explain God's rejection too easily. Perhaps it is the state of Cain's heart, but the text is not explicit. God simply rejects Cain's offering. Later, God would reject Esau and bless Jacob. Why? See Romans 9 – God will have mercy on whom God will have mercy.
- ❖ Cain is angry and jealous. God offers Cain a choice as to how he will respond to this seeming injustice. God warns Cain that sin desires him and is ready to leap on him – and it does.
- ❖ Cain is angry with God but takes it out on his brother, murdering Abel. Cain is exiled but will still be under God's protection.
- ❖ The love and companionship in the garden has now transformed into jealousy, hatred, and murder. *Separation* is the new mark of humanity – the cosmos is being torn apart.

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## **Genealogies and Giants**

- ❖ Jewish genealogies are obviously important, we have lots of them in the Bible. Their purpose is probably continuity, to show the linkage of humankind from the Garden of Eden to the flood.
  - It is hard to know what to make of the people's ages and the diminishing lifespan.
- ❖ There is not much to go on with respect to Enoch. He “walked with God” and God “took him.”
- ❖ Note Lamech's comments on Noah's birth (5:29). This is good news that is proclaimed!
- ❖ 6:1-4 calls for very modest interpretation – to say the least! Perhaps we see here that sin has become cosmic.

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## Noah – remnant & covenant

- ❖ God's grief
  - What an amazing portrait of God here. Humankind has gone so wrong. Wickedness is everywhere. God grieves as a grieving parent.
  - How do all these stories shape our understanding of God? These depictions of God are filled with emotion. God can abandon what he has made and rescue what he has condemned.
- ❖ We might think that God will simply toss out the whole thing, but God does not. He chooses Noah and his family – a remnant. Noah is “righteous” and “blameless”
- ❖ God makes a covenant with Noah. Noah is obedient, building an ark and collecting animals as God instructed.
- ❖ Here is how this will play out:
  - hostility => remembering => commitment

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## Un-creation and Re-creation

- ❖ Flood waters cover the earth for 150 days and kill all living things are not in the ark.
- ❖ But then God remembers Noah and God's breath (*ruach*, wind) moves across the waters and they subside until God tells Noah to leave the ark.
- ❖ Regardless of how things got so bad, God promises – in his heart -- that he will never again curse the ground or destroy all living things. The sign of this covenant is the rainbow.
  - Notice that Noah and his sons are told to “be fruitful and multiply.” Life is precious, God reminds Noah (9:3-7). See all the parallels to the account of creation. God has re-created what God un-created.
  - This promise by God limits God's actions. God chooses to limit God's own freedom!
- ❖ Note that all of this is for all people in all places at all times. There is, as yet, no Israel, no chosen people.

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## ***But the darkness still spreads***

- ❖ Another difficult story – Noah and his sons. Why curse the grandson Canaan? Perhaps this story grounds in pre-history the coming struggle between Israel (Shem/Japheth?) and Canaan.
- ❖ The story of Babel
  - The humans use their knowledge and common language to build a tower to the heavens. They will yet figure out how to be like gods themselves.
  - God smashes the tower and scatters the people, introducing different languages.
- ❖ The next genealogy firmly links Abraham back to Noah and Adam.

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## ***Where is Jesus in this?***

- ❖ From at least Paul, many Christians have seen the serpent in Genesis 3 as Satan and that it is Jesus Christ who crushes Satan under his heel.
  - “The God of peace will shortly crush Satan under your [the Church’s] feet” Romans 16:20. An echo of Genesis 3?
  - Revelation 12:9 explicitly names Satan as the “serpent.”
- ❖ Noah and his family begin the “remnant” theme in Scripture. Jesus will be a faithful remnant of one.
- ❖ On the day of Pentecost, the shattering of the common language at Babel is restored.

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