



SETTING THE STAGE

A SERIES IN GENESIS 1-11

NARWEE
BAPTIST
CHURCH



HOW TO USE THIS BOOKLET

1. PERSONAL READING

- Use this guide to help you read your Bible every day.
- Scribble down your thoughts and questions each day.
- The 5 daily studies for each week are *in preparation* for the upcoming sermon on Sunday.
- Although some days you will be focussing on just a couple of verses, it is always great to read the whole chapter again to help put what you are reading into context.
- Each devotion should take approximately 10 minutes - if you would like to dive deeper: ask more questions, read back over yesterday's points, or read the surrounding text. If you can make and take more time, go for it!
- By spending weeks studying this book, the goal is that you will have read it many times and have studied it in depth.
- Take your time and enjoy God's word.

2. PRAYER

- In some places, prayer ideas are given as a suggestion. In other places, the prayer has been left blank. This is for you to complete with your own requests, confessions and thanks. At times your prayers may be prompted by the passage, but there is room to pray for whatever is happening in your life each day.

3. CHURCH

- Keep this guide with your Bible and bring it with you to church.
- Scribble down sermon notes in the space provided after each week.

SERMONS AND DIGITAL BOOKLET AVAILABLE AT:

www.narweebaptist.org.au

GENESIS 1-11: SETTING THE STAGE

WHY SETTING THE STAGE?

In our modern times, Genesis 1-11 contains some of the most controversial texts of the Bible. But these very texts are enormously significant. They set out basic features for a Christian worldview. They ‘set the stage’ for the story of Israel; God’s mission to create for himself a people to live as his treasured possession and be a blessing to the rest of the world. They ‘set the stage’ for redemption history, central to what the bible has to say about God, the concerns and concepts of sin, obedience and judgement which are continued throughout the scriptures. They ‘set the stage’ in a majestic, dignified and most wonderful fashion, profoundly and yet perfectly clear in introducing the two main subjects of Holy Scripture, God the Creator and humanity his creature, and so ‘sets the scene for the long tale of their relationship.’¹

Genesis 1-11, which can also be called the ‘primeval history,’² places the historical narrative of the remainder of the bible in the correct cosmic context. The God who called Abram, who brought Israel up out of Egypt, who set David upon the throne, and the one who ultimately came in flesh as Jesus; this God is no local divinity but the creator of the whole universe.

So, these texts may be controversial in our modern times, but they are of immense significance and worthy of close attention.

¹ Wenham, Word Bible Commentary OT, Genesis 1-15, p.6

² Primeval refers to the first age or ages, the earliest of times. It will often include information regarding origins; origins of God, time, humanity but particularly the world

HOW DO WE APPROACH THIS TEXT?

There has been a great deal of time spent considering the genre, the literary context and critics of these texts. Ink and blood spilt on Genesis' relationship to science, origins of the world and origins of humanity. We cannot begin to scratch the surface with much of the intricate debates. But, we must remember that the bible, including Genesis 1-11 is **God's inspired word given through human authors and written in a particular context and genre.**

... *GOD'S INSPIRED WORD*

Firstly, we must remember that we are unapologetically claiming that these words are God's words. Scripture itself testifies to this, that all Scripture is 'God breathed' or 'inspired' (2 Tim 3.16). This means that first and foremost we must ask what is God's word seeking to teach. What is God asking me to believe, to learn, to be taught from this part of His Word.

Throughout this series we hope to engage closely with the text. As we approach, or may have questions of authenticity and correspondence with our scientific-age, it is Scriptures 'cutting edge' that we must first engage with (Hebrews 4.12). Not ignoring the realities of what we are taught through science but not forcing them to inform us upon what the Scriptures need to or should teach us.

... *THROUGH HUMAN AUTHORS*

One of the great difficulties with Genesis extends from the ancient origin and the subsequent question regarding the author. This is where it gets harder, but again we must be informed by the text itself and what it seeks to communicate. Communication of all forms requires common ground in understanding. This means both the 'speaker' and the 'audience' must seek to find common ground to establish any understanding.

In His commitment to personal relationships, God speaks, and he speaks through human authors, through their Spirit inspired words (2 Peter 1.21). This allows for a common ground for communication, in this respect God has 'accommodated' to our needs in order that he could address humanity directly.

We noted that one difficulty with Genesis is seeking to understand *who* the author is. However, whether we can be definite or not, we can talk about the author's intent without needing to get within the author's head by asking 'what effect does *this text* seek to produce in the audience?' Again, much has been written regarding authorship, but this question helps us to maintain our focus upon what is spoken.

Genesis fits as one piece of the Pentateuch, the first five books of the Bible. Traditionally Moses was believed to have written these first five books. More and more theories grow as to the origins of Genesis and yet we can have confidence in this text and its unity. Both Scripture, Jewish and early church tradition support the understanding of Moses as the main author of the Pentateuch, and so, Genesis. The Pentateuch has Moses as its implied author. We are to read this text best when we read as though Moses had written these words to Israel.³ Therefore, this will be our approach. Yet, there is more to establishing common ground for communication than to ensure there is a speaker and an audience.

...IN A PARTICULAR CONTEXT AND GENRE

It is far too simple to say that we have a speaker, an audience and a message that connects them. We need to also note that the speaker and the audience have a 'picture of the world,' there is a particular context in which the text was written and originally read. This context influences knowledge, beliefs, values, experiences and language.

Again, we can only touch on the deep details. But, it is important that we remember the knowledge and beliefs of the author and audience were different to ours. Our worldview informs how we perceive things, so to did theirs. Moses wrote to a people with a Near Ancient East picture of the world. This was a time when people weren't asking the questions about the mechanics of creation. This was a time when they didn't have the same understanding of the world. So, questions of origins were directed toward function rather than material.

³ Collins, Genesis 1-4, p.36-7

Within the opening chapters, Gen 1-11, there are formulae that help us identify the structure implicit within the text. The most useful is the ‘toledot’ formula, each development in history is introduced with this formula, ‘this is the (family) history of...’ or ‘this is the story of...’ There are ten sections, with 1.1-2.3 functioning as grand introduction to the whole book.

	1:1–2:3	Prologue
1)	2:4–4:26	History of heaven and earth
2)	5:1–6:8	Family History of Adam
3)	6:9–9:29	Family History of Noah
4)	10:1–11:9	Family History of Noah’s sons
5)	11:10–26	Family History of Shem
6)	11:27–25:11	Family History of Terah
7)	25:12–18	Family History of Ishmael
8)	25:19–35:29	Family History of Isaac
9)	36:1–37:1	Family History of Esau
10)	37:2–50:26	Family History of Jacob ⁴

⁴ Taken from Wenham, Word Bible Commentary OT, Genesis 1-15

THIS BOOKLET AND PREACHING SERIES

Week 1 - Gen 1.1-2.3	The Perfect Stage is Set
Week 2 - Gen 2.4-25	The Main Characters Displayed
Week 3 - Gen 3.1-24	The Stage is Splintered A Tragedy Begins
Week 4 - Psalm 104	Praising the Creator God <i>Preaching – Perfect and Broken Sexuality</i>
Week 5 - Gen 4.1-25	The Characters Increasing Conflict
Week 6 - Gen 6.12-8.22	The Stage is Flooded, Uncreated and Recreated
Week 7- Gen 9.1-29	Is this a new Stage? A Promise made, but old problems remain
Week 8	Songs and Scripture <i>Preaching – Youth Service</i>
Week 9 - Gen 11.1-8 (11.9-12.8)	Characters Scattered, A broken stage set, but the story continues...
Week 10	Preaching Psalm 19 and QnA

WEEK ONE – GENESIS 1.1-2.3

The Perfect Stage is Set

MONDAY

Before you read the passage today, take some time and write down what you can of the creation account. What are the important details to you? Why?

Read Genesis 1.1-2.3

- i. How did your account match? What had you forgotten/remembered, were there any parts that surprised you?

- ii. What do you hope to learn as you look closely at Genesis this term? Are there any questions that you would love to have answered?

Pray that Genesis might remind you of the awesome creator that we worship. Ask that this text might not sit in front of you like a text book, but that you might see it as the living word of God that it might teach you.

TUESDAY

Read Gen 1.1-2

- i. What do the first four words tell us? Why is this a grand way to start? What does it teach us about the beginning?
- ii. What might the author be referring to when he says, ‘the heavens and the earth’? Could this be read in support of God creating all things out of nothing? Explain your reasoning.
- iii. The author directs the reader to consider ‘the earth’ in v.2. How is the earth described? Detail this specifically and then attempt to describe it in your own words.

The first verse of Genesis is a fantastic statement that sets God as the supreme creator of all things. It then describes the Spirit hovering expectantly above a chaotic and dark object waiting to be ordered. God’s initial act of creating ALL things is then followed by God’s ordering of the varied parts of the universe, specifically earth, a majestically thought out beginning!

As you pray today, thank God that he is before all things and that he is the creator of all things. Take time throughout the day to be remind that there was ‘in the beginning, God.’

WEDNESDAY

Read Gen 1.3-5

Before you answer the following questions, remind yourself of the scene in v.2.

- i. In v.3 what is God's first 'word act' in creation, what does he command and how?

- ii. What significance does this give to God's 'word' and 'words' and how might God's creation of light start to teach us about the contrast between light and darkness?

- iii. Read John 1.1-2, 3.19-21 and 8.12. How might these passages help us consider Jesus connection to creation and 'fill out' our understanding of light and darkness?

Take a quick look at Colossians 1.15-20 and Hebrews 1.1-4, reflect upon the way the authors describe Jesus and consider again just how marvelous it is that Christ became flesh, redeemed us and now has us dwell with him. Now, give thanks!

THURSDAY

Read Genesis 1.1-2.3

Read the passage relatively quickly, just skimming the surface as you will look more closely soon. Today we will consider the brilliant structure and order to the authors description of creation and what that teaches us about God.

- i. Look closely at Day 1, v.3-5. Day 1 gives us an insight into the ‘formula’ that is reused on each day. See if you can list the seven formula, they will be shown below but try and do it yourself first:
 - 1.
 - 2.
 - 3.
 - 4.
 - 5.
 - 6.
 - 7.

- ii. There is also order to the ‘establishing’ and then ‘filling’ of God’s creation. Complete the following:

Let there be, established:

Day 1 -

Day 2 -

Day 3 -

Day 7 –

Let there be, filled:

Day 4 –

Day 5 –

Day 6 –

- iii. Genesis 1-2.3 is highly stylized and structured, God's acts of creation appear order, what might this point towards?

- iv. Which days are presented the same, but differently, this is significant. We will consider Day 6 tomorrow, but what appears to be the significance of Day 7? Can you see a pattern? How does Exodus 20.8-11 help?

God wasn't haphazard in his creation, and this order actually highlights Yahweh, our God, as unique among all the other 'creating gods' that were around in early Biblical time (in the Ancient Near East, ANE). We can often be sidetracked by scientific debate, our questions were not the questions asked by the ANE community. Yes, this is an important topic but not the main point of this passage. God is presented as the God of grace and power who created the whole universe, ordered it and gave it purpose. Take time today to ask that you might be able to trust this God and stand in awe, not neglecting the questions of science but seeing them fit within our God's world.

Seven standard formulae: 1. announcement, 'God said...'; 2. command, 'let there be...'; 3. fulfillment, 'it was so...'; 4. execution, 'light...'; 5. approval, 'saw... good'; 6. subsequent word, 'God called...'; 7. day number

FRIDAY

Read Gen 1.26-31

Yesterday we noted that there are seven formulas that are similar each day of creation. But, we also noted that Day 7 is similar but different making it significant, this can also be said of Day 6.

- i. Looking at Day 1 v.3-5 and Day 6, today's reading, what is different in the description of God's creative act of man? Note them below.

These differences direct us to seeing Day 6 and the creation of man as the focal point of Genesis 1.1-2.3, the climax of the six days work.

- ii. In v.26 how is man described as being made?
- iii. Read Psalm 8. How does this Psalm help us understand the significance of humanity and their role in creation?

Humanity was made in God's image, his representative 'vice-regent' on earth, a copy of God himself. Jesus came and bore that image perfectly. Read Col 1.15-20 again. Pray that you will seek to bear the image of God as Christ has redeemed you. Pray also that the words of Psalm 8 will ever be on your lips recognizing the magnificent blessing God has given.

Sermon notes

The Perfect Stage is Set – the designer begins, the stage is set
Genesis 1.1-2.3

WEEK TWO – GENESIS 2.4-24

The Main Characters Displayed

MONDAY

Read Genesis 2:4-25

- i. What are the first observations you make about the passage?
- ii. What didn't make sense? Write down one question to ask someone at church on Sunday
- iii. Compare 2.4 with 1.1, is this the same story, how might we reconcile the 'two accounts'?

As you take time in this account, ask that God might cause you to see greater detail as we zoom in on the creation of man and women. Pray that God may reveal to you something more about himself, and that you may come to understand where you fit into his story.

TUESDAY**Read Genesis 2:4-7**

- i. Skim back through chapter one and take note of the word used for 'God'. How is it different in this chapter?

Note: whenever the word 'LORD' appears in the Old Testament, in all capitals as show, it means 'Yahweh', which is the personal name of God, rather than the impersonal title.

- ii. What does the difference in name suggest the author is teaching us about the LORD and his connection to his creation? Consider also who is 'doing' all the actions?
- iii. How does the LORD'S creation of man here differ from the rest of creation last chapter?
- iv. What is the significance of having the 'breath of life' in us, and being made 'living beings' (v7), does this show an intimacy?

God shaped man like a potter shapes his clay, pouring his very self into his work. As you pray today, thank God for his personal involvement in your creation. Read and prayerfully reflect upon Psalm 139.13-16.

WEDNESDAY

Read Genesis 2:8-14

We've seen that God made man personally – he formed him then gave him life. Today we discover the place he designed for him.

- i. Where did God place the man he had made? Why do you think he chose to put him here?

Throughout the Bible, direction often has specific meaning. East is associated with life – the rising of the sun.

- ii. What else did God place in the garden? Why do you think he put each of them there?



- iii. How do these things demonstrate God love and graciousness toward his most treasured creation? What do we still experience of this goodness in creation?

God took very good care of Adam. Thank him for all the ways he takes care of and provides for you.

THURSDAY

Read Genesis 2:15-17

- i. What does verse 15 suggest that the LORD's purpose was in placing Adam in the garden?
- ii. Do you think the LORD is capable of 'working' the earth and 'taking care of it' himself? Why then do you think that he gave that job to man?
- iii. In verse 16 the LORD tells the man that he is 'free to eat from any tree in the garden. Go back to yesterday's passage – how are the trees described in the first half of verse 9? What does that tell us about God?
- iv. It might seem strange that the LORD places the tree of the knowledge of good and evil in the garden. What might we learn from this?
- v. God loves his creation and he longs for his creation to respond in love and obedience so he gives us good words to obey. How do we see this in v.16-17?

Ask God that you might trust his good and loving words. Ask God that you might trust 'the word,' Jesus Christ, and so live in obedience to him, knowing that he has our best intentions in mind.

FRIDAY

Read Genesis 2:18-25

- iv. Look back to Genesis 1:26. How do the events of verses 19 and 20 relate to that verse?

God delighted in including Adam as a part of the process of naming the animals. The image comes to mind of a child proud of his art, showing it off to his father, keen to have him involved.

- v. This passage can seem offensive to us in our 21st century context- the idea that woman was created from man (v21, 22) and that her role is to be man's helper (v18) has been called misogynistic. How does this perspective effect how we perceive the passage?

Note: the word for 'suitable' in v18 can also be translated 'equal and adequate', and the word used for 'helper' is mostly used to describe God in the Old Testament. Whilst men and women are definitely not the same (see Colossians 3:18-19), our idea of what the bible teaches may not be exactly what we had assumed.

Also consider the words of Matthew Henry: 'The woman was made out of a rib from the side of Adam, not made out of his head to rule over him, nor out of his feet to be trampled upon by him, but out of his side to be equal with him, under his arm to be protected, and near his heart to be beloved.'

- vi. What does God's providence of a 'suitable helper' for Adam suggest about his character?

We have seen that God cares greatly about our relationships. Take this opportunity to thank God for the relationships that he has given us, especially the one that we share with him.

SETTING THE STAGE
Sermon notes

The Main Characters Displayed
Genesis 2.4-25

WEEK THREE - GENESIS 3:1-24

The Stage is Splinters – A Tragedy Begins

MONDAY**Read Genesis 3:1-6**

- i. Before you look closely at Genesis 3, what was the image left at the end of Genesis 2? Particularly look at the final verse.

- iii. The snake first asks a sneaky question (v1) and then flat-out lies (vv4–5). What is the snake implying about God?

- iv. When did the woman sin? Talking to the snake at all (v2)? Not recounting God's command correctly (v3)? Looking at the fruit (v6a)? Desiring it (v6b)? Eating it (v6c)?

- v. The woman doubts God's word, and then disobeys it. How might we relate, are there any of God's words or promises that you have trouble believing? Which of God's good words do you struggle to obey?

Pray: confess your doubt and/or disobedience to God. Ask him to help you trust and obey all that he says.

TUESDAY

Read Genesis 3:7-13

We see here that sin has consequences even before the curses are made in the following verses.

- i. What adjectives (describing words!) would you use to describe the man and woman's actions here? How much does this live up to the snake's promises of what the fruit would do?

- ii. How is the relationship between the man and the woman going in these verses? Between the people and God?

- iii. What are the natural consequences of some of the sins in your life?

Pray: confess to God the sin in your life, and acknowledge its consequences. Thank him that he reaches out to us even in our sin and its consequences - just as he did for this man and woman.

WEDNESDAY

Read Genesis 3:14-19

- i. Look carefully: are people cursed in this passage?

- ii. What similarities exist between the curses? What's different for each recipient? How are the curses appropriate to each 'person'?

- iii. Verse 15 has been called the earliest hint of the good news about Jesus in the Bible. What did it mean to Adam and Eve? What can it mean for us?

Pray: We recognise God's justice in these verses, and so we should praise him. But we should also be terrified as we realise what God's judgement means for us. Pray about these things. But remember also that God hints he will do something about the problem of sin, so take refuge in him.

THURSDAY

Read Genesis 3:20–24

- i. After yesterdays events what would you expect God do to next?
- ii. What mercies does God show to the man and the woman in these verses?
- iii. How has the snakes promise been partially fulfilled? How has the man become like God (v22)? Reflecting on Genesis 1:26–27, what is wrong with this?
- iv. What were the consequences for not trusting God at his word and instead giving in to the Snake’s lie?
- v. There is a lot about life (and death, by implication) in these verses. How has sin impacted human life as a whole?

Pray: for people living under the shadow of death. Pray for someone facing great difficulty, sickness, or grieving over death. And pray that God would show mercy on someone you know who hasn't accepted God's new offer of life in Jesus.

FRIDAY

Read all of Genesis 3 again.

This event sets the stage for all human history to come. And yet, it isn't just history: Romans 5:12–21 makes it clear that we all somehow participate in this event, even though we weren't physically there. e.g. 'one trespass resulted in condemnation for all people' (Rom 5:18a). Then Paul goes on to say that we also participate in Jesus' saving work: 'so also one righteous act resulted in justification and life for all people.' (Rom 5:18b)

- vii. What have you learned this week about the consequences of sin?

- viii. What have you learned about God's response to sin in the world?
In your life?

- ix. If you have time, read through Romans 5:12–20 and see how we are caught up in Jesus in a much better way than we are caught up in Adam.

Pray: again confessing your sin. Acknowledge that God is just in judging sin, and merciful in his response. Thank him for how we are caught up in Jesus' work that deals with sin.

SETTING THE STAGE
Sermon notes

The Stage is Splintered – A Tragedy Begins
Genesis 3.1-24

WEEK FOUR - PSALM 104:1-35

Praising the Creator God

As the writer of this psalm looks at creation, his or her heart wells up in shouts of praise to God. But the writer doesn't just reflect on nature: it is clear that they are reflecting on the first three chapters of Genesis as well. As you read this week, use this psalm to praise God, and to keep meditating on what we have learned in Genesis 1–3.

MONDAY

Read Psalm 104:1-35

- i. What stands out to you?

Zooming in on verses 1–4:

- ii. In verse 1, the writers tells us that this will be a psalm focused on 'praise', declaring how good God is. As you read these four verses, who are they addressed to? Why do you think he changes this (twice!)?
- iii. The writer compares God to a majestic king, using powerful creative forces. What kingly elements can you see? What does the creation imagery do to enhance this image?

Pray: praise God for his power and greatness. Acknowledge again that you are his servant (remember what we saw in Jude 1:1 recently).

TUESDAY

Read Psalm 104:5-13

- i. Water (particularly the ocean) was associated with chaos in the ancient Israelite mindset. What does God do to and with water in these verses?

- ii. Look back over Genesis 1. What connections do you see?

- iii. What strikes you as chaotic in the world today? How might this Psalm be of comfort?

- iv. Read Mark 4.35-41, how is Jesus shown to be God and what confidence should this give us?

Praise God for his control over the world. Pray that God might reveal himself amidst the chaos of this world. Thank God that he did this in Jesus and that we can trust Jesus, the creator who stepped into chaos to rescue his people.

WEDNESDAY**Read Psalm 104:14-23**

- i. We've seen in recent weeks that God made the world. But he also looks after it. How does God care for creation in these verses?
- ii. What things does God particularly do for humans?
- iii. Can you think of a time where God has taken care of you? What might prevent you from seeing his powerful work within creation and specifically your life?
- iv. What does all this tell you about God's power and character? How might the Psalmist's approach help you to remember God's continued activity in creation?

Pray: Notice that the psalmist doesn't use the word 'thank you' here, but uses these examples of care to explain how powerful, conscientious, and kind God is. Using this psalm and your experiences of God's care, write down a few sentences (or even lines of poetry!) that express your praise to God. Pray them to him, and maybe share them with a friend, housemate, or family member.

THURSDAY

Read Psalm 104:24-30

- i. Some describe God as like a watchmaker: a watchmaker makes a watch, puts a battery in it and then lets it go by itself, and in the same way God made the world and now leaves it to run itself. How much would the writer of these verses agree? What might his response be to this sort of description?

- ii. In this section the echoes of Genesis 1–3 come through very clearly. What links can you find? (Genesis 1:2, 1:20, 2:7, and 3:19 would be good places to start.)

- iii. We can learn about God from looking at the world around us, but our knowledge is much deeper when we combine those observations with the Bible. What have you learned about the world, and God’s involvement with it, in the last few weeks?

Pray: praise God that he keeps the world working. Acknowledge that you (and everything else) rely on God for all things. Entrust yourself and your circumstances to him.

FRIDAY

Read Psalm 104:31-35

- i. Here the psalmist brings his outpouring of praise to an end. What conclusions does he make about God?

- ii. What is his personal response to God's incredible creation and intricate care of it?

- iii. How does verse 35 relate to the rest of the psalm?

Pray: for God's will to be done over the entire world. Ask him to grow your ability to praise him (hopefully this psalm has helped!), and to be filled with heart-felt praise. Tell God again how incredible he is.

SETTING THE STAGE
Sermon notes

Perfect and Broken Sexuality

WEEK FIVE - GENESIS 4:1-25

The Characters Increasing Conflict

MONDAY

Read Genesis 4:1-16

- i. First Impressions of the passage? What stands out to you?

Genesis 4 starts with a Genealogy of Adam, which is interrupted by the narrative of Cain and Abel in verses 3-16.

- ii. What problem is outlined in verses 3-5? What words used in these verses help us identify the problem?
- iii. Why might God have accepted Abel's offering and not Cain's?

Abel brought to God the best of his flock to worship God whereas Cain brought to God some of his fruits.

Pray that we may worship God with our whole lives not just the areas that are convenient for us.

TUESDAY

Read Genesis 4.6-8

- i. Compare Genesis 3:1 and 4:6. Consider who is asking each question? What is the intention of the question? What is the difference between the two questions?

God's questioning is similar to the serpents. However, the snake has the intention of leading humans into sin; God's intentions here is to lead away from sin and to see hearts changed.

- ii. In Verse 7, what is God's solution to Cain's rejection? Is God's favour achievable?
- iii. What is Cain's response to God's rejection of his offering? How do we see the growing impact of sin in creation?

Genesis 3 reveals that the result of the fall establishes separation between God and humans. Although humanity is already in conflict too, Genesis 4 shows the progression of sin, which results in the every increasing separation of horizontal relationships, ie. Humans.

Pray that you might not be mastered by your human desires that lead to sin and instead have a yearning to be obedient to God who has made a way to have a restored relationship with Him and others through Jesus' death and resurrection.

WEDNESDAY

Read Genesis 4:9-15

- i. What questions does God ask Cain in Verses 9-10? What is God inviting Cain to do? *See contrast in 3:9 and 3:13.*

- ii. What is the judgement brought onto Cain? Verse 11-12.

- iii. What is Cain's response to his punishment in verse 13-14? How would you describe his response, would you say Cain acknowledging his sin or is he sorry for getting caught?

- iv. What do we learn about God's character, from verse 15, in reducing the severity of Cain's punishment?

Pray that God might give you the strength you need to confess and acknowledge your sin. Thank God that he is a gracious, loving and merciful God who sent Jesus to pay a debt he didn't owe, because we owed a debt we couldn't pay.

THURSDAY

Read Genesis 4:16-24

We see in verses 3-5 that Cain and Abel tried to draw close to God in worship through bringing their sacrifices and in verse 16 it ends with Cain being driven from God's presence (East of Eden).

- i. What is the underlying truth about sin and relationships that is reveal through the story of Cain and Abel?

- ii. What is broken because of the fall? What is constant even though the fall took place? Refer to verse 15 from yesterday.

One thing we learn from this narrative is that even though Cain is out of the presence of God and receives judgement for his sin, he is not out of the protection of God.

- iii. What are the similarities between Genesis 4:1, 17, 25?

As we trace the line of Adam, the future looks grim, as it appears the line of Cain will continue. However, tomorrow we will look closely at v.25-26 and see that hope still remains.

Take another look at today's passage and see where God's character is shown. Pray in response.

FRIDAY

Read Genesis 4.25-26

- i. Genesis 4:1, 17 & 25 all speak of the line of Adam being continued, what is different about verse 25 to verses 1 & 17?

To understand the importance of Seth's birth, we need to compare it to the previous two births (Gen 4:1 & 17)

- ii. Outline briefly a summary of Genesis 4:1-16, look at the people involved, where the story starts, where it finishes?
- iii. Do the same for Genesis 4:17-24. What similarities do you find in these verses when you look at the big picture of the verses?
- iv. Read Genesis 4:25-26, how do these compare to the previous verses? (Gen 4:1-16, 17-24) Compared to the first two gloomy stories, what does the birth of Seth suggest for the present and future of God's people? (Think back to yesterday's devotion)

Cain's actions in killing Abel meant that the chosen line of Adam would continue through Cain characterised by rejection, judgement and disaster. Due to this God's blessing cannot be with Cain, therefore at the end of Genesis 4 we see HOPE. God allows Adam and Eve to give birth to another son Seth, who becomes the father of the chosen line.

- v. Skim read Luke 3.23-38 but take a close look at v.38, who does Luke show Jesus was a descendent from? Why is this significant?

Pray and thank God that he has made a way for us to be right with God, that because of his love, grace and mercy we are able to be in a relationship with Him through the line of Seth, the line of hope.

Sermon notes

The Character Increasing Conflict
Genesis 4.1-26

WEEK SIX GENESIS 6:12-8:22

The Stage is Flooded, Uncreated and Recreated
I Will Make All Things New

MONDAY

Read Genesis 6:12 – 8:22

- i. Write down your first impressions of these passages.

- ii. What stands out? If you had to express what you believe the passages to be about in one short sentence, what would it be?

- iii. Are there any parts that didn't make sense to you, what questions do you have?

Pray that God may reveal to you a fresh understanding of this portion of Scripture, that he may communicate with you and draw you closer to him as you delve into his word.

TUESDAY**Read Genesis 6:12-22**

- i. What was wrong with the world in the eyes of God? (vv12-14)

- ii. In verse 13 God says, 'I am going to put an end to all people'. What does this teach you about God's expectations for human behavior?

- iii. In verses 14-17 God informs Noah, a righteous man, how he, his family, and the animals shall be saved. It is God who decides the terms of salvation. How does this relate to what we read in verse 13?

- iv. It is easy to question how God could do such a thing; destroy all the people of the earth. What was Noah's response? What does this teach you?

God created us for a purpose – to enjoy Him forever. When we disobey him and do what we want there are consequences. Praise God for promising salvation to Noah!

WEDNESDAY

Read Genesis 7:1-16

Although God had decided to destroy the earth with a flood, he had also decided to bring salvation to his faithful servant Noah. God set up a covenant with Noah (6:18), and Noah obeyed the commands of God. This is a paradigm of the Christian Life.

- i. God's covenant (v18) would have been a great encouragement to Noah who, for 120 years, was building the ark. List some of the struggles with which he would have contended. Consider Hebrews 11:7.
- ii. List some of the ways Noah demonstrated trust in God. What does this teach you about being faithful to God?
- iii. Verse 16 finishes with the words 'Then the LORD shut him in.' What does this phrase teach us about Noah's safety (vv11-12)? What does it mean for our own security in Jesus?

When discussing his second coming, Jesus drew a comparison between those who were destroyed in the flood and those who will not be ready for the final judgement. We are encouraged to remember the salvation brought once for all to God's elect. Look forward to the Lord's return, knowing that our salvation is found in Christ, not in ourselves.

THURSDAY**Read Genesis 7:17-8:5**

There was a strong bond of trust between Noah and his God. Noah trusted God while he was in the ark, and God remembered Noah following his righteous judgement.

- i. Think about the frightening experience of being in the ark while it twisted and rocked within the deluge of God's wrath day after day. Why do you think Noah trusted God in this situation? Consider 7:1-4.
- ii. What does it mean when the narrator says 'But God remembered Noah'?
- iii. How do you demonstrate trust to God during your own times of difficulty?
- iv. Do you believe God remembers you? If so, how? Consider 2 Thessalonians 3:3-5.

Praise God for the example set by Noah during the flood! It was the faithfulness of God that sustained him and his family. Pray that you will remain faithful to God through all you do.

FRIDAY

Read Genesis 8:6-22

The account of the flood is the one great historical demonstration of God's inescapable judgement. It is also the demonstration of his salvation. With Christ as our ark, we look forward to the second coming for the completion of our salvation.

- i. Noah was given a sign while he was in the ark which gave him hope that the time of distress was over. The dove returned with a fresh olive leaf, then found nesting away from the confines of the ark. What signs has God given to you? Particularly think about his promises that come from his word.

- ii. How did Noah demonstrate his faithfulness to God following the flood? How do you continue to demonstrate your faithfulness to God?

- iii. What was God's response to Noah's demonstration?

Even though God had destroyed those who were rebellious, he still declared 'every inclination of the human heart [to be] evil from childhood.' Noah needed the salvation of the ark, but it was merely a shadow of his salvation in Christ. Let us rejoice that Jesus' death and glorious resurrection paid the ransom that has set us free from the bondage of our sin!

Sermon notes

The Stage is Flooded – Uncreated and Recreated

I will make all things new.

Genesis 6.12-8.22

WEEK SEVEN GENESIS 9:1-29

Is this a New Stage?

A Promise made, but the problem remains...

MONDAY

Read chapter 9 of Genesis

As you read try to grasp the flow of the chapter, starting from God's command to "be fruitful and multiply" and finishing with Noah's death, it might help to map it out below.

- i. What stands out to you about this chapter?

- ii. What questions do you have about chapter 9?

Pray that God may provide a fresh understanding of this chapter, that He may communicate with you and draw you closer to him as you delve into His word.

TUESDAY

Read Genesis 9:1-7

- i. Compare this passage to Genesis 1:28-30. What is similar and what is different?

- ii. The positive instruction of having dominion over the living creatures (in Gen 1:28-30) is replaced here by the negative comment that they will fear and dread human beings. Also, humans are now given permission to eat animals. Why is this? What has changed since chapter 1?

- iii. What do verses 5-6 teach about how God values life?

As you pray today, consider your relationship to Jesus and the life you have. Pray that our values will become more and more aligned with His.

WEDNESDAY

Read Genesis 9:8-11

Today's passage includes God establishing a covenant with Noah and making a promise to all humanity. A covenant formally binds two parties together in a relationship, on the basis of mutual personal commitment, with consequences for keeping or breaking the commitment.

- i. What is the covenant that God establishes here?

- ii. Take a look again at Genesis 6.18, who does God establish the covenant with? What is different about his promise in this chapter?

- iii. The flood demonstrated the Lord's judgement and yet in saving Noah we also see his salvation. How have we seen God remain faithful to his promises in the story of Noah, and what is the significance of there never being another flood like the one they just experienced?

Thank God that He keeps His word and is faithful to His promises. Reflect on some promises made to all Christians and praise God in light of these.

THURSDAY

Read Genesis 9:12-17

Different covenants have appropriate signs or symbols linked to them.

- v. Turn over to chapter 17 of Genesis – what is the sign of the covenant with Abraham?

- vi. And what is the sign of the covenant with Israel at Mount Sinai (Ex 31:12-17)?

- vii. What is God’s designated sign on this occasion?

- viii. How long is this covenant for?

- ix. The Lord continues to makes promises to his people through covenants. Take a look at Hebrews 8:6-13 and 9:15, the author expresses that the covenant is “new.” How is this covenant “new”?

May our faith and thankfulness increase, as we are mindful of the covenant God made in and through Christ. Spend time thanking God for all He has given you and promised in Jesus.

FRIDAY

Read Genesis 9:18-29

- i. What did Ham do when he saw his drunk father naked?
- ii. What are the contrasting prophetic announcements for each of the sons:
 - Shem –
 - Japheth –
 - Ham's son Canaan -

As the story of Israel continues we see the outworking of these prophetic announcements. However, at this stage of the story after what appeared to be a high point what happens immediately to remind us that sin's influences are still at work?

- iii. How does this passage direct our thoughts back to Genesis 3?

The flood didn't solve the issue of sin, clearly shown in Noah and his son's behaviour. But, praise God that in Jesus God's wrath was satisfied and the penalty for sin was paid in full, so that, those who are in Christ are made new. Take time today to confess your sins and ask God to transform you more and more into the likeness of his son.

Sermon notes

Is this a New Stage? A Promise made, but old problems remain...

Genesis 9

WEEK EIGHT – SONGS & SCRIPTURE

MONDAY

Take your time reading these song lyrics:

"Amazing Grace (My Chains Are Gone)" - Christ Tomlin

Amazing grace
How sweet the sound
That saved a wretch like me
I once was lost, but now I'm found
Was blind, but now I see

'Twas grace that taught my heart to fear
And grace my fears relieved
How precious did that grace appear
The hour I first believed

My chains are gone
I've been set free
My God, my Savior has ransomed me
And like a flood His mercy reigns
Unending love, amazing grace

The Lord has promised good to me
His word my hope secures
He will my shield and portion be
As long as life endures

[2x]

My chains are gone
I've been set free
My God, my Savior has ransomed me
And like a flood His mercy reigns
Unending love, amazing grace

The earth shall soon dissolve like snow
The sun forbear to shine
But God, Who called me here below,
Will be forever mine.
Will be forever mine.
You are forever mine.

Now, have a think: what bible passages can you relate to these lyrics?

- iii. Take some time to read Eph 2:1-10, how do these words remind us of God's amazing grace?

Pray about this amazing grace. What are you thankful for? How has His mercy changed your life?

TUESDAY

Read these song lyrics:

JERUSALEM - Jonny Robinson, Rich Thompson, Tiarne Kleyn

See Him in Jerusalem
Walking where the crowds are
Once these streets had sung to Him
Now they cry for murder

Such a frail and lonely Man
Holding up the heavy cross
See Him walking in Jerusalem
On the road to save us

See Him there upon the hill
Hear the scorn and laughter
Silent as a lamb He waits
Praying to the Father

See the King who made the sun
And the moon and shining stars
Let the soldiers hold and nail Him down
So that He could save them

See Him there upon the cross
Now no longer breathing
Dust that formed the watching crowds
Takes the blood of Jesus

SETTING THE STAGE

Feel the earth is shaking now
See the veil is split in two
And He stood before the wrath of God
Shielding sinners with His blood

See the empty tomb today
Death could not contain Him
Once the Servant of the world
Now in vict'ry reigning

Lift your voices to the One
Who is seated on the throne
See Him in the New Jerusalem
Praise the One who saved us
Praise the One who saved us!

Then have a think: what bible passages are related to these lyrics? If you have time, read Luke's passion narratives (including Luke 19.28-48; 22-24). Otherwise, read John 20 and reflect on the resurrection today.

Praise God because Jesus is alive and risen. Think about the implications of this and pray specifically.

WEDNESDAY

Have a read of these song lyrics:

"O Praise The Name (Anástasis)" - Hillsong

I cast my mind to Calvary
Where Jesus bled and died for me.
I see His wounds, His hands, His feet.
My Saviour on that cursed tree

His body bound and drenched in tears
They laid Him down in Joseph's tomb.
The entrance sealed by heavy stone
Messiah still and all alone

O praise the name of the Lord our God
O praise His name forever more
For endless days we will sing Your praise
Oh Lord, oh Lord our God

And then on the third at break of dawn,
The Son of heaven rose again.
O trampled death where is your sting?
The angels roar for Christ the King

O praise the name of the Lord our God
O praise His name forever more
For endless days we will sing Your praise
Oh Lord, oh Lord our God

He shall return in robes of white,
The blazing Son shall pierce the night.
And I will rise among the saints,
My gaze transfixed on Jesus' face

O praise the name of the Lord our God
O praise His name forever more
For endless days we will sing Your praise
Oh Lord, oh Lord our God
Oh Lord, oh Lord our God
Oh Lord, oh Lord our God

Find a Psalm that you can relate to these lyrics, maybe you know a few.
If you find that difficult take some time to read Psalm 150.

Once you've finished the about read Romans 5 today and try to
memorise verse 8.

*Thank God for the gospel today and "praise the name of the Lord our
God!"*

THURSDAY

Spend 5mins reading these song lyrics:

"God Of Wonders" – Third Day

Lord of all creation
of water earth and sky
The heavens are your Tabernacle
Glory to the Lord on high

God of wonders beyond our galaxy
You are Holy, Holy
The universe declares your Majesty
And you are holy holy
Lord of Heaven and Earth
Lord of Heaven and Earth

Early in the morning
I will celebrate the light
When I stumble in the darkness
I will call your name by night

Hallelujah to the Lord of heaven and earth

Precious Lord reveal your heart to me.... Father holy..
The universe declares your majesty
You are holy, holy, holy, holy,
Hallelujah to the lord of heaven and earth

Take some time to return to the opening chapters of Genesis and remind yourself of God's incredible works in creation. Then read Psalm 40 and notice the word "wonders" in verse 5. How does this add depth to the song lyrics?

Pray about what you have read. Approach our God of wonders with boldness and confidence (Heb 4:16)

FRIDAY

Take your time going through these song lyrics:

Rock of Ages, cleft for me,
Let me hide myself in Thee;
Let the water and the blood,
From Thy wounded side which flowed,
Be of sin the double cure,
Save from wrath and make me pure.

Not the labor of my hands
Can fulfill Thy law's demands;
Could my zeal no respite know,
Could my tears forever flow,
All for sin could not atone;
Thou must save, and Thou alone.

Nothing in my hand I bring,
Simply to Thy cross I cling;
Naked, come to Thee for dress;
Helpless, look to Thee for grace;
Foul, I to the fountain fly;
Wash me, Savior, or I die.

While I draw this fleeting breath,
When my eyes shall close in death,
When I rise to worlds unknown,
And behold Thee on Thy throne,
Rock of Ages, cleft for me,
Let me hide myself in Thee.

What do you think of when you sing this song? Write a few reflections below.

Read Isaiah 26, look closely at v.4 and see if you can memorise it by the end of the day.

Praise God for who He is. Take some time to jot down all the attributes you can think of that describe God.

SETTING THE STAGE
Sermon notes

YOUTH Service!

WEEK NINE – GENESIS 11.1-9 (11.10-12.9)

Characters Scattered,
a broken stage... but the story continues

MONDAY

Skim Read Genesis 10

The details of Genesis 10 show the continuation of the blessing. You would have noticed the repeated reference to divisions, by ‘clans’ and ‘languages.’ Given 11.1 commences, ‘Now the whole world had one language and common speech,’ the narrator is moving ‘back in time,’ focusing on the main line.

Read Genesis 11.1-9

- iv. What are your initial thoughts of the passage? Is this a familiar story to you?

- v. Was there anything that particularly surprised you about the passage leaving you with questions?

Pray that as you look at a well-known and familiar story this week, you might be able to glean a new understanding. Ask God to speak to you from His word and by His Spirit so that your preconceived notions might be corrected, stretched or reaffirmed.

TUESDAY

Read Gen 11.1-4

- i. How is humanity described in v.1-2, where and in what direction are they moving?
- ii. Noah's sons were told to 'fill the earth' (Gen 9.1) but what do they do when they reach Shinar?
- iii. What are they determined to build and why? How does this reveal the thoughts of their hearts?
- iv. The descendants of Moses are seeking to build a tower that 'reaches to heaven,' the top is to be in the heavens. It is like a staircase to the dwelling place of God, how could this be seen as another effort to become like God?
- v. What problem do we still see?

Ask that God might convict you of the places in your life where you are being proud and disobedient. Confess and then thank God that he forgives us in Christ Jesus.

WEDNESDAY**Read Genesis 11.1-7**

- i. How does the description of the LORD coming down to see this tower that is meant to reach the heavens show the size of the tower in the LORD's eyes?

- ii. How is the scene in v.5-7 similar to the moment in the flood narrative where 'God remembered Noah?' (8.1) How is God's view of the situation different to him remembering Noah, the righteous man?

- iii. What does the LORD do to the people in response to their defiant act and disobedience?

- iv. The people's action is described like the eating of the tree in Genesis 3. This is but the beginning of their activity. How then do we see the LORD's graciousness in preparing for judgement?

- v. At this point in the story, whose purposes appear to be most likely to be fulfilled? Look closely at how the contrast is being established and keep that in mind for tomorrow.

Consider how the LORD is described in these verses. The people have clearly forgotten who this God is. Take time to consider when you forget God and his place; the one seated above all, the one whose purposes and plans are supreme but also perfect. Ask that you might always remember who our God is.

THURSDAY

Read Genesis 11.1-9 (focus v.8-9)

- i. What does the LORD do to the people? How does this show that the peoples plans have been completely frustrated?
- ii. What name is given to this place and why? Do you think there is more significance to this than simply a description?

It appears that the whole story is built to explain the word 'Babel' and to show it as under divine judgement. Babel also directs the reader to think of Babylon, and throughout Scripture Babylon is seen as the embodiment of human pride and godlessness.

- iii. Take a quick look again at Genesis 10, it paints a positive picture, at very least neutral regarding the relationship between the nations. But the story doesn't end there. As a result of this story, what do we witness instead?

Praise God that the hopelessness of humanities situation at Babel is not God's last word. The Scriptures reveal a day when sin will be destroyed and we dwell in perfect unity. The Lord Jesus' first coming, his death and then resurrection gives us assurance that when he returns that day will come.

FRIDAY

Read Gen 11.10-12.9

- iv. Today, take time to compare the account of Terah and Abram. What are the similarities, but more importantly what is the key difference (12.5)?
- v. God makes Abram a great promise, what are the key features of this promise?
- vi. How does the promise to Abram compare to the ambitions of the people at Babel?
- vii. Take time to skim over Genesis 1-11. Where does Genesis 12.9 leave the story? How has the stage been set and what are you expecting?

As you pray today, thank God for all that he has taught you through Genesis 1-11. Ask that these opening chapters might continue to shape the way you see the Scriptures tell the story of relationship to our God. If you have time, read the introductory material again and see what depth has been added as a result of spending this time in God's word.

SETTING THE STAGE

Sermon notes

Characters Scattered – *a broken stage, but the story continues...*

Genesis 11.1-9 (11.10-12.9)

Notes and Questions:

SETTING THE STAGE

Notes and Questions: