

GENESIS

VOLUME 1



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We're all familiar with the phrase "origin stories" made popular by countless superhero inspired movies over the past two decades. An origin story is an account, or backstory, revealing how a character or group of people came to be. Origin stories add details, interest and complexity to fill in gaps of missing information and paint a broader picture, so the story is more complete.

There's something refreshing and hope-filled about starting at the beginning. As we start a new year, we're going to begin at the at the origin, or genesis, of our story. Origin is the literal translation of the word, genesis. We'll see several beginnings in the book of Genesis; the beginning of the world, humans, family, community and salvation. It's the story of God's hopes, purposes and plans for His world. Genesis sets the stage for the rest of the Bible. It reveals the nature of God, the value of human beings, the fall, the consequences of sin and the promise of our salvation.

God is the start and reason for everything. I often say, "If you can believe the first ten words of the Bible, 'In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth,' then the following 783,127 words shouldn't be that difficult. God and the relationship to His new creation is the centerpiece of the Genesis account. We see God create the world we know with a creative beauty, brilliance and power that culminates with the creation of mankind. We then watch the first families of faith navigate through life and have a front row seat in the lives of Adam, Eve, Noah, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and Joseph.

We're going to watch families thrive and falter, faith in God rise and fall, men and women struggle to walk with God. We're going to see the corruption of sin and the compassion of God. We're going to view difficult circumstances that lead to breakthroughs and we're going to observe a covenant promise that one day God will restore the earth to the garden state.

The people we will meet on the pages of Genesis are real people; ordinary, simple people that God works through to do the extraordinary. This is a clear picture of how God worked and still works in our lives today. He uses all kinds of people to accomplish His purposes, even people like you and me.

Join us on this year-long journey through our origin and be encouraged. No matter how dark the days may seem there's always hope! God is working through it all to bring about His purposes for His creation. No matter what you're facing in your life right now or how insignificant you feel, God loves you and you have a part to play in His-story.

Beginning with you,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jason". The signature is stylized with a large, sweeping initial letter 'J' that loops around the name.

Pastor Jason

HOW TO USE THIS BOOK

This workbook is volume one of a three-volume study series through the book of Genesis. The workbook will be used during weekly teaching lessons, as well as group and personal study.

TEACHING

The Scripture passages for the week and *Sermon Takeaway* section are used during the teaching message, group discussion and personal study. Message replays can be found online at www.Christs.Church.

GROUP STUDY

The *Examine* and *Discuss* sections are used to prepare for discussion in your group. If you are not in a group, use these sections for personal study after the teaching message.

PERSONAL STUDY

The *Apply* and *S.O.A.P* sections help you dive deeper into The Word for personal application. Record daily notes and prayers.

“Do not merely listen to the word, and so deceive yourselves. Do what it says.”

- James 1:22 (NIV)

HOW TO P.R.A.Y

There is no special formula for prayer. There are no “buzz words” or phrases that capture God’s attention more than any other. Prayer is pouring your honest, surrendered heart out to God and seeking His answers to your struggles. When asked by His disciples about prayer, Jesus responded with the Lord’s Prayer.

“This, then, is how you should pray: ‘Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us today our daily bread. And forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one.’” – Matthew 6:9-13 (NIV)

Jesus’ response points out four key attributes of prayer. We’ve made an acrostic to make it easy to remember every time you pray. This isn’t a formula, but if you need a little direction in your prayers, this serves as a great guide.

PRAISE: Praise God for who He is and His attributes. Begin by giving Him your worship and adoration.

REPENT: Confess to God the things you have done in word, thought or deed which led you into sin. Confess and repent.

ASK: After you have spent time in praise and repentance, make your requests known to God by asking Him to provide your needs.

YIELD: God is always at work around you. Take time to notice when He invites you to join Him to become part of His mission.



HOW TO USE S.O.A.P.

Open your Bible and ask God to illuminate what He wants you to learn and apply today. God's Word says that the Holy Spirit "will guide you into all truth" (John 16:13) and will help you understand what you read from the scriptures. Read the passage slowly and look for that specific "gem" of truth that jumps off the page and grabs your attention.

SCRIPTURE

Choose one Bible verse that stands out to me and copy it word for word.

OBSERVATION

What does this verse teach me about my relationship with God?

APPLICATION

How will I be different because of what I've read today?

PRAYER

Write out a prayer asking God to help me live out what I've just learned.



WEEK 1

GENESIS 1 – THE BEGINNING

1 In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. 2 The earth was formless and empty, and darkness covered the deep waters. And the Spirit of God was hovering over the surface of the waters.

3 Then God said, “Let there be light,” and there was light. 4 And God saw that the light was good. Then he separated the light from the darkness. 5 God called the light “day” and the darkness “night.” And evening passed and morning came, marking the first day.

6 Then God said, “Let there be a space between the waters, to separate the waters of the heavens from the waters of the earth.” 7 And that is what happened. God made this space to separate the waters of the earth from the waters of the heavens. 8 God called the space “sky.”

And evening passed and morning came, marking the second day. 9 Then God said, “Let the waters beneath the sky flow together into one place, so dry ground may appear.” And that is what happened. 10 God called the dry ground “land” and the waters “seas.”

And God saw that it was good. 11 Then God said, “Let the land sprout with vegetation—every sort of seed-bearing plant, and trees that grow seed-bearing fruit. These seeds will then produce the kinds of plants and trees from which they came.” And that is what happened.

12 The land produced vegetation—all sorts of seed-bearing plants, and trees with seed-bearing fruit. Their seeds produced plants and trees of the same kind. And God saw that it was good. 13 And evening passed and morning came, marking the third day. 14 Then God said, “Let lights appear in the sky to separate the day

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GENESIS 1 – THE BEGINNING

from the night. Let them be signs to mark the seasons, days, and years. 15 Let these lights in the sky shine down on the earth.” And that is what happened. 16 God made two great lights—the larger one to govern the day, and the smaller one to govern the night. He also made the stars. 17 God set these lights in the sky to light the earth, 18 to govern the day and night, and to separate the light from the darkness. And God saw that it was good. 19 And evening passed and morning came, marking the fourth day. 20 Then God said, “Let the waters swarm with fish and other life. Let the skies be filled with birds of every kind.” 21 So God created great sea creatures and every living thing that scurries and swarms in the water, and every sort of bird—each producing offspring of the same kind. And God saw that it was good. 22 Then God blessed them, saying, “Be fruitful and multiply. Let the fish fill the seas, and let the birds multiply on the earth.” 23 And evening passed and morning came, marking the fifth day. 24 Then God said, “Let the earth produce every sort of animal, each producing offspring of the same kind—livestock, small animals that scurry along the ground, and wild animals.” And that is what happened. 25 God made all sorts of wild animals, livestock, and small animals, each able to produce offspring of the same kind. And God saw that it was good. 26 Then God said, “Let us make human beings in our image, to be like us. They will reign over the fish in the sea, the birds in the sky, the livestock, all the wild animals on the earth, and the small animals that scurry along the ground.” 27 So God created human beings in his own image. In the image of God he created them; male and female he created them. 28 Then God blessed them and said, “Be fruitful and multiply. Fill the earth and govern it. Reign

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over the fish in the sea, the birds in the sky, and all the animals that scurry along the ground.” 29 Then God said, “Look! I have given you every seed-bearing plant throughout the earth and all the fruit trees for your food. 30 And I have given every green plant as food for all the wild animals, the birds in the sky, and the small animals that scurry along the ground—everything that has life.” And that is what happened. 31 Then God looked over all he had made, and he saw that it was very good! And evening passed and morning came, marking the sixth day.

NOTES

SERMON TAKEAWAY FOR THE WEEK:



WEEK 1

GENESIS 1 – THE BEGINNING

EXAMINE:

- “In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.” This opening verse of the Bible emphasizes immediately that the God of Scripture is the One who has always been and will always be; He is uncreated, with no beginning and no end.
- In this chapter, along with chapter 2:1-3, the Hebrew word translated as “God” is Elohim. It is significant to know that although the Old Testament continuously reveals to us that there is only One God, this word is in its plural form. This has several implications. Many Christian scholars believe that the plural usage of Elohim, combined with the singular form of the verb “created”, in chapter 1:1, is the first indicator of God’s triune nature; multiple persons performing a singular act, as One Being. In the New Testament parallel passage of John chapter 1, we see that “the Word,” identified as Jesus in verse 14, was with God in the beginning, while also being God Himself (verse 1). Other New Testament passages support and reveal God’s nature as being triune as well. See Matthew 28:19; Romans 10:9-13; Philippians 2:9-11; Revelation 17:14; 19:16
 - For Old Testament passages that teach there is only One God, see Deuteronomy 4:35, 39; Isaiah 43:10; 44:6-8; 45:5, 14, 21-22; Jeremiah 10:10
- In this first chapter of Genesis, we also find the order in which things were created. God created the universe out of nothing and spoke all things into existence.
 - First, God prepares the stage or foundation for all life to be able to function; this includes the light, sky, land and sea.
 - Then God places and fills His stage with the objects that will move through His creation. This includes the sun, moon, birds, fish, animals, and humans.
- Beginning with a macro view, we see the focus narrow as we approach the end of the chapter. In verse 27 we read that God created human beings in His own image; male and female He created them. In Latin, this is known as the Imago Dei, the image of God.
- In verse 28, God gives His first command to human beings, to “Be fruitful and multiply...” This command plays a significant part in the progression of the human race and will be repeated several times in the coming chapters.

GENESIS 1 – THE BEGINNING

DISCUSS:

1. What was something you already knew about Genesis, specifically chapter 1? What is something you've learned in your study and devotional time?
2. Is the reference to God as Elohim something you have ever thought about? How can this help you better understand God's nature and character?
3. In the Hebrew language, there are several ways to interpret a "day" (Yom). It could be a literal 24-hour period, a geological or mythological era, or even a theological designation to indicate a non-specific time period. Whatever position you hold to, we know that God created with intent, bringing life and order out of chaos. What are your thoughts about the length of each day, or Yom? (Please note that this is not a salvation issue)
4. In this section of scripture, God continually declares at the end of each day that what He created was "good." Did you know that several other major religions teach that physical creation is bad or evil? Even though the world as we know it is fallen, how does knowing God's design and intent impact your worship of Him?
5. What comes to mind as you meditate on Genesis 1:26-27? How should this truth impact the way you treat others? Also, how does this truth speak to God's design and order for humanity?

GENESIS 1 – THE BEGINNING

REFLECT:

Wow, what a beginning! The same Spirit who was hovering over the surface of the waters also inspired Moses to record all that we see in this passage. As we stand in awe of God's power, wisdom, and provision, let us take note of the culmination of God's work, the creation of human beings. On the sixth day, after creating humans, God looks at all He has made and deems it as "very good." It is vital for us to understand that worth and value come from God alone. Being created in His image, human beings were intended to teach creation about its creator by taking care of every living thing.

As you will see in this study, the triune God who spoke the universe into existence loves you. He created you for a purpose; to trust Him, enjoy Him and teach others about Him. Today, we obey God's command by filling the world with the knowledge of Jesus Christ and His Gospel, being fruitful and multiplying the residents of God's Kingdom. "For we were not making up clever stories when we told you about the powerful coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. We saw his majestic splendor with our own eyes..." (2 Peter 1:16).

APPLY:

- Commit to this study and utilize the S.O.A.P. Scriptures daily. Use your Bible, the note pages and your own journal to get the most of this study.

S.O.A.P.*

Monday – John 1:1-3

Tuesday – Colossians 1:15-23

Wednesday – Job 38

Thursday – Hebrews 1:1-2:4

Friday – Psalm 104

**Refer to the "How to S.O.A.P" section at the front of the book if the S.O.A.P acronym is new to you.*

NOTES

WEEK 2

GENESIS 2 – THE MASTERPIECE

1 So the creation of the heavens and the earth and everything in them was completed. 2 On the seventh day God had finished his work of creation, so he rested from all his work. 3 And God blessed the seventh day and declared it holy, because it was the day when he rested from all his work of creation. 4 This is the account of the creation of the heavens and the earth. When the LORD God made the earth and the heavens, 5 neither wild plants nor grains were growing on the earth. For the LORD God had not yet sent rain to water the earth, and there were no people to cultivate the soil. 6 Instead, springs came up from the ground and watered all the land. 7 Then the LORD God formed the man from the dust of the ground. He breathed the breath of life into the man's nostrils, and the man became a living person. 8 Then the LORD God planted a garden in Eden in the east, and there he placed the man he had made. 9 The LORD God made all sorts of trees grow up from the ground—trees that were beautiful and that produced delicious fruit. In the middle of the garden he placed the tree of life and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. 10 A river flowed from the land of Eden, watering the garden and then dividing into four branches. 11 The first branch, called the Pishon, flowed around the entire land of Havilah, where gold is found. 12 The gold of that land is exceptionally pure; aromatic resin and onyx stone are also found there. 13 The second branch, called the Gihon, flowed around the entire land of Cush. 14 The third branch, called the Tigris, flowed east of the land of Asshur. The fourth branch is called the Euphrates. 15 The LORD God placed the man in the Garden of Eden to tend and watch over it. 16 But the LORD God warned him, "You may freely eat the fruit of every tree

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GENESIS 2 – THE MASTERPIECE

in the garden— 17 except the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. If you eat its fruit, you are sure to die.” 18 Then the LORD God said, “It is not good for the man to be alone. I will make a helper who is just right for him.” 19 So the LORD God formed from the ground all the wild animals and all the birds of the sky. He brought them to the man to see what he would call them, and the man chose a name for each one. 20 He gave names to all the livestock, all the birds of the sky, and all the wild animals. But still there was no helper just right for him. 21 So the LORD God caused the man to fall into a deep sleep. While the man slept, the LORD God took out one of the man’s ribs and closed up the opening. 22 Then the LORD God made a woman from the rib, and he brought her to the man. 23 “At last!” the man exclaimed. “This one is bone from my bone, and flesh from my flesh! She will be called ‘woman,’ because she was taken from ‘man.’” 24 This explains why a man leaves his father and mother and is joined to his wife, and the two are united into one. 25 Now the man and his wife were both naked, but they felt no shame.

NOTES

SERMON TAKEAWAY FOR THE WEEK:

WEEK 2

GENESIS 2 – THE MASTERPIECE

EXAMINE:

- As we consider the significance of “the seventh day” we notice that it is not described as the other days of creation, “and evening passed and morning came.” This seems to indicate that this day was not designed with the desire that it would end. God resting on this day shows the completeness of creation in its initial form. The Israelites at the time of Moses would have been familiar with the law about the Sabbath, given at Mount Sinai in Exodus 20. Moses is letting them know that the Sabbath was important from the beginning.
- In verse 4, the New Living Translation reads, “When the LORD God made the earth and the heavens...” Most English translations have carried over an ancient Jewish tradition that is first seen in this text. When you read “the LORD,” in all capital letters, it is a substitute for something else. The text is revealing that in the original Hebrew, the personal name of God was written; which is YHWH, also known as Yahweh. God is being referred to as “Yahweh Elohim” (the LORD God) for first time in scripture here in verse 4. This would have reminded the Israelites in the time of Moses that the God (*Elohim*) who was described in chapter 1 as the creator of the heavens and the earth is also the God who gave them His name, rescued them from Egypt and made a covenant with them that He would be their God. By revealing His personal name, God is giving His people the confidence to trust Him and know that He is with them and for them.
- The garden is mentioned for the first time in this chapter; we know it as “the Garden of Eden.” Two trees are said to be “in the middle of” the garden; the tree of life and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. Verse 16 specifies that God warned Adam to not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, or else he would surely die. This is the only recording of God giving this command and it was given directly to Adam, not Eve.
 - The Hebrew word for “man” is *ish*, while the word for “woman” is *ishshah*. This connection, and even play-on-words, shows a strong connection and relationship between man and woman. We must understand that they share the same substance or being; they have the same value even though their roles differ. Look back at

GENESIS 2 – THE MASTERPIECE

Genesis 1:27, “God created human beings in his own image...male and female he created them.” It is together, in a complementary fashion, that man and woman together bear God’s image to the world.

- Genesis 2:24 reads, “This explains why a man leaves his father and mother and is joined to his wife and the two are united into one.” God created marriage not only for reproduction but also companionship. Gender differences emphasize God’s design and display His character to creation; going against this is a rejection of His created order.
 - In verse 24, the Hebrew word translated as “one” is *echad*. This word is often used in the Old Testament to communicate the idea of “unified oneness”, and often between individuals, not just numerical oneness, or singularity. One reason this is significant is because the same Hebrew word is used to describe God in Deuteronomy 6:4. This, combined with Genesis 1:26-27 and multiple other passages, strongly hints toward God being trinitarian in nature. This teaching is described more fully in the New Testament.



GENESIS 2 – THE MASTERPIECE

DISCUSS:

1. How does God's design for having a day of rest compare with the "rise and grind" mentality of our culture?
2. Hebrews 4:1-13 describes God's rest as still being accessible but only through Jesus. What is meant by resting from our labors in Christ?
3. Before the Fall, God commanded Adam to tend, care for and watch over the garden. What does this tell us about work and responsibility?
 - a. Adam was created to be a gardener. After His resurrection, who did Mary Magdalene confuse Jesus with and how do His actions show that He is renewing creation to be as God intended?
4. What are your thoughts about the two trees in the garden? Why do you think God decided to place the tree of the knowledge of good and evil there in the first place?
5. Having told Adam not to eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil or else he would die, what can we understand about this consequence of death?
 - a. How might this "death" indicate two different ideas? (See John 5:25; Ephesians 2:1; Revelation 2:11, 20:4, 20:6, 21:8)
6. How does marriage between a man and a woman give us insight into the nature of God? How do Jesus' words in Matthew 19:4-6 add to this?

GENESIS 2 – THE MASTERPIECE

REFLECT:

The creation of human beings was the final and greatest aspect of God's newly formed world. With the intention of revealing Himself to all creation, God formed man from the dust of the ground and then formed woman from his rib, or side. The beauty of fashioning a bride for His newly formed son should point us to the greater picture of God preparing a bride for His eternally begotten Son, Jesus the Christ. As the Apostle Paul echoed in Ephesians 5:32, the awe and wonder of marriage between man and woman reveals the mystery of Christ and the church. In one sense we could say that the Bible is simply a book about a Father looking for a bride for His Son. Together in the garden with God, the first man and the first woman enjoyed a completeness of living that we currently do not understand. But we do have God's promise that, in Christ, we will once again see Him face to face and enter His ultimate Sabbath rest.

APPLY:

- Take a moment this week to do at least one kind deed toward someone, to honor them as a fellow image bearer of God.
- Spend some time in prayer thanking God for creating you, your family, and your friends. Ask Him to help you better love and serve them this week and beyond.

S.O.A.P.

Monday – Matthew 19:1-12

Tuesday – Malachi 2:10-17

Wednesday – Ephesians 5:15-33

Thursday – Colossians 3:18-4:1

Friday – Revelation 22

NOTES



WEEK 3

GENESIS 3 – THE FALL

NOTES

1 The serpent was the shrewdest of all the wild animals the LORD God had made. One day he asked the woman, “Did God really say you must not eat the fruit from any of the trees in the garden?”

2 “Of course we may eat fruit from the trees in the garden,” the woman replied. 3 “It’s only the fruit from the tree in the middle of the garden that we are not allowed to eat. God said, ‘You must not eat it or even touch it; if you do, you will die.’” 4 “You won’t die!” the serpent replied to the woman. 5 “God knows that your eyes will be opened as soon as you eat it, and you will be like God, knowing both good and evil.” 6 The woman was convinced. She saw that the tree was beautiful and its fruit looked delicious, and she wanted the wisdom it would give her. So she took some of the fruit and ate it. Then she gave some to her husband, who was with her, and he ate it, too. 7 At that moment their eyes were opened, and they suddenly felt shame at their nakedness. So they sewed fig leaves together to cover themselves.

8 When the cool evening breezes were blowing, the man and his wife heard the LORD God walking about in the garden. So they hid from the LORD God among the trees. 9 Then the LORD God called to the man, “Where are you?” 10 He replied, “I heard you walking in the garden, so I hid. I was afraid because I was naked.” 11 “Who told you that you were naked?” the LORD God asked. “Have you eaten from the tree whose fruit I commanded you not to eat?” 12 The man replied, “It was the woman you gave me who gave me the fruit, and I ate it.” 13 Then the LORD God asked the woman, “What have you done?”

“The serpent deceived me,” she replied. “That’s why I ate it.” 14 Then the LORD God said to the serpent,

GENESIS 3 – THE FALL

“Because you have done this, you are cursed more than all animals, domestic and wild. You will crawl on your belly, groveling in the dust as long as you live. 15 And I will cause hostility between you and the woman, and between your offspring and her offspring. He will strike your head, and you will strike his heel.” 16 Then he said to the woman, “I will sharpen the pain of your pregnancy, and in pain you will give birth. And you will desire to control your husband, but he will rule over you.” 17 And to the man he said, “Since you listened to your wife and ate from the tree whose fruit I commanded you not to eat, the ground is cursed because of you. All your life you will struggle to scratch a living from it. 18 It will grow thorns and thistles for you, though you will eat of its grains. 19 By the sweat of your brow will you have food to eat until you return to the ground from which you were made. For you were made from dust, and to dust you will return.” 20 Then the man—Adam—named his wife Eve, because she would be the mother of all who live. 21 And the LORD God made clothing from animal skins for Adam and his wife. 22 Then the LORD God said, “Look, the human beings have become like us, knowing both good and evil. What if they reach out, take fruit from the tree of life, and eat it? Then they will live forever!” 23 So the LORD God banished them from the Garden of Eden, and he sent Adam out to cultivate the ground from which he had been made. 24 After sending them out, the LORD God stationed mighty cherubim to the east of the Garden of Eden. And he placed a flaming sword that flashed back and forth to guard the way to the tree of life.

NOTES

SERMON TAKEAWAY FOR THE WEEK:

WEEK 3

GENESIS 3 – THE FALL

EXAMINE:

- Remember, when Moses wrote Genesis, there were no chapter divisions. One moment Adam and Eve are living with no shame and in what seems like an instant, the reader is introduced to “the serpent.” It’s highly likely that the intention of this text is not to give us a chronological account of history, but to communicate how things became so messed up for us all. In this chapter we will learn how the very creation that God deemed, “very good,” would become what it is today.
- Take note that in this section of scripture, the serpent is not explicitly identified as Satan. It is the last book of the New Testament that truly shines a light on his identity. “This great dragon—the ancient serpent called the devil, or Satan, the one deceiving the whole world—was thrown down to the earth with all his angels.” (Revelation 12:9)
- While much focus is often placed on the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, we should not forget about the tree of life. There is no record of Adam and Eve ever eating from it, or even acknowledging it. This can lead us to question the function of this tree and wonder how long they were in the garden before the tempter came along.
- In our culture, we often hear accusations made against scripture, or even Christianity, for recording that it was Eve who was tempted and ate of the tree. But verse six gives us a detail that is often overlooked. It says, “...So she took some of the fruit and ate it. Then she gave some to her husband, who was with her, and he ate it, too.” It was Adam who was created first, placed in the garden and commanded to tend and watch over it. He was the one given the responsibility of sharing God’s commands with his wife. Yes, Eve was tricked into eating from the forbidden tree. But Adam consciously chose to rebel against God’s command. As you study the New Testament, you will see in multiple passages that Adam is to blame for the fall of humanity. (See Romans 5:12-21; 1 Corinthians 15:22, 45-49; 1 Timothy 2:13-14; Hosea 6:7)
- In this passage, we see the first biblical display of God’s mercy. He does not allow Adam and Eve to immediately experience physical death. Promising that the serpent will be defeated, God then provides a covering of animal skins for the first man and

GENESIS 3 – THE FALL

woman. Finally, we see that He prevents them from taking of the tree of life so that they would not live forever in their fallen state. We know from Matthew 25:41, that eternal fire is prepared for the devil and his demons. We can speculate that the fate of humanity would have been sealed for eternity as well if they had eaten from the tree of life. The overarching theme of the Bible tells us about God's ultimate plan to reveal Himself to His creation and redeem human beings through a great act of love.

DISCUSS:

1. As we are introduced to the main antagonist in the story of humanity, we observe in this passage several tactics used by the serpent to tempt Eve. What is the first method that we see in verse 1? How does the enemy still use this tactic today? What are some examples?
 - a. Read Ephesians 6:10-13. How are we called to fight back against Satan's strategies?
 - b. Read Matthew 4:1-11. How does Jesus respond to the devil's temptations? What helpful strategies do we see?
2. What did Eve find to be desirable about the forbidden fruit? (Hint: she observes 3 specific things) What do we need to be aware of regarding our desires, as they relate to obeying God?
 - a. Compare Eve's encounter with the serpent with 1 John 2:15-17.
3. Sin leads to complete separation from God (see Isaiah 59:1-2). Immediately after their sin, what do we observe about the relationship between God, Adam, and Eve?

GENESIS 3 – THE FALL

- a. Where have you seen the destructive effects of sin in your own life?
-
4. Calling back to a question from last week, how have you come to understand God's motive for even placing the Tree of the knowledge of good and evil in the garden?
 - a. How could this relate to “love?” (see Matthew 23:37)
 5. How does Romans 8:18-22 give us more information about the impact of sin, specifically on creation?
 6. What other details in this chapter stand out to you?
 - a. What do you observe about humans?
 - b. What is revealed about God?

GENESIS 3 – THE FALL

REFLECT:

Merely three chapters in, and all humanity, as well as creation, have been thrown into chaos. As we learn about the twisting of God’s Word and then the disobedience of humankind, we also observe a sliver of hope. Although the world has become just as distorted as Satan’s words to Eve and everything seems chaotic, God is still very much in control. His grace and mercy are clearly shown as He begins sharing details of His redemptive plan; His sovereign strategy to reconcile all things back to Himself. It is normal to assume that God’s strategy of reconciliation was “Plan B,” but Scripture tells us otherwise. “For you know that God paid a ransom to save you from the empty life you inherited from your ancestors. And it was not paid with mere gold or silver, which lose their value. It was the precious blood of Christ, the sinless, spotless Lamb of God. God chose him as your ransom long before the world began, but now in these last days he has been revealed for your sake.” (1 Peter 1:18-20)

APPLY:

- Share what you’ve learned up to this point with someone you know. It could be a fellow believer, a wandering family member, or even a neighbor. This may seem like a fearful thought but pray through any doubts or anxiety, asking your heavenly Father for courage and wisdom.
- For a few days, pay attention to your thought-life. Do your thoughts line up with scripture? Or do you let doubts and lies creep in and steal your joy?

S.O.A.P.

Monday – 2 Corinthians 11:1-15

Tuesday – Romans 5:12-21

Wednesday – 1 John 3:4-10

Thursday – Luke 4:1-13

Friday – Revelation 12

NOTES



WEEK 4
GENESIS 3:15 – THE REDEMPTION

15 And I will cause hostility between you and the woman, and between your offspring and her offspring. He will strike your head, and you will strike his heel.”

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SERMON TAKEAWAY FOR THE WEEK:

WEEK 4

GENESIS 3:15 – THE REDEMPTION

EXAMINE:

- This single verse is one of the most significant in all of Scripture. Referred to by scholars as the “protoevangelium,” this verse is the very first announcement of “the Gospel.” We know that this promised offspring of the woman is our Lord Jesus Christ, who defeated the serpent, Satan, through the cross — His death, burial, and resurrection.
 - Let’s look at two significant verses in Genesis, chapter 3. In verse 7, we read that Adam and Eve sewed fig leaves together to cover themselves, while verse 21 records that God made clothing, or a covering, for them from animal skins. We must realize that there is nothing we, as humans, can do to cover ourselves before God. The importance of the Gospel is that God provided the sacrifice and the covering for us. There is absolutely nothing you can do on your own to be made right, justified, in God’s eyes. We will see this teaching repeated over and over throughout the entire Bible.
- It’s worth noting that, because of sin, God is the one who put “hostility” between the serpent and the woman, and his offspring and her offspring. (Matthew 13:37-39; John 8:39-47; 1 John 3:8-12) From this point forward, not only will the serpent be the consistent enemy of humanity but also of this promised offspring. As noted in last week’s study, the eternal fire of judgment was created specifically for the devil and his angels; redemption is not an option for him. This shows us that God desires no union, alliance, or coalition with Satan.
- Referring to the promised offspring as being from the woman could indicate that He will not be from Adam’s bloodline. The reason this is significant is because humanity is now tainted and unclean. (Haggai 2:11-14) Although not explicitly stated, this sets up the idea and need of the virgin birth of Jesus. (Matthew 1:18-25; Luke 1:26-38)
- “He will strike your head, and you will strike his heel.” (verse 15) This indicates a clear and predicted victory for Him over Satan. The crushing blow is a fatal wound for the serpent, in which there is no recovery; while the striking of the heel would be significant but not ultimately fatal. We find this exchange as taking place at the cross, where Jesus took the curse upon Himself and paid the debt for sin. (Isaiah 52:13-53:12; 2 Corinthians 5:20-21; Galatians 3:13, Colossians 2:13-15)

GENESIS 3:15 – THE REDEMPTION

DISCUSS:

1. As you consider God's plan of redemption, what do we learn from Acts 2:22-24? See also Luke 22:22; 1 Peter 1:20; Ephesians 1:1-4; Titus 1:1-2. Was God's plan a last second thought? Or was it in the works before the foundation of the world?
 - a. What are the implications of this?
2. Read 1 Corinthians 15:1-4. What does this tell us about the Gospel, or Good News of Jesus Christ?
3. Many accounts in Scripture give us types and shadows of the great battle between Jesus and Satan. One of the most famous being David vs Goliath. The NASB translation of 1 Samuel 17:5 reads, "He [Goliath] had a bronze helmet on his head, and he was clothed with scale-armor..." In this story, we see the shepherd prevail over the giant. In the same way that David struck Goliath's head with a stone and then cut it off, Jesus has absolutely stunned Satan through the cross and will return to finally judge him and cast him into the Lake of Fire. Do any other passages come to your mind that show and prophesy of the final defeat of Satan?
 - a. How are you encouraged through the teaching that, although he still prowls around, Satan has been defeated? Do you understand that, in Christ, you currently are sharing in His victory? (see Luke 10:17-20)
4. What does Genesis 3:15 tell you about God's character and nature?

GENESIS 3:15 – THE REDEMPTION

5. How can John 8:44; Matthew 23:33; & 1 John 3:8-12 help us better understand the identity of the offspring of the serpent?

6. It's not enough to simply know that God exists; even the demons believe and they tremble in terror. (James 2:19) Romans 1:19-20 tells us that everyone knows, but many suppress the truth and exchange the knowledge about God for various lies. We must make our relationship with God personal, through Jesus. Before moving forward, ask yourself this question, "Do I have a relationship with Jesus Christ?" (The letter of 1 John was written to help us with this question.)
 - a. Do you know how to receive the Gospel of Jesus Christ and truly believe in Him? (see Luke 2:11; John 1:11-13; 3:16-20; Romans 10:9-10)

 - b. If you do know Jesus and have a relationship with Him, are you prepared to share God's plan of salvation with others and guide them through receiving the gospel?

GENESIS 3:15 – THE REDEMPTION

REFLECT:

It is here where we see God's ultimate plan, prophesied well over 1,000 years before the birth of Jesus of Nazareth. Before the foundation of the world, the Father loved His Son and planned to give Him *a people* who would be faithful to Him. (John 17:24; Ephesians 1:4) From our human perspective, God could have simply decided in this moment to judge everything and cast humanity away with Satan and He would have been just and right in doing so. But in order to reveal His love, grace and mercy to all of creation, He withholds His anger, abstaining from wrath. Psalm 89:14 says, "Righteousness and justice are the foundation of your throne. Unfailing love and truth walk before you as attendants." Just like the Israelites in the time of Moses, we too, are learning that God is truly good and sin must be dealt with. It is through God's plan of salvation that we come to understand who He is and why He is so worthy of worship. Let us join all of creation as we cry out, "Blessing and honor and glory and power belong to the one sitting on the throne and to the Lamb forever and ever." (Revelation 5:13)

APPLY:

- Christ fully paid the debt for our sin on the cross. In Him we are now freed from bondage, having eternal life. Are you living in this freedom? If not, talk to a pastor or spiritual leader today to begin that conversation. If you are living in this freedom, take a moment in your quiet time or S.O.A.P readings to audibly praise God for His plan of salvation and for saving you.

S.O.A.P.

Monday – John 3:13-21

Tuesday – Hebrews 2:10-18

Wednesday – John 12:27-36

Thursday – Ephesians 1:1-14

Friday – Colossians 2:6-15

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WEEK 5

GENESIS 4 – THE BLOODLINE

1 Now Adam had sexual relations with his wife, Eve, and she became pregnant. When she gave birth to Cain, she said, “With the LORD’s help, I have produced a man!” 2 Later she gave birth to his brother and named him Abel. When they grew up, Abel became a shepherd, while Cain cultivated the ground. 3 When it was time for the harvest, Cain presented some of his crops as a gift to the LORD. 4 Abel also brought a gift—the best portions of the firstborn lambs from his flock. The LORD accepted Abel and his gift, 5 but he did not accept Cain and his gift. This made Cain very angry, and he looked dejected. 6 “Why are you so angry?” the LORD asked Cain. “Why do you look so dejected? 7 You will be accepted if you do what is right. But if you refuse to do what is right, then watch out! Sin is crouching at the door, eager to control you. But you must subdue it and be its master.” 8 One day Cain suggested to his brother, “Let’s go out into the fields.” And while they were in the field, Cain attacked his brother, Abel, and killed him. 9 Afterward the LORD asked Cain, “Where is your brother? Where is Abel?” “I don’t know,” Cain responded. “Am I my brother’s guardian?” 10 But the LORD said, “What have you done? Listen! Your brother’s blood cries out to me from the ground! 11 Now you are cursed and banished from the ground, which has swallowed your brother’s blood. 12 No longer will the ground yield good crops for you, no matter how hard you work! From now on you will be a homeless wanderer on the earth.” 13 Cain replied to the LORD, “My punishment is too great for me to bear! 14 You have banished me from the land and from your presence; you have made me a homeless wanderer. Anyone who finds me will kill me!” 15 The LORD replied, “No, for I will give a sevenfold punishment to

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GENESIS 4 – THE BLOODLINE

anyone who kills you.” Then the LORD put a mark on Cain to warn anyone who might try to kill him. 16 So Cain left the LORD’s presence and settled in the land of Nod, east of Eden. 17 Cain had sexual relations with his wife, and she became pregnant and gave birth to Enoch. Then Cain founded a city, which he named Enoch, after his son. 18 Enoch had a son named Irad. Irad became the father of Mehujael. Mehujael became the father of Methushael. Methushael became the father of Lamech. 19 Lamech married two women. The first was named Adah, and the second was Zillah. 20 Adah gave birth to Jabal, who was the first of those who raise livestock and live in tents. 21 His brother’s name was Jubal, the first of all who play the harp and flute. 22 Lamech’s other wife, Zillah, gave birth to a son named Tubal-cain. He became an expert in forging tools of bronze and iron. Tubal-cain had a sister named Naamah. 23 One day Lamech said to his wives, “Adah and Zillah, hear my voice; listen to me, you wives of Lamech. I have killed a man who attacked me, a young man who wounded me. 24 If someone who kills Cain is punished seven times, then the one who kills me will be punished seventy-seven times!” 25 Adam had sexual relations with his wife again, and she gave birth to another son. She named him Seth, for she said, “God has granted me another son in place of Abel, whom Cain killed.” 26 When Seth grew up, he had a son and named him Enosh. At that time people first began to worship the LORD by name.

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SERMON TAKEAWAY FOR THE WEEK:

WEEK 5

GENESIS 4 – THE BLOODLINE

EXAMINE:

- One of the first things we notice in this chapter is that Eve understood, at least in part, that God would defeat the serpent through her male offspring. We need to acknowledge again that instead of being a play-by-play chronological account of every detail of the lives of Adam and Eve, instead we have a deliberate and intentional sharing of specific events that relate to the overarching storyline of Genesis, most specifically found in the prophecy from Genesis 3:15. This chapter is not saying that Adam and Eve *only* had these sons and no other children. Rather, Moses, through inspiration of the Holy Spirit, is highlighting the birth of the sons because the prophecy concerned male offspring. Because the Scriptures don't limit the existence of other children, we can safely say that daughters were born through Adam and Eve as well. (This answers the skeptic's favorite question about how Cain found a wife.)
- The major difference between the offerings given by Cain and Abel very well may relate back to Genesis 3:21 and the blood that was spilled to cover Adam and Eve. In the New and Old Testament, we see that it is by blood that one's sins are covered, whether it's the blood of an animal for temporary covering or the blood of Christ as an eternal covering. Given their jobs in agriculture, it is likely that they were adults, at least in some sense. They also likely heard from their parents the story of everything that happened when they were removed from the garden. Another clue to this being the case is verse 7, when God tells Cain, "You will be accepted if you do what is right. But if you refuse to do what is right, then watch out!" Cain knew what God required of him and therefore his seemingly half-hearted offering was rejected.
- In a fit of jealous rage, Cain kills his brother and then denies that he had anything to do with it when he asks, "Am I my brother's guardian?" (verse 9) Cain's response to God shows no sign of remorse or repentance; he had truly hardened his heart. As followers of Jesus, we must remember the answer to Cain's rhetorical question is, "Yes!" Galatians 6:1 instructs us, "Dear brothers and sisters, if another believer is overcome by some sin, you who are godly should gently and humbly help that person back onto the right path." Let's remember that we are called to lovingly watch out for each other.

GENESIS 4 – THE BLOODLINE

- As chapter 4 continues, we see the descendants of Cain. The focus goes to Lamech, who we see not only killed someone in revenge, but also desecrated the gift of marriage by taking two wives. The Israelites in the time of Moses would have better understood the behavior of the evil Canaanites after learning of Cain and his family.
- Recording the birth of the third son, verse 25 revives the hope of the promise from Genesis 3:15 by letting the reader know about Seth. His name means, “God has appointed.” Even with evil increasing on the earth, God is still moving forward in keeping His promise. In response to God’s faithfulness, we see in verse 26 that people first began worshipping the LORD by name, Yahweh, in the time of Seth’s son, Enosh.



GENESIS 4 – THE BLOODLINE

DISCUSS:

1. Looking at verses 3-5, what do we read about the offerings made to God? What do we read about Abel's offering and how is it different from Cain's? Read 1 John 3:12 & Hebrews 11:4. What do these verses say is the difference between the two people making the offering?
 - a. What do we observe about God's desire and instruction for Cain?

2. Just like Genesis 3:9, we see in chapter 4:9 that God is asking questions to His creatures. What are your thoughts about this?
 - a. Do you believe God truly did not know where Adam and Eve were, or where Abel was? Or is there more to this?

 - b. In what way was Cain's sinful response similar to his father's response to God in Genesis 3:12?

3. Is anger really a sin? Read Psalm 4:4, Ephesians 4:26, & James 1:19-20.
 - a. What are some ways that you manage your anger?

GENESIS 4 – THE BLOODLINE

- b. When shining a light on the intention and heart of the sixth commandment (Exodus 20:16) Jesus teaches in Matthew 5:21-26 that those who are enraged with others to the point of insulting or defaming their character will be liable to judgment. Who are you treating as though they are “dead” to you? How can you reach a place of reconciliation?

4. Do you ever wonder why God allows evil? Hopefully, chapter 3 has helped us to better understand the nature of the world we are in. Do you think God should have stopped Cain from murdering Abel?
 - a. Cain’s punishment was to be cursed and banished from the ground where he killed Abel. In light of this punishment, and the “mark” that is placed upon Cain, how does God show Himself to be merciful throughout this scenario?

5. What was interesting to you about this section of Scripture? Were any of the details surprising, perplexing, or even comforting?

GENESIS 4 – THE BLOODLINE

REFLECT:

A group of teenagers set off to spend a day at the beach park one Saturday. A per person entry fee was required, so they decide to hide all but the driver in the trunk to avoid paying the fees. Once parked, the driver finds the trunk is stuck and he is unable to let his friends out. Panic sets in. He calls the Park Ranger, who calls the Police, to assist. Needless to say, they spent little time enjoying themselves, and instead had a day filled with embarrassment and shame. Similarly, when we sin, we often do so with the futile hope that we will obtain the greatest amount of pleasure with little to no consequences. However, it seldom works that way. With any sin, the ride is short, and the fare is high. Chapter 4 shows us the continued corruption of everything. From Cain murdering his brother, down through the generations to Lamech abusing the sanctity of marriage, we observe the distortion of God's commands and created order. 1 John 3:4 teaches us that, "Everyone who sins is breaking God's law, for all sin is contrary to the law of God." Even in the midst of total depravity and rebellion, God is faithful and true to His Word. The human race continues through the line of Seth, whose generations would eventually usher in the King of kings!

APPLY:

- Romans 12:1 says, "And so, dear brothers and sisters, I plead with you to give your bodies to God because of all he has done for you. Let them be a living and holy sacrifice – the kind he will find acceptable. This is truly the way to worship him." How are you currently serving God and surrendering your physical body for His glory? What is something you can do this week as an offering to God for saving you from eternal destruction?

S.O.A.P.

Monday – Hebrew 11:1-6

Tuesday – Matthew 23:29-36

Wednesday – 1 John 3:11-18

Thursday – Luke 3:23-38

Friday – Revelation 20:11-15

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WEEK 6

GENESIS 5-8; 9:1-17 – THE FLOOD

CHAPTER 5

1 This is the written account of the descendants of Adam. When God created human beings, he made them to be like himself. 2 He created them male and female, and he blessed them and called them “human.” 3 When Adam was 130 years old, he became the father of a son who was just like him—in his very image. He named his son Seth. 4 After the birth of Seth, Adam lived another 800 years, and he had other sons and daughters. 5 Adam lived 930 years, and then he died. 6 When Seth was 105 years old, he became the father of Enosh. 7 After the birth of Enosh, Seth lived another 807 years, and he had other sons and daughters. 8 Seth lived 912 years, and then he died. 9 When Enosh was 90 years old, he became the father of Kenan. 10 After the birth of Kenan, Enosh lived another 815 years, and he had other sons and daughters. 11 Enosh lived 905 years, and then he died. 12 When Kenan was 70 years old, he became the father of Mahalalel. 13 After the birth of Mahalalel, Kenan lived another 840 years, and he had other sons and daughters. 14 Kenan lived 910 years, and then he died. 15 When Mahalalel was 65 years old, he became the father of Jared. 16 After the birth of Jared, Mahalalel lived another 830 years, and he had other sons and daughters. 17 Mahalalel lived 895 years, and then he died. 18 When Jared was 162 years old, he became the father of Enoch. 19 After the birth of Enoch, Jared lived another 800 years, and he had other sons and daughters. 20 Jared lived 962 years, and then he died. 21 When Enoch was 65 years old, he became the father of Methuselah. 22 After the birth of Methuselah, Enoch lived in close fellowship with God for another 300 years, and he had other sons and daughters. 23 Enoch lived 365 years, 24 walking in close

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fellowship with God. Then one day he disappeared, because God took him. 25 When Methuselah was 187 years old, he became the father of Lamech. 26 After the birth of Lamech, Methuselah lived another 782 years, and he had other sons and daughters. 27 Methuselah lived 969 years, and then he died. 28 When Lamech was 182 years old, he became the father of a son. 29 Lamech named his son Noah, for he said, “May he bring us relief from our work and the painful labor of farming this ground that the LORD has cursed.” 30 After the birth of Noah, Lamech lived another 595 years, and he had other sons and daughters. 31 Lamech lived 777 years, and then he died. 32 After Noah was 500 years old, he became the father of Shem, Ham, and Japheth.

CHAPTER 6

1 Then the people began to multiply on the earth, and daughters were born to them. 2 The sons of God saw the beautiful women and took any they wanted as their wives. 3 Then the LORD said, “My Spirit will not put up with humans for such a long time, for they are only mortal flesh. In the future, their normal lifespan will be no more than 120 years.” 4 In those days, and for some time after, giant Nephilites lived on the earth, for whenever the sons of God had intercourse with women, they gave birth to children who became the heroes and famous warriors of ancient times. 5 The LORD observed the extent of human wickedness on the earth, and he saw that everything they thought or imagined was consistently and totally evil. 6 So the LORD was sorry he had ever made them and put them on the earth. It broke his heart. 7 And the LORD said, “I will wipe this human race I have created from the face of the earth. Yes, and I will destroy every living thing—all the people, the large animals, the small animals that scurry along the ground, and even the birds of the sky. I am sorry I ever made them.” 8

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But Noah found favor with the LORD. 9 This is the account of Noah and his family. Noah was a righteous man, the only blameless person living on earth at the time, and he walked in close fellowship with God. 10 Noah was the father of three sons: Shem, Ham, and Japheth. 11 Now God saw that the earth had become corrupt and was filled with violence. 12 God observed all this corruption in the world, for everyone on earth was corrupt. 13 So God said to Noah, “I have decided to destroy all living creatures, for they have filled the earth with violence. Yes, I will wipe them all out along with the earth! 14 “Build a large boatc from cypress wood and waterproof it with tar, inside and out. Then construct decks and stalls throughout its interior. 15 Make the boat 450 feet long, 75 feet wide, and 45 feet high. 16 Leave an 18-inch opening below the roof all the way around the boat. Put the door on the side, and build three decks inside the boat—lower, middle, and upper. 17 “Look! I am about to cover the earth with a flood that will destroy every living thing that breathes. Everything on earth will die. 18 But I will confirm my covenant with you. So enter the boat—you and your wife and your sons and their wives. 19 Bring a pair of every kind of animal—a male and a female—into the boat with you to keep them alive during the flood. 20 Pairs of every kind of bird, and every kind of animal, and every kind of small animal that scurries along the ground, will come to you to be kept alive. 21 And be sure to take on board enough food for your family and for all the animals.” 22 So Noah did everything exactly as God had commanded him.

CHAPTER 7

1 When everything was ready, the LORD said to Noah, “Go into the boat with all your family, for among all the people of the earth, I can see that you alone are righteous. 2 Take with you seven pairs—male and female—of each animal I have approved for eating and

for sacrifice, and take one pair of each of the others. 3 Also take seven pairs of every kind of bird. There must be a male and a female in each pair to ensure that all life will survive on the earth after the flood. 4 Seven days from now I will make the rains pour down on the earth. And it will rain for forty days and forty nights, until I have wiped from the earth all the living things I have created.” 5 So Noah did everything as the LORD commanded him. 6 Noah was 600 years old when the flood covered the earth. 7 He went on board the boat to escape the flood—he and his wife and his sons and their wives. 8 With them were all the various kinds of animals—those approved for eating and for sacrifice and those that were not—along with all the birds and the small animals that scurry along the ground. 9 They entered the boat in pairs, male and female, just as God had commanded Noah. 10 After seven days, the waters of the flood came and covered the earth. 11 When Noah was 600 years old, on the seventeenth day of the second month, all the underground waters erupted from the earth, and the rain fell in mighty torrents from the sky. 12 The rain continued to fall for forty days and forty nights. 13 That very day Noah had gone into the boat with his wife and his sons—Shem, Ham, and Japheth—and their wives. 14 With them in the boat were pairs of every kind of animal—domestic and wild, large and small—along with birds of every kind. 15 Two by two they came into the boat, representing every living thing that breathes. 16 A male and female of each kind entered, just as God had commanded Noah. Then the LORD closed the door behind them. 17 For forty days the floodwaters grew deeper, covering the ground and lifting the boat high above the earth. 18 As the waters rose higher and higher above the ground, the boat floated safely on the surface. 19 Finally, the water covered even the highest mountains on the earth, 20 rising more than twenty-two feet above the highest peaks. 21 All the living things on earth died—

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birds, domestic animals, wild animals, small animals that scurry along the ground, and all the people. 22 Everything that breathed and lived on dry land died. 23 God wiped out every living thing on the earth—people, livestock, small animals that scurry along the ground, and the birds of the sky. All were destroyed. The only people who survived were Noah and those with him in the boat. 24 And the floodwaters covered the earth for 150 days.

CHAPTER 8

1 But God remembered Noah and all the wild animals and livestock with him in the boat. He sent a wind to blow across the earth, and the floodwaters began to recede. 2 The underground waters stopped flowing, and the torrential rains from the sky were stopped. 3 So the floodwaters gradually receded from the earth. After 150 days, 4 exactly five months from the time the flood began, the boat came to rest on the mountains of Ararat. 5 Two and a half months later, as the waters continued to go down, other mountain peaks became visible. 6 After another forty days, Noah opened the window he had made in the boat 7 and released a raven. The bird flew back and forth until the floodwaters on the earth had dried up. 8 He also released a dove to see if the water had receded and it could find dry ground. 9 But the dove could find no place to land because the water still covered the ground. So it returned to the boat, and Noah held out his hand and drew the dove back inside. 10 After waiting another seven days, Noah released the dove again. 11 This time the dove returned to him in the evening with a fresh olive leaf in its beak. Then Noah knew that the floodwaters were almost gone. 12 He waited another seven days and then released the dove again. This time it did not come back. 13 Noah was now 601 years old. On the first day of the new year, ten and a half months after the flood began, the floodwaters had almost dried up from the

earth. Noah lifted back the covering of the boat and saw that the surface of the ground was drying. 14 Two more months went by, and at last the earth was dry! 15 Then God said to Noah, 16 “Leave the boat, all of you—you and your wife, and your sons and their wives. 17 Release all the animals—the birds, the livestock, and the small animals that scurry along the ground—so they can be fruitful and multiply throughout the earth.” 18 So Noah, his wife, and his sons and their wives left the boat. 19 And all of the large and small animals and birds came out of the boat, pair by pair. 20 Then Noah built an altar to the LORD, and there he sacrificed as burnt offerings the animals and birds that had been approved for that purpose. 21 And the LORD was pleased with the aroma of the sacrifice and said to himself, “I will never again curse the ground because of the human race, even though everything they think or imagine is bent toward evil from childhood. I will never again destroy all living things. 22 As long as the earth remains, there will be planting and harvest, cold and heat, summer and winter, day and night.”

CHAPTER 9:1-17

1 Then God blessed Noah and his sons and told them, “Be fruitful and multiply. Fill the earth. 2 All the animals of the earth, all the birds of the sky, all the small animals that scurry along the ground, and all the fish in the sea will look on you with fear and terror. I have placed them in your power. 3 I have given them to you for food, just as I have given you grain and vegetables. 4 But you must never eat any meat that still has the lifeblood in it. 5 “And I will require the blood of anyone who takes another person’s life. If a wild animal kills a person, it must die. And anyone who murders a fellow human must die. 6 If anyone takes a human life, that person’s life will also be taken by human hands. For God made human beings in his own image. 7 Now be fruitful and multiply, and repopulate the earth.” 8 Then

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GENESIS 5-8; 9:1-17 – THE FLOOD

God told Noah and his sons, 9 “I hereby confirm my covenant with you and your descendants, 10 and with all the animals that were on the boat with you—the birds, the livestock, and all the wild animals—every living creature on earth. 11 Yes, I am confirming my covenant with you. Never again will floodwaters kill all living creatures; never again will a flood destroy the earth.” 12 Then God said, “I am giving you a sign of my covenant with you and with all living creatures, for all generations to come. 13 I have placed my rainbow in the clouds. It is the sign of my covenant with you and with all the earth. 14 When I send clouds over the earth, the rainbow will appear in the clouds, 15 and I will remember my covenant with you and with all living creatures. Never again will the floodwaters destroy all life. 16 When I see the rainbow in the clouds, I will remember the eternal covenant between God and every living creature on earth.” 17 Then God said to Noah, “Yes, this rainbow is the sign of the covenant I am confirming with all the creatures on earth.”

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SERMON TAKEAWAY FOR THE WEEK:



WEEK 6

GENESIS 5-8; 9:1-17 – THE FLOOD

EXAMINE:

- Genesis 5:1 uses an introductory phrase that repeats itself several times throughout the book. (Genesis 2:4; 6:9; 10:1; 11:10; 11:27; 25:12; 25:19; 36:1, 9; 37:2) This phrase identifies the beginning of a new section of the book. This is helpful because we are better able to examine each section in its entirety in order to glean the author's intended message.
- Often skimmed over or even skipped entirely, biblical genealogies are important for several reasons: 1) They are historical accounts of our ancient ancestors. 2) Written with intention, they give us a context to storylines portrayed in the sections of scripture where they are found. 3) They point to and trace the family lines that eventually led to the birth of the anxiously awaited serpent-crusher, Jesus of Nazareth. (Genesis 3:15; Matthew 1:1-18; Luke 3:23-38)
- However the accounts of chapter 6:1-4 are interpreted, Genesis 6:2 should call our minds back to the sin that took place in the Garden (Genesis 3:6). Just as Eve *saw* that the tree was beautiful and then *took* its fruit, these "sons of God" *saw* the beauty of the daughters of men and *took* any they wanted as their wives. Even like the temptations of Jesus in the wilderness, this is later described as "the love of the world." Read 1 John 2:15-17 for a greater understanding of this temptation that has plagued humanity since the beginning.
- When learning to understand Scripture, it is helpful to interpret the Old Testament through the lenses of the New Testament. The nature of the marriages and offspring described in Chapter 6:1-4 can be better understood by studying 2 Peter 2:4-5 and Jude 6-7. Peter and Jude, when writing about false teachers, both describe a time when angels sinned by leaving their proper dwelling place. The Israelites in the time of Moses would have known the history of other religious teachings of the day that praised a group

GENESIS 5-8; 9:1-17 – THE FLOOD

of divine “god-men” who ruled and shared secret knowledge with mankind. For us, there is one source of truth, Jesus Christ. Any other source of wisdom or knowledge, no matter how “supernatural” it may seem, is not from the Most High God.

- Genesis 6:10 lists Noah and his three sons, “Shem, Ham, and Japheth.” It’s worth noting that this isn’t their birth order, Ham is the youngest (9:24). Rather, it appears that they were listed in this way to accent their significance to history and what led to God establishing the nation of Israel.

DISCUSS:

1. In Genesis 5:1-3, what themes or teachings are found? How does this further speak to us about God as creator and our role as His creation?
2. Appearing several times in the first six chapters, how does this sin of *seeing* and *taking* reveal itself in your own life?
3. Compare Genesis 4:7 with 6:5. What appears to have happened to human beings? Why did God judge humanity and creation in general, by flooding the earth?
 - a. What does this reveal about God’s character?
 - b. What does this tell us about sin?
4. When looking at Genesis 7:16, what could be the significance of God being the one to close the door of the boat?

GENESIS 5-8; 9:1-17 – THE FLOOD

5. What does Genesis 8:21 reveal about humans, in their post-fall condition?

6. In Genesis 8:20-9:17, we see God's covenant established with Noah. What similarities exist between this section of scripture and the creation account from Genesis 1 & 2?
 - a. What is the sign of the covenant made with Noah and what purpose did it serve?

7. If you are familiar with this story, what are some details that stand out to you in a new way?
 - a. What questions come up and how will you seek answers?

REFLECT:

We learned in Genesis 1:27-28 that God blessed human beings with the command to “be fruitful and multiply...” However, in chapter 6, as sinful humans began to multiply on the earth, their wickedness multiplied with them. They grew increasingly evil with each generation. The moral decline of their behavior, violence and corruption, led to The Flood, a divine judgment by God. The pinnacle of God's creation had become misguided, rebellious, and absolutely perverse.

Similarly, the New Testament reveals to us that although God will never flood the earth again, He will pour out judgment upon the wicked at the end of the age. And just like the flood in Noah's day, unbelievers will be living their lives with no thought of the future when they are suddenly swept away. “That is the way it will be when the Son of Man comes.” (Matthew 24:39) “For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life through

GENESIS 5-8; 9:1-17 – THE FLOOD

Christ Jesus our Lord.” (Romans 6:23) The Ark protected its occupants from judgment, just as those who are in Christ will be saved from God’s wrath.

“What we do see is Jesus, who for a little while was given a position ‘a little lower than the angels’; and because he suffered death for us, he is now ‘crowned with glory and honor.’” (Hebrews 2:9)

“...For only as a human being could he die, and only by dying could he break the power of the devil, who had the power over death. Only in this way could he set free all who have lived their lives as slaves to the fear of dying.” (Hebrews 2:14-15)

APPLY:

- Who is one person you can share the Gospel with this week?
- Whether at home or in your vehicle, choose one worship song that moves you to praise your heavenly Father for saving you from sin and its consequences. Sing it to Him boldly.

S.O.A.P.

Monday – Matthew 24:37-44

Tuesday – Luke 17:20-37

Wednesday – 1 Peter 3:18-22

Thursday – 2 Peter 2:1-10

Friday – Jude 3-7

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WEEK 7

GENESIS 9:18–11:9 – THE PEOPLE

CHAPTER 9:18-29

18 The sons of Noah who came out of the boat with their father were Shem, Ham, and Japheth. (Ham is the father of Canaan.) 19 From these three sons of Noah came all the people who now populate the earth. 20 After the flood, Noah began to cultivate the ground, and he planted a vineyard. 21 One day he drank some wine he had made, and he became drunk and lay naked inside his tent. 22 Ham, the father of Canaan, saw that his father was naked and went outside and told his brothers. 23 Then Shem and Japheth took a robe, held it over their shoulders, and backed into the tent to cover their father. As they did this, they looked the other way so they would not see him naked. 24 When Noah woke up from his stupor, he learned what Ham, his youngest son, had done. 25 Then he cursed Canaan, the son of Ham: “May Canaan be cursed! May he be the lowest of servants to his relatives.” 26 Then Noah said, “May the LORD, the God of Shem, be blessed, and may Canaan be his servant! 27 May God expand the territory of Japheth! May Japheth share the prosperity of Shem, and may Canaan be his servant.” 28 Noah lived another 350 years after the great flood. 29 He lived 950 years, and then he died.

CHAPTER 10

1 This is the account of the families of Shem, Ham, and Japheth, the three sons of Noah. Many children were born to them after the great flood. 2 The descendants of Japheth were Gomer, Magog, Madai, Javan, Tubal, Meshech, and Tiras. 3 The descendants of Gomer were Ashkenaz, Riphath, and Togarmah. 4 The descendants of Javan were Elishah, Tarshish, Kittim, and Rodanim. 5 Their descendants became the seafaring peoples that spread out to various lands,

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each identified by its own language, clan, and national identity. 6 The descendants of Ham were Cush, Mizraim, Put, and Canaan. 7 The descendants of Cush were Seba, Havilah, Sabtah, Raamah, and Sabteca. The descendants of Raamah were Sheba and Dedan. 8 Cush was also the ancestor of Nimrod, who was the first heroic warrior on earth. 9 Since he was the greatest hunter in the world, his name became proverbial. People would say, “This man is like Nimrod, the greatest hunter in the world.” 10 He built his kingdom in the land of Babylonia, with the cities of Babylon, Erech, Akkad, and Calneh. 11 From there he expanded his territory to Assyria, building the cities of Nineveh, Rehoboth-ir, Calah, 12 and Resen (the great city located between Nineveh and Calah). 13 Mizraim was the ancestor of the Ludites, Anamites, Lehabites, Naphtuhites, 14 Pathrusites, Casluhites, and the Caphtorites, from whom the Philistines came. 15 Canaan’s oldest son was Sidon, the ancestor of the Sidonians. Canaan was also the ancestor of the Hittites, 16 Jebusites, Amorites, Girgashites, 17 Hivites, Arkites, Sinites, 18 Arvadites, Zemarites, and Hamathites. The Canaanite clans eventually spread out, 19 and the territory of Canaan extended from Sidon in the north to Gerar and Gaza in the south, and east as far as Sodom, Gomorrah, Admah, and Zeboiim, near Lasha. 20 These were the descendants of Ham, identified by clan, language, territory, and national identity. 21 Sons were also born to Shem, the older brother of Japheth. Shem was the ancestor of all the descendants of Eber. 22 The descendants of Shem were Elam, Asshur, Arphaxad, Lud, and Aram. 23 The descendants of Aram were Uz, Hul, Gether, and Mash. 24 Arphaxad was the father of Shelah, and Shelah was the father of Eber. 25 Eber had two sons. The first was named Peleg (which means “division”), for during his lifetime the people of the world were divided into different language groups. His brother’s name was Joktan. 26 Joktan was the ancestor of Almodad, Sheleph, Hazarmaveth, Jerah, 27 Hadoram, Uzal, Diklah, 28 Obal, Abimael, Sheba, 29 Ophir, Havilah, and Jobab. All

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GENESIS 9:18-11:9 – THE PEOPLE

these were descendants of Joktan. 30 The territory they occupied extended from Mesha all the way to Sephar in the eastern mountains. 31 These were the descendants of Shem, identified by clan, language, territory, and national identity. 32 These are the clans that descended from Noah's sons, arranged by nation according to their lines of descent. All the nations of the earth descended from these clans after the great flood.

CHAPTER 11:1-9

1 At one time all the people of the world spoke the same language and used the same words. 2 As the people migrated to the east, they found a plain in the land of Babylonia and settled there. 3 They began saying to each other, "Let's make bricks and harden them with fire." (In this region bricks were used instead of stone, and tar was used for mortar.) 4 Then they said, "Come, let's build a great city for ourselves with a tower that reaches into the sky. This will make us famous and keep us from being scattered all over the world." 5 But the LORD came down to look at the city and the tower the people were building. 6 "Look!" he said. "The people are united, and they all speak the same language. After this, nothing they set out to do will be impossible for them! 7 Come, let's go down and confuse the people with different languages. Then they won't be able to understand each other." 8 In that way, the LORD scattered them all over the world, and they stopped building the city. 9 That is why the city was called Babel, because that is where the LORD confused the people with different languages. In this way he scattered them all over the world.

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SERMON TAKEAWAY FOR THE WEEK:

WEEK 7

GENESIS 9:18–11:9 – THE PEOPLE

EXAMINE:

- Much of this section from Genesis 9 should bring our minds back to the creation account of chapters 1 & 2; this includes verse 19, which tells us that from Noah's three sons came all people who now populate the earth.
- Noah's sin and the consequences that come from it leave us with many questions. Regardless of our understanding of the exact details of these events, we do see clearly that Ham dishonors his father, while Shem and Japheth covered Noah's nakedness, looking the other way. We also want to notice that the prophetic statements in 9:25-27 did not come from God, but from Noah. This could have simply been a prophecy about the future lives that his sons and their descendants would live.
- A Ziggurat is a type of massive structure built in Mesopotamia; the same region known as Babylon. Many of these temples were built for worship and contained no rooms. The only purpose was the altar on top, which was usually used for placing food, in which humans could "feed the gods." Pagan gods were thought to come down and eat food for sustenance. It is important to note that it's not the height of the tower that was the method for "reaching into the sky," it was the worship itself. It was the devotion and worship that the people believed would give them favor with "the gods."

DISCUSS:

1. When thinking about Noah's proclamation in Genesis 9:25-27, what does 9:19 & 10:32 tell us about these people groups? How might an Israelite in Moses' day have understood the nations and people groups in their time?
2. What was the people's motivation for putting in the work to build this city and tower?

GENESIS 9:18-11:9 – THE PEOPLE

- a. Where do you get your identity? Is it from materials and status? Social media followers and money? Take a moment to really think about this. What treasures in your life have a hold of your heart?

3. Considering the purpose of pagan temples to feed the gods, what is different about our God, as He is revealed in scripture? (Think back to Genesis 1:1) List any differences that come to mind.

4. What impact did a false understanding of God and an incorrect understanding of worship have on the people in Genesis 11:1-9?
 - a. How did this misunderstanding cause them to disobey God's command from Genesis 9:7?

5. What are your thoughts about all people, at one time, speaking the same language? Why did God see this as something that needed to be stopped?

6. In chapter 11, verse 5 says the LORD (YHWH) "...came down to look at the city and the tower..." What might the implications of this be? (Hint: the people thought they were doing something tremendously great. How did the One True God see it?)
 - a. What thoughts does this create regarding God's status and glory?

GENESIS 9:18-11:9 – THE PEOPLE

REFLECT:

When unified with one mission and goal, humans often believe they can accomplish the impossible and achieve victory in any circumstance, but is that true? By seeking their own glory, and desiring to make a name for themselves, they forgot about the creator of the heavens and the earth. Instead of devoting their lives to the One True God, they created their own form of worship and sought their own gain. But God, out of His mercy, confused their languages and by doing so, forced them to spread throughout the world. Remember, God still had a promise to keep and a mission to accomplish. He would bring about the serpent-crusher and free humankind from the bondage of sin and death. Several thousand years later, God, through the death, burial and resurrection of His Son, would unify the human race in Christ. On the day of Pentecost, God's Spirit reversed the confusion of languages and opened the door for the message of salvation to be preached to and understood by all people, regardless of their language. What heart could fathom such boundless grace?

APPLY:

- The temple of God is His Spirit-filled people. Pick at least one brother or sister in Christ and pray for them very specifically. In addition to interceding for them, find a way to honor them publicly. This can be verbal, written, or even in the form of a gift.

S.O.A.P.

Monday – Acts 2:1-24

Tuesday – Acts 17:22-31

Wednesday – Romans 1:16-25

Thursday – 2 Peter 3:1-12

Friday – Romans 12:1-3

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THE FIRST BOOK OF MOSES
COMMONLY CALLED

GENESIS

the beginning God created^a the heavens and the earth. 2 The earth was without form and void, and darkness was upon the face of the deep; and the spirit^b of God was moving over the waters. 3 And God said, "Let there be light"; and there was light. 4 And God saw that the light was good; and God separated the light from the darkness. 5 God called the light Day, and the darkness Night. And there was evening and there was morning, one day.

6 And God said, "Let there be light in the midst of the waters, and let

so. 16 And God made the greater light to rule the day, and the lesser light to rule the night, and made the stars also. 17 And God set them in the firmament of the heaven to give light upon the earth, 18 and to rule the day and over the night, and to separate the light from the darkness. And God saw that it was good. 19 And there was evening and there was morning, the second day.

20 And God said, "Let the waters bring forth every living creature that

WEEK 8

GENESIS 11:10–12:9 – THE COVENANT

CHAPTER 11:10-32

10 This is the account of Shem's family. Two years after the great flood, when Shem was 100 years old, he became the father of Arphaxad. 11 After the birth of Arphaxad, Shem lived another 500 years and had other sons and daughters. 12 When Arphaxad was 35 years old, he became the father of Shelah. 13 After the birth of Shelah, Arphaxad lived another 403 years and had other sons and daughters. 14 When Shelah was 30 years old, he became the father of Eber. 15 After the birth of Eber, Shelah lived another 403 years and had other sons and daughters. 16 When Eber was 34 years old, he became the father of Peleg. 17 After the birth of Peleg, Eber lived another 430 years and had other sons and daughters. 18 When Peleg was 30 years old, he became the father of Reu. 19 After the birth of Reu, Peleg lived another 209 years and had other sons and daughters. 20 When Reu was 32 years old, he became the father of Serug. 21 After the birth of Serug, Reu lived another 207 years and had other sons and daughters. 22 When Serug was 30 years old, he became the father of Nahor. 23 After the birth of Nahor, Serug lived another 200 years and had other sons and daughters. 24 When Nahor was 29 years old, he became the father of Terah. 25 After the birth of Terah, Nahor lived another 119 years and had other sons and daughters. 26 After Terah was 70 years old, he became the father of Abram, Nahor, and Haran. 27 This is the account of Terah's family. Terah was the father of Abram, Nahor, and Haran; and Haran was the father of Lot. 28 But Haran died in Ur of the Chaldeans, the land of his birth, while his father, Terah, was still living. 29 Meanwhile, Abram and Nahor both married. The name of Abram's wife was Sarai, and the name of Nahor's wife was Milcah. (Milcah and her sister Iscah were daughters of Nahor's brother Haran.) 30 But Sarai was unable to become pregnant and

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GENESIS 11:10–12:9 – THE COVENANT

had no children. 31 One day Terah took his son Abram, his daughter-in-law Sarai (his son Abram's wife), and his grandson Lot (his son Haran's child) and moved away from Ur of the Chaldeans. He was headed for the land of Canaan, but they stopped at Haran and settled there. 32 Terah lived for 205 years and died while still in Haran.

CHAPTER 12:1-9

1 The LORD had said to Abram, "Leave your native country, your relatives, and your father's family, and go to the land that I will show you. 2 I will make you into a great nation. I will bless you and make you famous, and you will be a blessing to others. 3 I will bless those who bless you and curse those who treat you with contempt. All the families on earth will be blessed through you." 4 So Abram departed as the LORD had instructed, and Lot went with him. Abram was seventy-five years old when he left Haran. 5 He took his wife, Sarai, his nephew Lot, and all his wealth—his livestock and all the people he had taken into his household at Haran—and headed for the land of Canaan. When they arrived in Canaan, 6 Abram traveled through the land as far as Shechem. There he set up camp beside the oak of Moreh. At that time, the area was inhabited by Canaanites. 7 Then the LORD appeared to Abram and said, "I will give this land to your descendants." And Abram built an altar there and dedicated it to the LORD, who had appeared to him. 8 After that, Abram traveled south and set up camp in the hill country, with Bethel to the west and Ai to the east. There he built another altar and dedicated it to the LORD, and he worshiped the LORD. 9 Then Abram continued traveling south by stages toward the Negev.

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SERMON TAKEAWAY FOR THE WEEK:

WEEK 8

GENESIS 11:10–12:9 – THE COVENANT

EXAMINE:

- It is important for us to remember that Moses recorded this history after the Israelites had been delivered from Egypt. This section of our study zooms in on the descendants of Noah's son Shem in order to tell us about Abram. As we continue through our study, keep in mind Noah's pronounced blessing from Genesis 9:26-27 as it relates to Shem. It is no coincidence that God chose to call his descendant Abram to serve Him. (*Note: God changes Abram's name to Abraham in Chapter 17.*)
- Leading up to this point of the book of Genesis, we have seen the creation of the heavens and the earth, the creation and fall of mankind, the wickedness of human beings which led to the flood and the pride and dispersion of man at the Tower of Babel. These first 11 chapters contain over 2000 years of human history. But starting with Abram, the rest of Genesis will be narrowed down to cover approximately 350 years of history and several generations of one family, from which comes the nation of Israel.
- Genesis 12:1-3 give us a summary of God's call and promise to Abram. In leaving his homeland and family, he is seeking to take hold of God's offer to him. Land, descendants and protection are themes that will dominate not only the rest of the book of Genesis, but the entire narrative of the Bible.
- We want to highlight God's choosing of Abram. Joshua 24:2-3 tells us that Abraham's father, Terah, worshiped other gods and that the LORD took Abram to lead him into the land of Canaan. Abram grew up in a culture that was devoted to false gods and idols. But despite this, the LORD chose to call Abram, asking him to leave his home, family and life behind. Although he did not completely obey, as he brought most of his family and possessions with him, Abram's decision to follow God's command showed his true faith.

GENESIS 11:10-12:9 – THE COVENANT

DISCUSS:

1. Genesis 12:1 records God telling Abram to “...go to the land that I will show you.” Verse 7 then records God saying to Abram, “I will give this land to your descendants.” What happened between these two verses that changed “show” to “give”? What is a takeaway for us as New Covenant followers of Jesus? (Hint: James 2:14-26 & Hebrews 11:8)

2. What is the significance of Genesis 11:30 considering God’s promise to Abram in 12:2 that he will be made into a great nation?
 - a. How does God’s promise that through Abram will be the blessing of all the families of the earth contrast with previous accounts from Genesis, like the flood and the Tower of Babel?

3. In this section of Scripture, we read that Abram built and dedicated two separate altars to God. These altars were located in places where God spoke to Abram. What is the significance and value of an altar? What locations come to your mind as you think about your past encounters with God?

4. Regarding religious beliefs, what does your family history look like? How did God call you to Himself?

GENESIS 11:10-12:9 – THE COVENANT

REFLECT:

As we reflect on this initial account of God's covenant with Abram, let us also consider the New Testament's teaching about this passage. Galatians 3:8-9 reads, "What's more, the Scriptures looked forward to this time when God would make the Gentiles right in his sight because of their faith. God proclaimed this good news to Abraham long ago when he said, 'All nations will be blessed through you.' So, all who put their faith in Christ share in the same blessing Abraham received because of his faith." Jesus Christ is the promised offspring who fulfills the covenant that God made with Abram. It is because of God's faithfulness that all people, whether Jew or Gentile, can rest in the joy of being children of God, counted as the offspring of Abraham, receiving the promised blessing. (*Note: Abram's name is changed to Abraham in Genesis 17*)

APPLY:

- As you read the S.O.A.P. passages, focus on the fact that God's plan had always been to save anyone and everyone who would trust Him, not just certain peoples from certain backgrounds.
- Think of a place where God has met with you. Consider placing something there as a reminder of His faithfulness and love toward you because of the blessings you have through Jesus Christ.

S.O.A.P.

Monday – Galatians 3:1-14

Tuesday – Galatians 3:15-29

Wednesday – Romans 4:1-12

Thursday – Romans 4:13-24

Friday – Acts 15:1-35

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WEEK 9

GENESIS 12:10–13:4 – FAITH

CHAPTER 12:10-20

10 At that time a severe famine struck the land of Canaan, forcing Abram to go down to Egypt, where he lived as a foreigner. 11 As he was approaching the border of Egypt, Abram said to his wife, Sarai, “Look, you are a very beautiful woman. 12 When the Egyptians see you, they will say, ‘This is his wife. Let’s kill him; then we can have her!’ 13 So please tell them you are my sister. Then they will spare my life and treat me well because of their interest in you.” 14 And sure enough, when Abram arrived in Egypt, everyone noticed Sarai’s beauty. 15 When the palace officials saw her, they sang her praises to Pharaoh, their king, and Sarai was taken into his palace. 16 Then Pharaoh gave Abram many gifts because of her—sheep, goats, cattle, male and female donkeys, male and female servants, and camels. 17 But the LORD sent terrible plagues upon Pharaoh and his household because of Sarai, Abram’s wife. 18 So Pharaoh summoned Abram and accused him sharply. “What have you done to me?” he demanded. “Why didn’t you tell me she was your wife? 19 Why did you say, ‘She is my sister,’ and allow me to take her as my wife? Now then, here is your wife. Take her and get out of here!” 20 Pharaoh ordered some of his men to escort them, and he sent Abram out of the country, along with his wife and all his possessions.

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GENESIS 12:10-13:4 – FAITH

CHAPTER 13:1-4

1 So Abram left Egypt and traveled north into the Negev, along with his wife and Lot and all that they owned. 2 (Abram was very rich in livestock, silver, and gold.) 3 From the Negev, they continued traveling by stages toward Bethel, and they pitched their tents between Bethel and Ai, where they had camped before. 4 This was the same place where Abram had built the altar, and there he worshiped the LORD again.

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SERMON TAKEAWAY FOR THE WEEK:

WEEK 9

GENESIS 12:10–13:4 – FAITH

EXAMINE:

- In this text we observe two decisions that Abram makes: 1) Due to a famine he is forced to go down into Egypt. 2) He allows his fear of the Egyptian men to move him into deception, lying about his relationship to his wife, Sarai.
- Notice Sarai's pivotal role in the events described here. In the end, Abram does prosper because of her, while Pharaoh suffers. Sarai is a catalyst for good and for evil. Because of God's favor, Pharaoh, even in his ignorance, is held accountable for the sin of taking another man's wife.
- After leaving Egypt, in 13:1, we observe that Abraham left with his wife, Lot, and all they owned. It's important to note that this would include the additional possessions that were given to Abram when the Pharaoh took an interest in Sarai. These possessions included sheep, goats, cattle, male and female donkeys, male and female servants and camels.

DISCUSS:

1. Consider Abram's behavior in Genesis 12:1-9 and compare it with his attitude and behavior in Genesis 12:10-20. What differences do we find?
 - a. In what ways can you relate with Abram here? Are there specific examples from your own life that come to mind?
2. Why did the LORD send the terrible plagues upon Pharaoh and his household? What are some possible reasons for this?

GENESIS 12:10-13:4 – FAITH

3. Proverbs 10:2 tells us that “Tainted wealth has no lasting value...” As Abram left Egypt with his wife and all his old and new possessions, what are your thoughts about the exchange he allowed to happen?
 - a. What are some ways that we gain wealth or possessions through ungodly means or with deceptive intentions?

4. In 13:4 it is emphasized that the place they set up camp was that same place Abram worshipped God in Genesis 12:8. Why might this be significant? Have you ever revisited a place where you had an encounter with God?
 - a. One of the greatest blessings of the New Covenant is that the Holy Spirit of God no longer dwells in tabernacles or temples, but within His children, believers in Jesus Christ. How does this truth impact you as you worship your heavenly Father?



GENESIS 12:10-13:4 – FAITH

REFLECT:

Fear can be a compelling emotion, even in the life of a believer. Abram allowed himself to be overtaken by fear. As a result, he disobeyed God and dishonored his wife. Forgetting God's promises, provision, protection and power, Abram turned to his own schemes in order to save himself. Even today, we find that we are not much different than Abram. Jesus has given us commands to live a certain way, love a certain way, and handle conflicts in a certain way. Too often we approach these situations using our own wisdom. Casting away the teachings of our Lord, we choose for ourselves what's "best." While our Father in Heaven is abounding in mercy and steadfast love, we sometimes still must bear with the earthly consequences of our sin. Remember that faith is simply trusting God. Trusting that He knows best and that He wants the best for us.

APPLY:

- Find a trustworthy brother or sister in Christ and share your fears with them. It could be one fear that looms over you often, or perhaps many that come to your mind sporadically throughout the day. Seeking wise counsel and bringing fear out into the light allows us to deal with it before it steals anymore of our peace.

S.O.A.P.

Monday – Hebrews 10:32-11:3

Tuesday – Hebrews 11:4-16

Wednesday – Hebrews 11:17-31

Thursday – Hebrews 11:32-12:2

Friday – Romans 10:5-17

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WEEK 10

GENESIS 13:5–14 – THE BLESSING

CHAPTER 13:5-18

5 Lot, who was traveling with Abram, had also become very wealthy with flocks of sheep and goats, herds of cattle, and many tents. 6 But the land could not support both Abram and Lot with all their flocks and herds living so close together. 7 So disputes broke out between the herdsmen of Abram and Lot. (At that time Canaanites and Perizzites were also living in the land.) 8 Finally Abram said to Lot, “Let’s not allow this conflict to come between us or our herdsmen. After all, we are close relatives! 9 The whole countryside is open to you. Take your choice of any section of the land you want, and we will separate. If you want the land to the left, then I’ll take the land on the right. If you prefer the land on the right, then I’ll go to the left.” 10 Lot took a long look at the fertile plains of the Jordan Valley in the direction of Zoar. The whole area was well watered everywhere, like the garden of the LORD or the beautiful land of Egypt. (This was before the LORD destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah.) 11 Lot chose for himself the whole Jordan Valley to the east of them. He went there with his flocks and servants and parted company with his uncle Abram. 12 So Abram settled in the land of Canaan, and Lot moved his tents to a place near Sodom and settled among the cities of the plain. 13 But the people of this area were extremely wicked and constantly sinned against the LORD. 14 After Lot had gone, the LORD said to Abram, “Look as far as you can see in every direction—north and south, east and west. 15 I am giving all this land, as far as you can see, to you and your descendants as a permanent possession. 16 And I will give you so many descendants that, like the dust of the earth, they cannot be counted! 17 Go and walk through the land in every direction, for I am giving it to you.” 18 So Abram moved his camp to

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Hebron and settled near the oak grove belonging to Mamre. There he built another altar to the LORD.

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CHAPTER 14

1 About this time war broke out in the region. King Amraphel of Babylonia, King Arioch of Ellasar, King Kedorlaomer of Elam, and King Tidal of Goiim 2 fought against King Bera of Sodom, King Birsha of Gomorrah, King Shinab of Admah, King Shemeber of Zeboiim, and the king of Bela (also called Zoar). 3 This second group of kings joined forces in Siddim Valley (that is, the valley of the Dead Sea). 4 For twelve years they had been subject to King Kedorlaomer, but in the thirteenth year they rebelled against him. 5 One year later Kedorlaomer and his allies arrived and defeated the Rephaites at Ashteroth-karnaim, the Zuzites at Ham, the Emites at Shaveh-kiriathaim, 6 and the Horites at Mount Seir, as far as El-paran at the edge of the wilderness. 7 Then they turned back and came to En-mishpat (now called Kadesh) and conquered all the territory of the Amalekites, and also the Amorites living in Hazazon-tamar. 8 Then the rebel kings of Sodom, Gomorrah, Admah, Zeboiim, and Bela (also called Zoar) prepared for battle in the valley of the Dead Sea. 9 They fought against King Kedorlaomer of Elam, King Tidal of Goiim, King Amraphel of Babylonia, and King Arioch of Ellasar—four kings against five. 10 As it happened, the valley of the Dead Sea was filled with tar pits. And as the army of the kings of Sodom and Gomorrah fled, some fell into the tar pits, while the rest escaped into the mountains. 11 The victorious invaders then plundered Sodom and Gomorrah and headed for home, taking with them all the spoils of war and the food supplies. 12 They also captured Lot—Abram’s nephew who lived in Sodom—and carried off everything he owned. 13 But one of Lot’s men escaped and reported everything to Abram the Hebrew, who was living near the oak grove belonging to Mamre the Amorite. Mamre and his relatives, Eshcol and Aner,

GENESIS 13:5-14 – THE BLESSING

were Abram's allies. 14 When Abram heard that his nephew Lot had been captured, he mobilized the 318 trained men who had been born into his household. Then he pursued Kedorlaomer's army until he caught up with them at Dan. 15 There he divided his men and attacked during the night. Kedorlaomer's army fled, but Abram chased them as far as Hobah, north of Damascus. 16 Abram recovered all the goods that had been taken, and he brought back his nephew Lot with his possessions and all the women and other captives. 17 After Abram returned from his victory over Kedorlaomer and all his allies, the king of Sodom went out to meet him in the valley of Shaveh (that is, the King's Valley). 18 And Melchizedek, the king of Salem and a priest of God Most High, brought Abram some bread and wine. 19 Melchizedek blessed Abram with this blessing: "Blessed be Abram by God Most High, Creator of heaven and earth. 20 And blessed be God Most High, who has defeated your enemies for you." Then Abram gave Melchizedek a tenth of all the goods he had recovered. 21 The king of Sodom said to Abram, "Give back my people who were captured. But you may keep for yourself all the goods you have recovered." 22 Abram replied to the king of Sodom, "I solemnly swear to the LORD, God Most High, Creator of heaven and earth, 23 that I will not take so much as a single thread or sandal thong from what belongs to you. Otherwise you might say, 'I am the one who made Abram rich.' 24 I will accept only what my young warriors have already eaten, and I request that you give a fair share of the goods to my allies—Aner, Eshcol, and Mamre."

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SERMON TAKEAWAY FOR THE WEEK:

WEEK 10

GENESIS 13:5–14 – THE BLESSING

EXAMINE:

- Keep in mind the events described in chapter 12. God gave Abram specific instructions on how he is to leave and go to this land that has been promised. In verse 1 of chapter 12, He tells Abram to not take any of his relatives, but what did he do? He brought Lot with him. We will see on several occasions the unintended consequences of Abram's decision, which brought additional grief and hardship upon him.
- Notice that Abram allows Lot to be the first to choose the land he would like to dwell. Lot used his eyes, found something desirable, and took the land that was pleasing in his sight. This theme has appeared multiple times throughout the first 12 chapters of Genesis (3:6; 6:2, 5) and is described in detail in 1 John 2:15-17.
- We can easily assume verses 8 & 9 show only two options. But we must recognize that Lot had an opportunity to reconcile this dispute without separating from Abram, keeping himself under the covering of the promise of the blessing of God toward Abram.
- Recorded in chapter 14, Abram defeats several groups of kings in order to rescue Lot. After the battle we are introduced to a figure that won't be mentioned in Scripture again until the book of Hebrews, that is Melchizedek. It's significant to note that Melchizedek is described as a king and a priest; his name means "Righteous King." The city he is from is Salem, which seems to be an abbreviated name for "Jerusalem."
- There is so much to be said about this "mysterious" figure. Many would subscribe to Melchizedek being either the pre-incarnate Jesus or a type and shadow of Christ; we see similar types that point to Jesus throughout God's Word. The fact that he serves bread and wine also stands out as a theme that is repeated throughout Scripture.
- Unlike in his previous encounter with the Pharaoh of Egypt, Abram took nothing from the King of Sodom. Abram's faith in God shines in this moment. He believed God's promise about the land; that it would be given to him, meaning that force would not be necessary.
- It should also be noted that Genesis 14:13 is the first time the word *Hebrew* has been used in Scripture. The word, *ibree* in the Hebrew dialect, was used by the Israelites to distinguish themselves from foreigners and it meant, "one from beyond."

GENESIS 13:5-14 – THE BLESSING

DISCUSS:

1. Why do you think Abram gave Lot the choice to pick which land he would like to dwell in? What does this say about Abram and how might his approach with handling this dispute show growth since he went in and out of Egypt?
 - a. What do we learn about Lot in this section of Scripture?
 - b. What did Abram risk with his offer to let Lot choose?

2. Genesis 13:13 describes the people near the area that Lot chose as “...extremely wicked and constantly [sinning] against the LORD.” Compared to Lot’s decision, have you ever placed yourself close to the line of wickedness and sin?
 - a. What was the outcome of that decision? Did it lead to stumbling and falling?
 - b. In general, do you recognize the risk of being too comfortable among ungodliness? How do negative influences impact your relationships, even your relationship with God?

3. Remember a time in your life when you really had to rely on God, placing your faith in Him for something that seemed impossible. Abram’s situation and concern focused on him being of old age and still not having his promised heir. What was your situation? Who would be encouraged if you shared your story with them?

GENESIS 13:5-14 – THE BLESSING

4. Have you ever refused a gift, promotion, or anything that would have brought you great gain but also put you outside of God's will? Have you possibly accepted something that God wasn't calling you to? Whichever scenario, what was the impact on your faith?

REFLECT:

Faith is absolutely necessary for following Jesus (Hebrews 11:6). Without faith, we could be fooled into giving ourselves over to sin, only causing us pain and dishonoring the name of Christ. The desires of our flesh and our eyes, along with the pride of life, will lead us to utter destruction while promising to bring us joy and excitement. This was true for Lot, just as it was true for Adam and Eve and it's true for us as well. We see that Abram's faith not only led to blessings but also favor with God. Having faith in God gives us the courage to do what some would think was impossible. Hebrews 11:1 says, "Now faith is confidence in what we hope for and assurance about what we do not see." (NIV)

APPLY:

- Spend some time this week meditating on the word "faith." Ask yourself this question, "What is faith and why is it important?" Spend some quality time in your S.O.A.P.s and in prayer, kicking around this question. Write down times when God has been faithful in your life and where you need Him to be faithful in your future.

S.O.A.P.

Monday – Hebrews 11:1-3

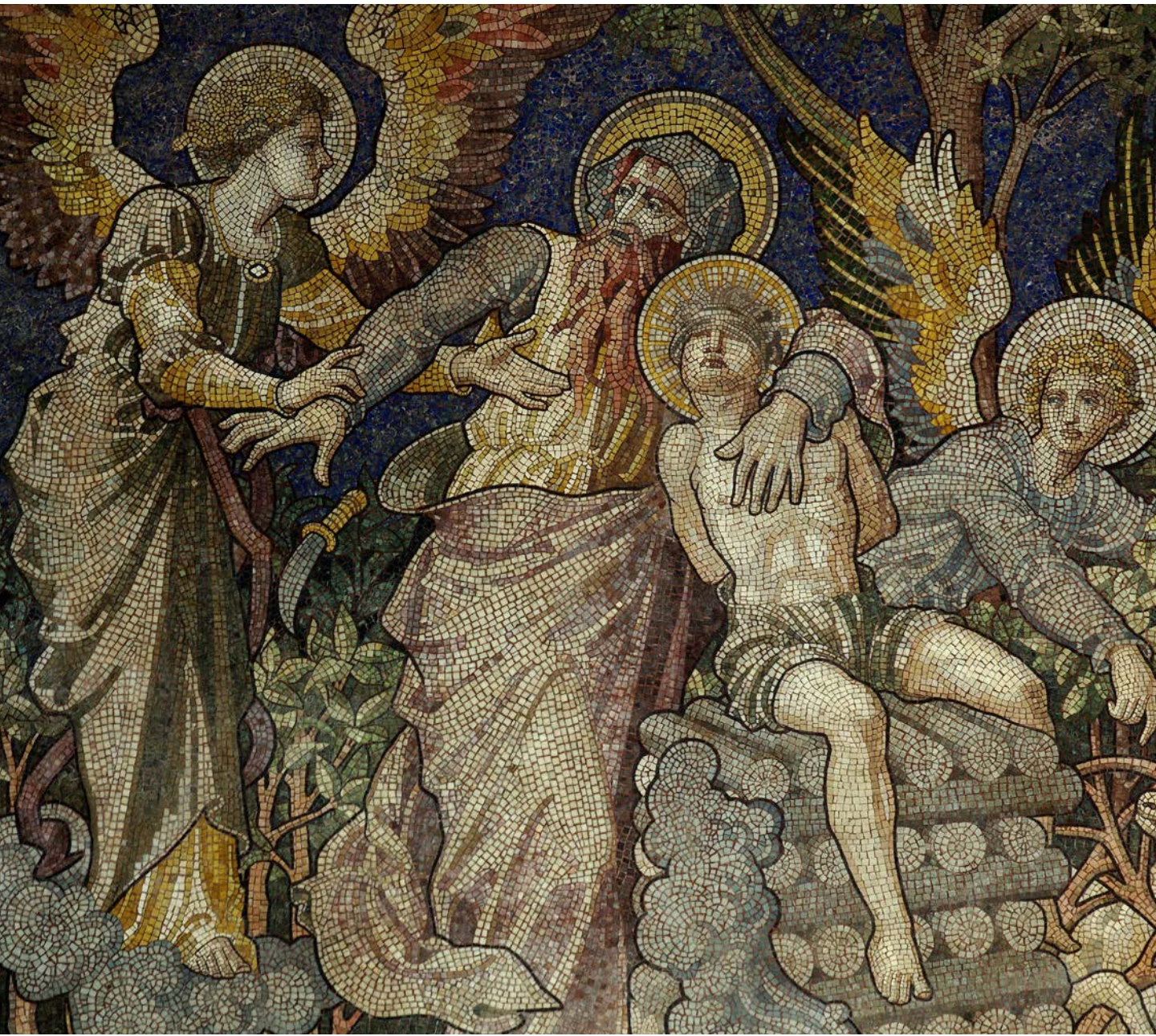
Tuesday – Hebrews 5:1-10

Wednesday – Hebrews 7:1-28

Thursday – 1 John 2:12-17

Friday – Ephesians 2:8-9

NOTES



WEEK 11

GENESIS 22 – THE LAMB

*Chapter 22 has been moved up to follow sermon series

1 Sometime later, God tested Abraham's faith. "Abraham!" God called. "Yes," he replied. "Here I am." 2 "Take your son, your only son—yes, Isaac, whom you love so much—and go to the land of Moriah. Go and sacrifice him as a burnt offering on one of the mountains, which I will show you." 3 The next morning Abraham got up early. He saddled his donkey and took two of his servants with him, along with his son, Isaac. Then he chopped wood for a fire for a burnt offering and set out for the place God had told him about. 4 On the third day of their journey, Abraham looked up and saw the place in the distance. 5 "Stay here with the donkey," Abraham told the servants. "The boy and I will travel a little farther. We will worship there, and then we will come right back." 6 So Abraham placed the wood for the burnt offering on Isaac's shoulders, while he himself carried the fire and the knife. As the two of them walked on together, 7 Isaac turned to Abraham and said, "Father?" "Yes, my son?" Abraham replied. "We have the fire and the wood," the boy said, "but where is the sheep for the burnt offering?" 8 "God will provide a sheep for the burnt offering, my son," Abraham answered. And they both walked on together. 9 When they arrived at the place where God had told him to go, Abraham built an altar and arranged the wood on it. Then he tied his son, Isaac, and laid him on the altar on top of the wood. 10 And Abraham picked up the knife to kill his son as a sacrifice. 11 At that moment the angel of the LORD called to him from heaven, "Abraham! Abraham!" "Yes," Abraham replied. "Here I am!" 12 "Don't lay a hand on the boy!" the angel said. "Do not hurt him in any way, for now I know that you truly fear God. You have not withheld from me even your son, your

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GENESIS 22 – THE LAMB

only son.” 13 Then Abraham looked up and saw a ram caught by its horns in a thicket. So he took the ram and sacrificed it as a burnt offering in place of his son. 14 Abraham named the place Yahweh-Yireh (which means “the LORD will provide”). To this day, people still use that name as a proverb: “On the mountain of the LORD it will be provided.” 15 Then the angel of the LORD called again to Abraham from heaven. 16 “This is what the LORD says: Because you have obeyed me and have not withheld even your son, your only son, I swear by my own name that 17 I will certainly bless you. I will multiply your descendants beyond number, like the stars in the sky and the sand on the seashore. Your descendants will conquer the cities of their enemies. 18 And through your descendants all the nations of the earth will be blessed—all because you have obeyed me.” 19 Then they returned to the servants and traveled back to Beersheba, where Abraham continued to live. 20 Soon after this, Abraham heard that Milcah, his brother Nahor’s wife, had borne Nahor eight sons. 21 The oldest was named Uz, the next oldest was Buz, followed by Kemuel (the ancestor of the Arameans), 22 Kesed, Hazo, Pildash, Jidlaph, and Bethuel. 23 (Bethuel became the father of Rebekah.) In addition to these eight sons from Milcah, 24 Nahor had four other children from his concubine Reumah. Their names were Tebah, Gaham, Tahash, and Maacah.

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SERMON TAKEAWAY FOR THE WEEK:

WEEK 11

GENESIS 22 – THE LAMB

EXAMINE:

- Our first observation in this text is the purpose for the events we read about; God is testing Abraham's faith. Genesis 15:6 says, "And Abram believed the LORD, and the LORD counted him as righteous because of his faith." Although Abraham was declared righteous by God because of his faith, that same faith would be tried and proven in order to show its genuineness, as described in 1 Peter 1:6-7.
- Notice in verse 2, how Isaac is described by God, "Take your son, your only son – yes, Isaac whom you love so much..." Two details should immediately jump out to us in this passage. For starters, this is the first time the word "love" is used in the Bible. Second, we know from Genesis 16, that Abraham has an older son, Ishmael. Take time to ponder upon these observations.
- Considering God's request to Abraham, verse 5 should stand out to us for several reasons as well. Abraham tells his servants that he and Isaac will worship, and they both will come right back. We want to read this statement as a confession of Abraham's faith. Although he may not know how God will keep the covenant promise, Abraham knows that God will bless him with generations of descendants through Isaac.
- Several connecting ideas should be noticed throughout the passage. Verse 6 tells us the wood is placed on Isaac's back for him to carry up the mountain. In verse 7, Isaac asks his father about the sheep for the burnt offering and in verse 8, Abraham replies, "God will provide a sheep..." After the Angel of the LORD halts Abraham, we see in verse 13 that a ram was caught in a thicket and then sacrificed as an offering "in place of his son." Abraham then named that place, "Yahweh-Yireh" which means, "The LORD(Yahweh) will provide." We can see in this text that God provides both the sacrifice and the substitute. The implications of this carry through into the New Covenant that we have through Jesus Christ's blood.

GENESIS 22 – THE LAMB

DISCUSS:

1. “God tested Abraham’s faith.” There are many passages in Scripture that show God testing those who claim to follow Him. However, there are also passages that tell us that God never tempts anyone (James 1:12-15). What is the difference between being tested and being tempted?
 - a. What is God’s goal when He tests a person? Another way to ask is this: What is the purpose of going through a testing of your faith?
 - b. What are some examples of testing that we see in Scripture?
 - c. Also, what are some examples of temptations?
2. Read Hebrews 11:17-19. What gaps does this passage fill in for us regarding Abraham’s mindset during the testing of his faith?
 - a. Related to this, read James 2:21-24. What is the relationship between true faith and works?
 - b. How do these passages speak to your own walk with Christ? Do you proclaim to have faith? Does your life, the way you live, reflect your faith? Or do your actions speak differently than your words? (Take time to wrestle with these questions.)
3. After His temptation in the wilderness, Jesus entered the place of Bethany, near the Jordan river where John was baptizing with water. As John saw Jesus coming toward

GENESIS 22 – THE LAMB

him, he cried out, “Look! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!” (John 1:29) Did you notice that Abraham prophesied that God would provide a Lamb, but it was a ram that appeared in the thicket? What could this imply about the place that was known as, “Yahweh will provide?”

- a. How does this account of Abraham and Isaac act as a dress rehearsal for what would occur near this same mountain when Jesus of Nazareth was crucified? (2 Chronicles 3:1; John 19:20; Hebrews 13:12)
 - i. Make a list of the similarities:
4. Various explanations exist for God referring to Isaac as Abraham’s “only son.” This is seen in verses 2, 12, & 16. How do the following passages relate to this theme that God made sure to emphasize in Genesis 22?
 - a. John 1:14
 - b. John 1:18 (see footnotes in certain translations)
 - c. John 3:16
 - d. John 3:18
 - e. 1 John 4:9-10

GENESIS 22 – THE LAMB

5. In the prophecy given by the angel of the LORD, verse 17 emphasizes Abraham's descendants having strength over their enemies. How does this relate to the long-awaited prophecy from Genesis 3:15, that the male offspring of the woman would strike the serpents head?
 - a. As New Testament believers, who are our enemies and how do we exercise our strength over them?

REFLECT:

When Moses recorded the book of Genesis, Mount Moriah was still known by the proverb, “on the mountain of the LORD it will be provided.” This provision, which God hinted at with Abraham and Isaac, came to its ultimate fulfillment as Jesus the Christ carried His cross up to Golgotha where He was crucified and lifted up as the substitute and sacrificial lamb of God. Offered in our place, in the same way the ram was offered in Isaac's place, Jesus took the punishment for our sin upon Himself and gifted us with the eternal life that He earned through perfect obedience to God's law. If you have received this gift, then take comfort in knowing that all of your sins have been dealt with and your debt has been paid. Jesus prophesied to His disciples in John 12:32 when He said, “And when I am lifted up from the earth, I will draw everyone to myself.” As the Gospel continues to go forth throughout the world, God is commanding everyone, everywhere, to repent of their sins and turn to Him. For He has set a day for judging the world with justice by the man He has appointed and He proved to everyone who this is by raising Him from the dead.

Brothers and sisters, do not be surprised at the trials that come upon you to test your faith. As you endure, standing strong and fixing your eyes on Jesus, the genuineness of your faith will shine through for all to see. Store these words of the Apostle Paul in your heart, “...If God is for us, who can ever be against us? Since he did not spare even his own Son but gave him up for us all, won't he also give us everything else? Who dares accuse us whom God has chosen for his own? No one – for God himself has given us right standing with himself.

GENESIS 22 – THE LAMB

Who then will condemn us? No one – for Christ Jesus died for us and was raised to life for us, and he is sitting in the place of honor at God’s right hand, pleading for us. Can anything separate us from Christ’s love? Does it mean he no longer loves us if we have trouble or calamity, or are persecuted, or hungry, or destitute, or in danger, or threatened with death? (As the Scriptures say, ‘For your sake we are killed every day; we are being slaughtered like sheep.’) No, despite all these things, overwhelming victory is ours through Christ, who loved us. And I am convinced that nothing can ever separate us from God’s love. Neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither our fears for today nor our worries about tomorrow – not even the powers of hell can separate us from God’s love. No power in the sky above or in the earth below – indeed, nothing in all creation will ever be able to separate us from the love of God that is revealed in Christ Jesus our Lord.” (Romans 8:31-39)

APPLY:

- Who needs you to share this story with them this week? How can you communicate the supernatural wonder of this promise that God made and kept over the span of over 1,000 years?

S.O.A.P.

Monday – Isaiah 52:13-53:12

Tuesday – John 3:1-21

Wednesday – 1 Peter 1:1-25

Thursday – 1 Corinthians 15:1-9

Friday – Revelation 5:1-14

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WEEK 12

GENESIS 15 – HOLD ON

1 Some time later, the LORD spoke to Abram in a vision and said to him, “Do not be afraid, Abram, for I will protect you, and your reward will be great.” 2 But Abram replied, “O Sovereign LORD, what good are all your blessings when I don’t even have a son? Since you’ve given me no children, Eliezer of Damascus, a servant in my household, will inherit all my wealth. 3 You have given me no descendants of my own, so one of my servants will be my heir.” 4 Then the LORD said to him, “No, your servant will not be your heir, for you will have a son of your own who will be your heir.” 5 Then the LORD took Abram outside and said to him, “Look up into the sky and count the stars if you can. That’s how many descendants you will have!” 6 And Abram believed the LORD, and the LORD counted him as righteous because of his faith. 7 Then the LORD told him, “I am the LORD who brought you out of Ur of the Chaldeans to give you this land as your possession.” 8 But Abram replied, “O Sovereign LORD, how can I be sure that I will actually possess it?” 9 The LORD told him, “Bring me a three-year-old heifer, a three-year-old female goat, a three-year-old ram, a turtledove, and a young pigeon.” 10 So Abram presented all these to him and killed them. Then he cut each animal down the middle and laid the halves side by side; he did not, however, cut the birds in half. 11 Some vultures swooped down to eat the carcasses, but Abram chased them away. 12 As the sun was going down, Abram fell into a deep sleep, and a terrifying darkness came down over him. 13 Then the LORD said to Abram, “You can be sure that your descendants will be strangers in a foreign land, where they will be oppressed as slaves for 400 years. 14 But I will punish the nation that enslaves them, and in the end they will

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GENESIS 15 – HOLD ON

come away with great wealth. 15 (As for you, you will die in peace and be buried at a ripe old age.) 16 After four generations your descendants will return here to this land, for the sins of the Amorites do not yet warrant their destruction.” 17 After the sun went down and darkness fell, Abram saw a smoking firepot and a flaming torch pass between the halves of the carcasses. 18 So the LORD made a covenant with Abram that day and said, “I have given this land to your descendants, all the way from the border of Egypt to the great Euphrates River— 19 the land now occupied by the Kenites, Kenizzites, Kadmonites, 20Hittites, Perizzites, Rephaites, 21 Amorites, Canaanites, Girgashites, and Jebusites.”

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SERMON TAKEAWAY FOR THE WEEK:

WEEK 12

GENESIS 15 – HOLD ON

EXAMINE:

- While we don't know how long it had been since the war described in chapter 14, we see that when God speaks to Abram, His comforting command is for Abram to not be afraid. This encounter and what follows, is one of the most significant moments in the book of Genesis.
- In Genesis 12, we first read about the covenant promise that God made to Abram when he called him to leave his native country. We find out in 15:1-5 that Abram was struggling. He doesn't understand how the promises he's been given will be fulfilled. We also observe that this is the first dialogue between God and Abram. Abram's conversation with God should encourage us as we go to Him in prayer.
- Abram was declared righteous by God through his faith. (Genesis 15:6) This is explained further in Romans 4:3 and Galatians 3:6. In the same way that we are saved by grace through faith in Jesus, the Old Testament saints were justified by their faith in God as well.
- Verses 9-20 describe the practice of "cutting a covenant." This ritual was not uncommon in the time of Abram. Many sources say that both parties of the covenant would pass between the animal carcasses as a sign and pledge to keep their part of the agreement or else suffer consequences. One of the main takeaways here is that God guided Abram to do this in order to give him assurance of the promises made to him.

GENESIS 15 – HOLD ON

DISCUSS:

1. Often in scripture we see that when God or an angel encounters a person, their first words are, “Do not be afraid.” Why is this? Is this significant considering Abram’s courage as he charged into battle to rescue Lot in the previous chapter?

2. See Matthew 6:8. What do you see regarding God’s love, care, and provision?

3. What are your thoughts about Abram asking God questions? Have you ever heard or been told, “You’re not supposed to ask questions, you’re just supposed to have faith?” What impact does this have on a person and how does it compare with the interaction between Abram and God?

4. Genesis 15:1 & 15:7 begin with the LORD declaring who He is. What does He say and what is the significance of this?
 - a. What aspect of God’s character do you need to be reminded of? What is a verse or passage you can memorize to help you to be reminded?

5. What do you notice about the covenant ritual that is emphasized in verse 18? What was Abram’s role in this ceremony? What are the implications of this regarding the promises?

GENESIS 15 – HOLD ON

REFLECT:

In Hebrews 6:18 we read that it is impossible for God to lie. Through His Word, God has continued to remind all of creation that He is faithful. When the LORD took Abram outside and asked him to look at the stars and even consider counting them, He made a declaration, “That’s how many descendants you will have.” (Genesis 15:5) Through the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, the Apostle Paul shared the truth that if we are in Christ then *we* are Abraham’s descendants, according to God’s promise (Galatians 3:29). As the Apostle John records his vision in Revelation 7:9-14, he is shown a great multitude of people who could not be numbered, from every tribe, nation, people, and language. They are all worshiping God and the Lamb. God has and is continuing to fulfill His promise to Abram. As you walk through the ups and downs of life, remember that your heavenly Father is faithful to finish what He started. He has promised and He will conquer.

APPLY:

- Make a list of difficulties that you’re currently facing. These could be certain situations, relationships, doubts that you’re working through, or anything that the Holy Spirit brings to mind. After your list is complete, pray over each item. Be specific! As you are praying, ask God to search your heart and reveal anything in you that isn’t surrendered to Him. There is no timeframe for this. Take as long as you need.

S.O.A.P.

Monday – Romans 3:20-31

Tuesday – Romans 4:1-10

Wednesday – Romans 4:11-17

Thursday – Romans 4:18-25

Friday – Galatians 3:1-29

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WEEK 13

GENESIS 16–17 – WAITING

CHAPTER 16

1 Now Sarai, Abram's wife, had not been able to bear children for him. But she had an Egyptian servant named Hagar. 2 So Sarai said to Abram, "The LORD has prevented me from having children. Go and sleep with my servant. Perhaps I can have children through her." And Abram agreed with Sarai's proposal. 3 So Sarai, Abram's wife, took Hagar the Egyptian servant and gave her to Abram as a wife. (This happened ten years after Abram had settled in the land of Canaan.) 4 So Abram had sexual relations with Hagar, and she became pregnant. But when Hagar knew she was pregnant, she began to treat her mistress, Sarai, with contempt. 5 Then Sarai said to Abram, "This is all your fault! I put my servant into your arms, but now that she's pregnant she treats me with contempt. The LORD will show who's wrong—you or me!"

6 Abram replied, "Look, she is your servant, so deal with her as you see fit." Then Sarai treated Hagar so harshly that she finally ran away. 7 The angel of the LORD found Hagar beside a spring of water in the wilderness, along the road to Shur. 8 The angel said to her, "Hagar, Sarai's servant, where have you come from, and where are you going?" "I'm running away from my mistress, Sarai," she replied. 9 The angel of the LORD said to her, "Return to your mistress, and submit to her authority." 10 Then he added, "I will give you more descendants than you can count." 11 And the angel also said, "You are now pregnant and will give birth to a son. You are to name him Ishmael (which means 'God hears'), for the LORD has heard your cry of distress. 12 This son of yours will be a

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wild man, as untamed as a wild donkey! He will raise his fist against everyone, and everyone will be against him. Yes, he will live in open hostility against all his relatives.” 13 Thereafter, Hagar used another name to refer to the LORD, who had spoken to her. She said, “You are the God who sees me.” She also said, “Have I truly seen the One who sees me?” 14 So that well was named Beer-lahai-roi (which means “well of the Living One who sees me”). It can still be found between Kadesh and Bered. 15 So Hagar gave Abram a son, and Abram named him Ishmael. 16 Abram was eighty-six years old when Ishmael was born.

CHAPTER 17

1 When Abram was ninety-nine years old, the LORD appeared to him and said, “I am El-Shaddai—‘God Almighty.’ Serve me faithfully and live a blameless life. 2 I will make a covenant with you, by which I will guarantee to give you countless descendants.” 3 At this, Abram fell face down on the ground. Then God said to him, 4 “This is my covenant with you: I will make you the father of a multitude of nations! 5 What’s more, I am changing your name. It will no longer be Abram. Instead, you will be called Abraham, for you will be the father of many nations. 6 I will make you extremely fruitful. Your descendants will become many nations, and kings will be among them! 7 “I will confirm my covenant with you and your descendants after you, from generation to generation. This is the everlasting covenant: I will always be your God and the God of your descendants after you. 8 And I will give the entire land of Canaan, where you now live as a foreigner, to you and your descendants. It will be their possession forever, and I will be their God.” 9 Then God said to Abraham, “Your responsibility is to obey the terms of the covenant. You and all your

descendants have this continual responsibility. 10 This is the covenant that you and your descendants must keep: Each male among you must be circumcised. 11 You must cut off the flesh of your foreskin as a sign of the covenant between me and you. 12 From generation to generation, every male child must be circumcised on the eighth day after his birth. This applies not only to members of your family but also to the servants born in your household and the foreign-born servants whom you have purchased. 13 All must be circumcised. Your bodies will bear the mark of my everlasting covenant. 14 Any male who fails to be circumcised will be cut off from the covenant family for breaking the covenant.” 15 Then God said to Abraham, “Regarding Sarai, your wife—her name will no longer be Sarai. From now on her name will be Sarah. 16 And I will bless her and give you a son from her! Yes, I will bless her richly, and she will become the mother of many nations. Kings of nations will be among her descendants.” 17 Then Abraham bowed down to the ground, but he laughed to himself in disbelief. “How could I become a father at the age of 100?” he thought. “And how can Sarah have a baby when she is ninety years old?” 18 So Abraham said to God, “May Ishmael live under your special blessing!” 19 But God replied, “No—Sarah, your wife, will give birth to a son for you. You will name him Isaac, and I will confirm my covenant with him and his descendants as an everlasting covenant. 20 As for Ishmael, I will bless him also, just as you have asked. I will make him extremely fruitful and multiply his descendants. He will become the father of twelve princes, and I will make him a great nation. 21 But my covenant will be confirmed with Isaac, who will be born to you and Sarah about this time next year.” 22 When God had finished speaking, he left

GENESIS 16-17 - WAITING

Abraham. 23 On that very day Abraham took his son, Ishmael, and every male in his household, including those born there and those he had bought. Then he circumcised them, cutting off their foreskins, just as God had told him. 24 Abraham was ninety-nine years old when he was circumcised, 25 and Ishmael, his son, was thirteen. 26 Both Abraham and his son, Ishmael, were circumcised on that same day, 27 along with all the other men and boys of the household, whether they were born there or bought as servants. All were circumcised with him.

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SERMON TAKEAWAY FOR THE WEEK:

WEEK 13

GENESIS 16-17 – WAITING

EXAMINE:

- While we've been aware of God's promise to Abram since chapter 12, we don't have any specific words written to indicate that God told Abram who the mother of his child would be. God very well could have been testing Abram's faithfulness, seeing if Abram would wait and let things happen in God's time.
- As we read verses 1-3 of Genesis 16, we find an instance where a wife uses her proximity to influence her husband; we can even trace this back to Adam and Eve. The relationship between husband and wife has been characterized by love and mutual submission since the beginning of creation, it is no different with Abram and Sarai. Don't let the mistakes that were made in these examples take away from the dynamics of the relationship. Read Ephesians 5:22-33; Colossians 3:18-4:1; 1 Peter 3:1-7 for additional commentary.
- Genesis 16:7 is the first appearance in Scripture of a being who is called, "The Angel of the LORD." Other appearances can be found in Genesis 22; Exodus 3; Numbers 22. It's significant that Hagar asks, "Have I truly seen the One who sees me?" (verse 13) Being on the road to Shur, Hagar was evidently on her way back to Egypt. Even though she grew up in a culture that worshiped false gods, we see in chapter 16 that she had become a worshiper of the true God, the God of Abram.
- Chapter 17 contains the first mention of circumcision in the Bible. It is given to Abraham and his household as a sign of the covenant between God and Abraham. To emphasize the necessity of this sign, God states in verse 14 that "Any male who fails to be circumcised will be cut off from the covenant family for breaking the covenant."
- In Colossians 2:11, we see that when we came to Christ, we were circumcised in a spiritual sense; Christ cut away our sinful nature. Because of this we are no longer identified with Adam, we are now identified with Christ.
- Genesis 17:15-27 ends any thoughts of Ishmael being the fulfillment of God's promise to bless Abraham with a child. With an emphatic, "no," God tells Abraham about the son Sarah will conceive, who will be named Isaac. He will be the one with which God confirms His covenant.

GENESIS 16-17 – WAITING

DISCUSS:

1. In Genesis 12:10-20, we read about Abram's scheme to protect himself; a plan that came from his mind, not God's. In similar fashion, we see in chapter 16 that Sarai now takes matters into her own hands in order to fulfill God's promise to bless Abram with a son. What are ways that we, as disciples of Jesus, do this today? How do we use human effort to attempt to do something that only God can do?

2. We read in the beginning of chapter 16 that Hagar was Sarai's Egyptian servant. Why is this significant? When might Hagar have joined Abram and Sarai?
 - a. Perhaps Abram's apparent disobedience in leaving Canaan to go to Egypt, combined with his doubts about God's protection over his life, both led to him acquiring Hagar as a servant. What lessons can we learn from Abram's behavior? What do we see about the consequences of disobedience?

3. What do you notice about the relationship between Hagar and Sarai once Hagar gets pregnant? What can we say about Abram's part in all of this? How does Hagar react to Sarai and what instruction does she receive from the Angel of the LORD?
 - a. How does Jesus call His disciples to handle arguments and conflicts with each other? Do you follow Jesus' ways? Or do you more often give in to your flesh?

GENESIS 16-17 – WAITING

4. Throughout the Old Testament, we see moments where God proclaims His name. These names usually communicate an aspect of His character. Considering what Abram is going through in this moment, how might God’s proclamation, “I am El-Shaddai - ‘God Almighty’” encourage him?
 - a. How does God’s ability to provide for you impact your walk with Him?

5. In this section of Scripture, we see several names highlighted. The name Ishmael means “God hears.” Abram means “exalted father” while Abraham means “father of many.” Sarai’s name is changed to Sarah, both meaning “princess” and we see the name Isaac means “he laughs.” Why is the meaning of a name significant?
 - a. Abraham’s name change comes before the promise has been fulfilled. In Christ, our identity has been changed even though we have not yet received our inheritance. Do you allow the promises God has made to you, in Christ, to energize and strengthen you? Are you currently living your life as if you have already inherited your home in the new heavens and new earth?

GENESIS 16-17 – WAITING

REFLECT:

In our culture we often hear the phrase, “the ends justify the means.” While our human minds can find ways to rationalize our decisions once things have worked out, we do not want to project this worldly mindset onto God’s Kingdom. Our God and Father has continued to show Himself as loving, gracious, and merciful, but that does not mean that our disobedience is of no consequence. He desires for us to trust Him and obey His commands, but He’s also given us the ability to choose for ourselves how we will live. This tension existed with Abram and Sarai and is a part of our everyday lives as well. Remember, “Since we are living by the Spirit, let us follow the Spirit’s leading in every part of our lives.” (Galatians 5:25) If you have received Jesus as your Lord, He has changed your identity. Like Abraham in this passage, we have an inheritance that awaits us in the future. Although we have not obtained it yet, we are called to live according to our new name, following the Spirit’s leading as we continue to die to our flesh.

APPLY:

- Who is one person you’ve had a conflict with and how can you take a step toward reconciliation? (Pray and use discernment)
- In the New Covenant, Jesus commands His disciples to be baptized. Have you been baptized? If not, what is holding you back and who can you talk with about it?

S.O.A.P.

Monday – Galatians 4:21-5:6

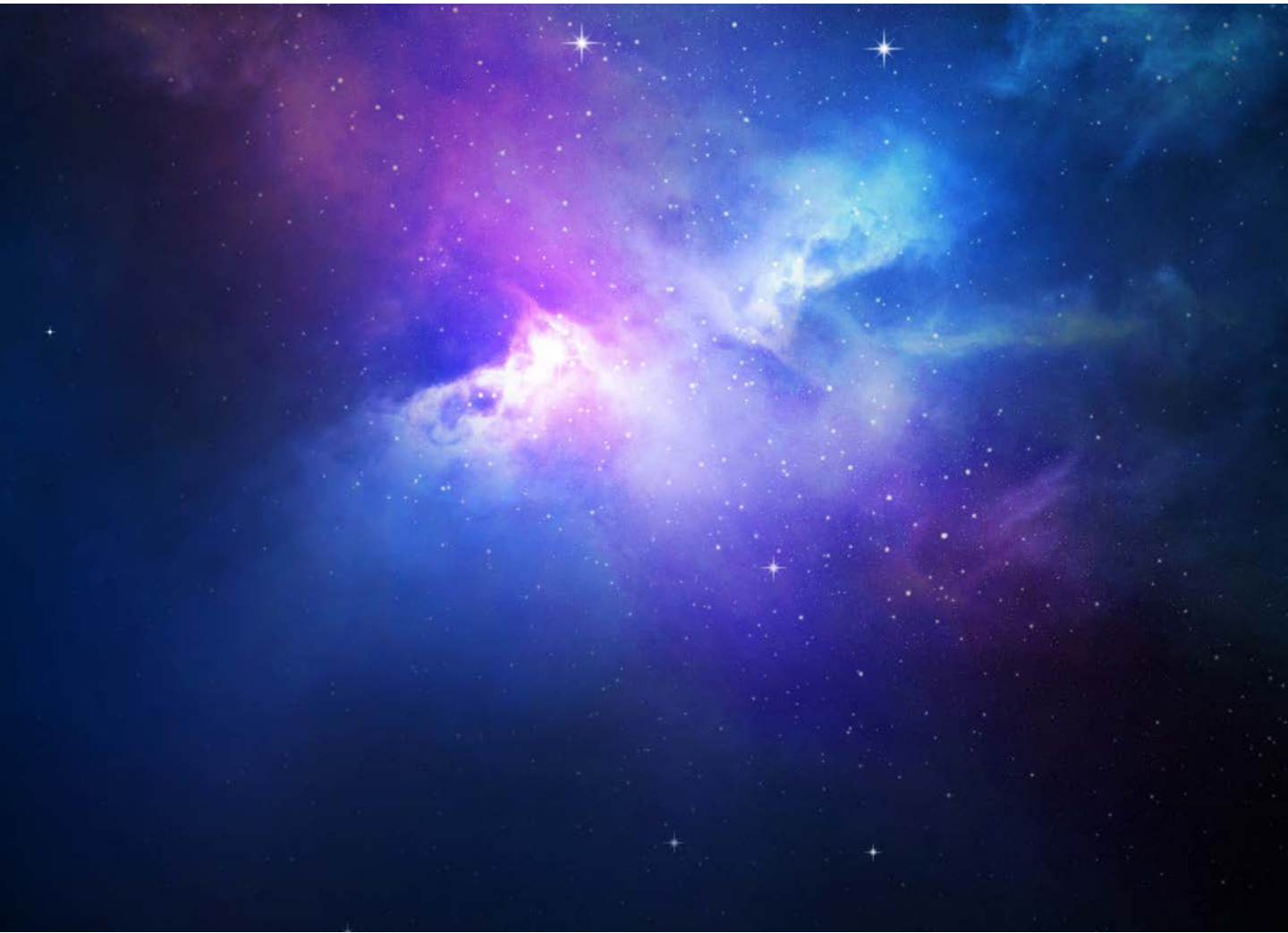
Tuesday – Colossians 2:6-23

Wednesday – Romans 2:1-16

Thursday – Romans 2:17-29

Friday – Philippians 3:1-11

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WEEK 14

GENESIS 18–19 – SIN CITIES

CHAPTER 18

1 The LORD appeared again to Abraham near the oak grove belonging to Mamre. One day Abraham was sitting at the entrance to his tent during the hottest part of the day. 2 He looked up and noticed three men standing nearby. When he saw them, he ran to meet them and welcomed them, bowing low to the ground. 3 “My lord,” he said, “if it pleases you, stop here for a while. 4 Rest in the shade of this tree while water is brought to wash your feet. 5 And since you’ve honored your servant with this visit, let me prepare some food to refresh you before you continue on your journey.” “All right,” they said. “Do as you have said.” 6 So Abraham ran back to the tent and said to Sarah, “Hurry! Get three large measures of your best flour, knead it into dough, and bake some bread.” 7 Then Abraham ran out to the herd and chose a tender calf and gave it to his servant, who quickly prepared it. 8 When the food was ready, Abraham took some yogurt and milk and the roasted meat, and he served it to the men. As they ate, Abraham waited on them in the shade of the trees. 9 “Where is Sarah, your wife?” the visitors asked. “She’s inside the tent,” Abraham replied. 10 Then one of them said, “I will return to you about this time next year, and your wife, Sarah, will have a son!” Sarah was listening to this conversation from the tent. 11 Abraham and Sarah were both very old by this time, and Sarah was long past the age of having children. 12 So she laughed silently to herself and said, “How could a worn-out woman like me enjoy such pleasure, especially when my master—my husband—is also so old?” 13 Then the LORD said to Abraham, “Why did Sarah laugh? Why did she say, ‘Can an old woman like me have a baby?’ 14 Is anything too hard for the LORD? I will return about this time next year, and Sarah will have a son.” 15 Sarah was afraid, so she denied it, saying,

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“I didn’t laugh.” But the LORD said, “No, you did laugh.”
16 Then the men got up from their meal and looked out toward Sodom. As they left, Abraham went with them to send them on their way. 17 “Should I hide my plan from Abraham?” the LORD asked. 18 “For Abraham will certainly become a great and mighty nation, and all the nations of the earth will be blessed through him. 19 I have singled him out so that he will direct his sons and their families to keep the way of the LORD by doing what is right and just. Then I will do for Abraham all that I have promised.” 20 So the LORD told Abraham, “I have heard a great outcry from Sodom and Gomorrah, because their sin is so flagrant. 21 I am going down to see if their actions are as wicked as I have heard. If not, I want to know.” 22 The other men turned and headed toward Sodom, but the LORD remained with Abraham. 23 Abraham approached him and said, “Will you sweep away both the righteous and the wicked? 24 Suppose you find fifty righteous people living there in the city—will you still sweep it away and not spare it for their sakes? 25 Surely you wouldn’t do such a thing, destroying the righteous along with the wicked. Why, you would be treating the righteous and the wicked exactly the same! Surely you wouldn’t do that! Should not the Judge of all the earth do what is right?” 26 And the LORD replied, “If I find fifty righteous people in Sodom, I will spare the entire city for their sake.” 27 Then Abraham spoke again. “Since I have begun, let me speak further to my Lord, even though I am but dust and ashes. 28 Suppose there are only forty-five righteous people rather than fifty? Will you destroy the whole city for lack of five?” And the LORD said, “I will not destroy it if I find forty-five righteous people there.” 29 Then Abraham pressed his request further. “Suppose there are only forty?” And the LORD replied, “I will not destroy it for the sake of the forty.” 30 “Please don’t be angry, my Lord,” Abraham pleaded. “Let me speak—suppose only thirty righteous people are found?” And the LORD replied, “I will not destroy it if I find thirty.” 31 Then Abraham said, “Since

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I have dared to speak to the Lord, let me continue—suppose there are only twenty?” And the LORD replied, “Then I will not destroy it for the sake of the twenty.”
 32 Finally, Abraham said, “Lord, please don’t be angry with me if I speak one more time. Suppose only ten are found there?” And the LORD replied, “Then I will not destroy it for the sake of the ten.” 33 When the LORD had finished his conversation with Abraham, he went on his way, and Abraham returned to his tent.

CHAPTER 19

1 That evening the two angels came to the entrance of the city of Sodom. Lot was sitting there, and when he saw them, he stood up to meet them. Then he welcomed them and bowed with his face to the ground. 2 “My lords,” he said, “come to my home to wash your feet, and be my guests for the night. You may then get up early in the morning and be on your way again.” “Oh no,” they replied. “We’ll just spend the night out here in the city square.” 3 But Lot insisted, so at last they went home with him. Lot prepared a feast for them, complete with fresh bread made without yeast, and they ate. 4 But before they retired for the night, all the men of Sodom, young and old, came from all over the city and surrounded the house. 5 They shouted to Lot, “Where are the men who came to spend the night with you? Bring them out to us so we can have sex with them!” 6 So Lot stepped outside to talk to them, shutting the door behind him. 7 “Please, my brothers,” he begged, “don’t do such a wicked thing. 8 Look, I have two virgin daughters. Let me bring them out to you, and you can do with them as you wish. But please, leave these men alone, for they are my guests and are under my protection.” 9 “Stand back!” they shouted. “This fellow came to town as an outsider, and now he’s acting like our judge! We’ll treat you far worse than those other men!” And they lunged toward Lot to break down the door. 10 But the two angels reached out, pulled Lot into the house, and bolted the door. 11 Then they blinded all the men, young and old, who were at the

door of the house, so they gave up trying to get inside. 12 Meanwhile, the angels questioned Lot. “Do you have any other relatives here in the city?” they asked. “Get them out of this place—your sons-in-law, sons, daughters, or anyone else. 13 For we are about to destroy this city completely. The outcry against this place is so great it has reached the LORD, and he has sent us to destroy it.” 14 So Lot rushed out to tell his daughters’ fiancés, “Quick, get out of the city! The LORD is about to destroy it.” But the young men thought he was only joking. 15 At dawn the next morning the angels became insistent. “Hurry,” they said to Lot. “Take your wife and your two daughters who are here. Get out right now, or you will be swept away in the destruction of the city!” 16 When Lot still hesitated, the angels seized his hand and the hands of his wife and two daughters and rushed them to safety outside the city, for the LORD was merciful. 17 When they were safely out of the city, one of the angels ordered, “Run for your lives! And don’t look back or stop anywhere in the valley! Escape to the mountains, or you will be swept away!” 18 “Oh no, my lord!” Lot begged. 19 “You have been so gracious to me and saved my life, and you have shown such great kindness. But I cannot go to the mountains. Disaster would catch up to me there, and I would soon die. 20 See, there is a small village nearby. Please let me go there instead; don’t you see how small it is? Then my life will be saved.” 21 “All right,” the angel said, “I will grant your request. I will not destroy the little village. 22 But hurry! Escape to it, for I can do nothing until you arrive there.” (This explains why that village was known as Zoar, which means “little place.”) 23 Lot reached the village just as the sun was rising over the horizon. 24 Then the LORD rained down fire and burning sulfur from the sky on Sodom and Gomorrah. 25 He utterly destroyed them, along with the other cities and villages of the plain, wiping out all the people and every bit of vegetation. 26 But Lot’s wife looked back as she was following behind him, and she turned into a pillar of salt. 27 Abraham got up early that

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morning and hurried out to the place where he had stood in the LORD's presence. 28 He looked out across the plain toward Sodom and Gomorrah and watched as columns of smoke rose from the cities like smoke from a furnace. 29 But God had listened to Abraham's request and kept Lot safe, removing him from the disaster that engulfed the cities on the plain. 30 Afterward Lot left Zoar because he was afraid of the people there, and he went to live in a cave in the mountains with his two daughters. 31 One day the older daughter said to her sister, "There are no men left anywhere in this entire area, so we can't get married like everyone else. And our father will soon be too old to have children. 32 Come, let's get him drunk with wine, and then we will have sex with him. That way we will preserve our family line through our father." 33 So that night they got him drunk with wine, and the older daughter went in and had intercourse with her father. He was unaware of her lying down or getting up again. 34 The next morning the older daughter said to her younger sister, "I had sex with our father last night. Let's get him drunk with wine again tonight, and you go in and have sex with him. That way we will preserve our family line through our father." 35 So that night they got him drunk with wine again, and the younger daughter went in and had intercourse with him. As before, he was unaware of her lying down or getting up again. 36 As a result, both of Lot's daughters became pregnant by their own father. 37 When the older daughter gave birth to a son, she named him Moab. He became the ancestor of the nation now known as the Moabites. 38 When the younger daughter gave birth to a son, she named him Ben-ammi. He became the ancestor of the nation now known as the Ammonites.

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SERMON TAKEAWAY FOR THE WEEK:

WEEK 14

GENESIS 18–19 – SIN CITIES

EXAMINE:

- In the opening of chapter 18, we find Abraham sitting when he notices three men outside his tent. The first thing he did was run, which would have been unbecoming of a man of Abraham's stature. Not only this, but he also bowed down, recognizing that this was no ordinary visitor. This sign of honor and respect, along with the description in this chapter, tells us that this was a manifestation of God.
- When the visitors are eating, as written in verse 8, Abraham is not eating with them but waiting on them hand in foot, tending to their every need as if he were a servant or hired hand. Again, this would not be a common practice for someone of stature and reputation. Abraham even refers to himself as a servant.
- In chapter 18, we witness what could seem like a peculiar event; Abraham's interceding for Sodom. God tells Abraham his plan and then tells him He must go and see their wickedness for Himself (18:17-21). At first glance it may seem that the LORD was surprised by the sin in Sodom. But this exchange emphasizes to the Israelites in Moses' day and to us, that the sexual immorality and wickedness in Sodom was so perverse that it was almost "unbelievable."
- Chapter 19 gives us a very clear picture of God's view of evil and His judgment upon the wicked. Like the flood, the destruction of Sodom (and Gomorrah) reveals the depravity of the human heart and the righteousness of God. Since the beginning, God has warned humans to turn from sin and walk in obedience. The disastrous effects of sin are seen in the behavior of the people in Sodom and in the behavior of Lot's own daughters, who seemingly brought the influence of Sodom with them.
- Lot's hospitality toward the two men is similar to Abraham's as the three approached his tent. Even though he allowed himself and his family to be surrounded by sin and even overcome by it, Lot's actions did show a level of faith and love toward the LORD. 2 Peter 2:7 reveals to us that Lot was indeed a righteous man. Despite his poor decision making, he is said to have been sick of the shameful immorality of the wicked people around him, tormented by their wickedness.

GENESIS 18-19 – SIN CITIES

DISCUSS:

1. Genesis 18:10 records God's promise to Abraham that "...this time next year...Sarah, will have a son!" What are your thoughts about Sarah's silent laughter and the back-and-forth between her and God?
 - a. Sometimes we take a posture like Sarah's and laugh off a promise that God has made. Do you know of a time when this was true for you? How did God show His faithfulness to you?

2. Starting in 18:17, we read an exchange between Abraham and God. Abraham pleads for God to withhold judgment on account of the righteous people in the city of Sodom, where his nephew Lot lived. Who have you also prayed for in this way, that God would rescue them from the evils of this world?
 - a. What are some practical ways to be persistent in prayer?

3. Review the following Scriptures: 1 Peter 1:17; Romans 2:6-11; Colossians 3:25; Revelation 19:1-2. What does the Word tell you about the fairness of God's judgment?
 - a. What are your thoughts and feelings about God's judgment of Sodom and Gomorrah?

 - b. How about God's judgment upon the wicked, in general?

TITLE GENESIS 18-19 – SIN CITIES

4. What are some scriptural examples in this passage or others, that show God’s patience and mercy toward the unrepentant?
5. In Luke 9:62, Jesus said, “Anyone who puts a hand to the plow and then looks back is not fit for the Kingdom of God.” What do we learn from the example of Lot’s wife?



GENESIS 18-19 – SIN CITIES

REFLECT:

There are many skeptics and unbelievers who see the accounts in these chapters as only showing God's anger and "meanness." In their eyes, God is destroying people for what seems (to them) like no reason at all. Those who take this point of view show that they have not truly studied and considered the details of this passage, along with the rest of Scripture. As Abraham is interceding for the city, we see that God was willing to save not only ten righteous people, but every one of the unrighteous along with them. The same is true today. God is showing great patience, allowing the righteous and the unrighteous to grow up together (Matthew 13:24-30). As we look carefully at this passage, we see many examples of God's mercy toward sinful and wicked people. Romans 1:18-32 tells us that God will give the unrepentant wicked (in this case we could say Sodom & Gomorrah) over to their own evil desires; the end result being complete separation from Himself. Romans 3:25 says, "For God presented Jesus as the sacrifice for sin. People are made right with God when they believe that Jesus sacrificed his life, shedding his blood. This sacrifice shows that God was being fair when he held back and did not punish those who sinned in times past..." In every chapter of Genesis, we see God's holiness put on display; both in His love and His wrath, His righteousness and His justice. Sin must be punished; the debt must be paid. A person either chooses to (attempt to) pay that debt themselves, or submit to the Lamb of God, whose sacrifice satisfied the debt and paid for the freedom of all who repent and cry out for salvation.

APPLY:

- Where in your life are you "living on the edge?" Look at your surroundings and consider whether you're living in a way that is acceptable to God. How can you take obedient steps toward God, leaving behind every weight and sin that holds you down?

S.O.A.P.

Monday – Luke 15:11-32

Tuesday – Romans 9:6-9

Wednesday – 1 Thessalonians 1:2-10

Thursday – Ephesians 2:1-3

Friday – 1 John 1:5-10

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WEEK 15

GENESIS 20–21 – SIN CYCLES

CHAPTER 20

1 Abraham moved south to the Negev and lived for a while between Kadesh and Shur, and then he moved on to Gerar. While living there as a foreigner, 2 Abraham introduced his wife, Sarah, by saying, “She is my sister.” So King Abimelech of Gerar sent for Sarah and had her brought to him at his palace. 3 But that night God came to Abimelech in a dream and told him, “You are a dead man, for that woman you have taken is already married!” 4 But Abimelech had not slept with her yet, so he said, “Lord, will you destroy an innocent nation? 5 Didn’t Abraham tell me, ‘She is my sister’? And she herself said, ‘Yes, he is my brother.’ I acted in complete innocence! My hands are clean.” 6 In the dream God responded, “Yes, I know you are innocent. That’s why I kept you from sinning against me, and why I did not let you touch her. 7 Now return the woman to her husband, and he will pray for you, for he is a prophet. Then you will live. But if you don’t return her to him, you can be sure that you and all your people will die.” 8 Abimelech got up early the next morning and quickly called all his servants together. When he told them what had happened, his men were terrified. 9 Then Abimelech called for Abraham. “What have you done to us?” he demanded. “What crime have I committed that deserves treatment like this, making me and my kingdom guilty of this great sin? No one should ever do what you have done! 10 Whatever possessed you to do such a thing?” 11 Abraham replied, “I thought, ‘This is a godless place. They will want my wife and will kill me to get her.’ 12 And she really is my sister, for we both have the same father, but different mothers. And I married her. 13 When God called me to leave my father’s home and to travel from place to place, I told

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her, ‘Do me a favor. Wherever we go, tell the people that I am your brother.’”

14 Then Abimelech took some of his sheep and goats, cattle, and male and female servants, and he presented them to Abraham. He also returned his wife, Sarah, to him. 15 Then Abimelech said, “Look over my land and choose any place where you would like to live.” 16 And he said to Sarah, “Look, I am giving your ‘brother’ 1,000 pieces of silver in the presence of all these witnesses. This is to compensate you for any wrong I may have done to you. This will settle any claim against me, and your reputation is cleared.” 17 Then Abraham prayed to God, and God healed Abimelech, his wife, and his female servants, so they could have children. 18 For the LORD had caused all the women to be infertile because of what happened with Abraham’s wife, Sarah.

CHAPTER 21

1 The LORD kept his word and did for Sarah exactly what he had promised. 2 She became pregnant, and she gave birth to a son for Abraham in his old age. This happened at just the time God had said it would. 3 And Abraham named their son Isaac. 4 Eight days after Isaac was born, Abraham circumcised him as God had commanded. 5 Abraham was 100 years old when Isaac was born. 6 And Sarah declared, “God has brought me laughter. All who hear about this will laugh with me. 7 Who would have said to Abraham that Sarah would nurse a baby? Yet I have given Abraham a son in his old age!” 8 When Isaac grew up and was about to be weaned, Abraham prepared a huge feast to celebrate the occasion. 9 But Sarah saw Ishmael—the son of Abraham and her Egyptian servant Hagar—making fun of her son, Isaac. 10 So she turned to Abraham and demanded, “Get rid of that slave woman and her son. He is not going to share the inheritance with my son, Isaac. I won’t have it!” 11 This upset Abraham very much because Ishmael was his son. 12 But God

told Abraham, “Do not be upset over the boy and your servant. Do whatever Sarah tells you, for Isaac is the son through whom your descendants will be counted. 13 But I will also make a nation of the descendants of Hagar’s son because he is your son, too.” 14 So Abraham got up early the next morning, prepared food and a container of water, and strapped them on Hagar’s shoulders. Then he sent her away with their son, and she wandered aimlessly in the wilderness of Beersheba. 15 When the water was gone, she put the boy in the shade of a bush. 16 Then she went and sat down by herself about a hundred yards away. “I don’t want to watch the boy die,” she said, as she burst into tears. 17 But God heard the boy crying, and the angel of God called to Hagar from heaven, “Hagar, what’s wrong? Do not be afraid! God has heard the boy crying as he lies there. 18 Go to him and comfort him, for I will make a great nation from his descendants.” 19 Then God opened Hagar’s eyes, and she saw a well full of water. She quickly filled her water container and gave the boy a drink. 20 And God was with the boy as he grew up in the wilderness. He became a skillful archer, 21 and he settled in the wilderness of Paran. His mother arranged for him to marry a woman from the land of Egypt. 22 About this time, Abimelech came with Phicol, his army commander, to visit Abraham. “God is obviously with you, helping you in everything you do,” Abimelech said. 23 “Swear to me in God’s name that you will never deceive me, my children, or any of my descendants. I have been loyal to you, so now swear that you will be loyal to me and to this country where you are living as a foreigner.” 24 Abraham replied, “Yes, I swear to it!” 25 Then Abraham complained to Abimelech about a well that Abimelech’s servants had taken by force from Abraham’s servants. 26 “This is the first I’ve heard of it,” Abimelech answered. “I have no idea who is responsible. You have never complained about this before.” 27 Abraham then gave some of his

GENESIS 20-21 – SIN CYCLES

sheep, goats, and cattle to Abimelech, and they made a treaty. 28 But Abraham also took seven additional female lambs and set them off by themselves. 29 Abimelech asked, “Why have you set these seven apart from the others?” 30 Abraham replied, “Please accept these seven lambs to show your agreement that I dug this well.” 31 Then he named the place Beersheba (which means “well of the oath”), because that was where they had sworn the oath. 32 After making their covenant at Beersheba, Abimelech left with Phicol, the commander of his army, and they returned home to the land of the Philistines. 33 Then Abraham planted a tamarisk tree at Beersheba, and there he worshiped the LORD, the Eternal God. 34 And Abraham lived as a foreigner in Philistine country for a long time.

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SERMON TAKEAWAY FOR THE WEEK:

WEEK 15

GENESIS 20–21 – SIN CYCLES

EXAMINE:

- In this passage, we see Abraham repeating the same deception as he did in Egypt, saying that his wife was only his sister. (Genesis 12:10-20) Even though Abraham had been declared righteous by God because of his faith, he still very much struggled with doubts and fear.
- In verse 3, we see God speaking to Abimelech through a dream. This was very common throughout the Old Testament and even recorded in several chapters of the New Testament. God can use all sorts of means to communicate with people and give them guidance, even when the person is not His faithful follower.
- “...this great sin...” described in verse 9 is adultery. Whether spiritual or physical, adultery is a sin that God does not regard lightly. Again, we saw this in Genesis 12:10-20 as well. It’s no coincidence that the seventh commandment, as recorded in Exodus 20:14, specifically states, “You must not commit adultery.”
- Alas, we see God’s promise to Abraham come true with the birth of Isaac. However, we still see the devastating consequences of Abraham’s sin as he is instructed to honor Sarah’s request and send Ishmael away. It should encourage us to see God’s faithfulness toward Hagar and Ishmael as well. Even though Isaac was the chosen vessel to bring about the blessing to the world, Ishmael still received provision and instruction.
- We learned in Genesis 16, that Hagar was also a faithful follower of Yahweh, the Most High God. We see in 21:12-21, that God was still very much involved in providing for Hagar and Ishmael. Opening her eyes to a nearby well, God made provision for Hagar to get water to her son, preventing him from dying in the wilderness. In addition to satisfying his immediate physical needs, God also makes Hagar aware of a future for Ishmael, that his descendants would be a great nation.

GENESIS 20-21 – SIN CYCLES

DISCUSS:

1. Read Romans 7:15-20. Are you aware of how your flesh “fights” against you and tries to draw you away from obeying God?
 - a. Do you find it difficult to follow Jesus and His commands? What are some practical steps you can take to grow spiritually and walk in freedom?

2. What are your thoughts about Abraham deciding to repeat his sinful behavior regarding his wife, Sarah?
 - a. Do not think it’s a coincidence that God interceded so strongly in chapter 20, seeing that Isaac was born soon after this encounter with King Abimelech. By protecting Sarah, and her reputation, what allegations does God protect her from regarding the birth of Isaac?

 - b. Why is Isaac’s birth and his lineage from Abraham and Sarah so significant? How does Genesis 21:12 also add to this significance?

3. Who do you fear more in your life - man or God? Why is it so common for believers in Jesus to be afraid of people and their opinions?
 - a. What are some practical ways to grow in reverent fear towards God?

GENESIS 20-21 – SIN CYCLES

4. The damaging effects of sexual sin are more significant and long lasting than our culture would like us to think. Sexual intercourse involves a spiritual connection that was meant for you and the one person of the opposite sex that you would spend your life with. Have you ever considered adultery to be a “great sin”? What is it about this sin that is so concerning? See Proverbs 6:32; Matthew 5:27-32; Revelation 2:20-23.
5. Are you aware of patterns of sin in your life? If this is a current battle that you are either fighting through or giving yourself to, who can you ask to be your accountability partner? If you are currently walking in victory, how can you come alongside a brother or sister in Christ to help them walk in victory as well?



GENESIS 20-21 – SIN CYCLES

REFLECT:

The life of a believer can be filled with inner struggles and turmoil. We know God's will for us through Scripture, but our human will within us, our fleshly sinful nature, fights for supremacy. In the case of Abimelech, God shows yet again that His purposes will come to pass. He made a promise to supernaturally bless Abraham and Sarah with a son and He is faithful to carry it out. Up to this point, Abraham's life has been a series of ups and downs. He has shown moments of faith and moments of doubt. But the true protagonist of this story, our Almighty God, has continued to shine through with perfection. Hebrews 13:8 says that "Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever." Our faithful God makes good on His promises no matter how badly we fail. While the consequences of our sins may stay around during our life on earth, as was the case with Abraham, Hagar and Ishmael, we know that God will comfort every heart and ultimately make all things right on the day when Jesus Christ returns. Until then, do not trust in your flesh, in your ability to keep rules; place no confidence in yourself or your performance! Hold fast to the promises of God and put all your faith in Jesus Christ. It is through Him alone that you will receive eternal life.

APPLY:

- Take some time this week to reflect on times you've walked your own path instead of the path that God has placed before you. Is there something to be learned from that experience that you should share with someone else? How will you continue to deny yourself, pick up your cross, and follow Christ?

S.O.A.P.

Monday – Galatians 4:21-5:6

Tuesday – Galatians 5:16-26

Wednesday – Galatians 6:7-10

Thursday – Romans 9:1-9

Friday – 2 Corinthians 6:1-7:1

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WEEK 16

GENESIS 24 – MORE WAITING

*Chapter 23 is in Week 17 of the study

1 Abraham was now a very old man, and the LORD had blessed him in every way. 2 One day Abraham said to his oldest servant, the man in charge of his household, “Take an oath by putting your hand under my thigh. 3 Swear by the LORD, the God of heaven and earth, that you will not allow my son to marry one of these local Canaanite women. 4 Go instead to my homeland, to my relatives, and find a wife there for my son Isaac.” 5 The servant asked, “But what if I can’t find a young woman who is willing to travel so far from home? Should I then take Isaac there to live among your relatives in the land you came from?” 6 “No!” Abraham responded. “Be careful never to take my son there. 7 For the LORD, the God of heaven, who took me from my father’s house and my native land, solemnly promised to give this land to my descendants. He will send his angel ahead of you, and he will see to it that you find a wife there for my son. 8 If she is unwilling to come back with you, then you are free from this oath of mine. But under no circumstances are you to take my son there.” 9 So the servant took an oath by putting his hand under the thigh of his master, Abraham. He swore to follow Abraham’s instructions. 10 Then he loaded ten of Abraham’s camels with all kinds of expensive gifts from his master, and he traveled to distant Aram-naharaim. There he went to the town where Abraham’s brother Nahor had settled. 11 He made the camels kneel beside a well just outside the town. It was evening, and the women were coming out to draw water. 12 “O LORD, God of my master, Abraham,” he prayed. “Please give me success today, and show unfailing love to my master, Abraham. 13 See, I am standing here beside this spring, and the young women of the town are coming out to draw

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water. 14 This is my request. I will ask one of them, ‘Please give me a drink from your jug.’ If she says, ‘Yes, have a drink, and I will water your camels, too!’—let her be the one you have selected as Isaac’s wife. This is how I will know that you have shown unfailing love to my master.” 15 Before he had finished praying, he saw a young woman named Rebekah coming out with her water jug on her shoulder. She was the daughter of Bethuel, who was the son of Abraham’s brother Nahor and his wife, Milcah. 16 Rebekah was very beautiful and old enough to be married, but she was still a virgin. She went down to the spring, filled her jug, and came up again. 17 Running over to her, the servant said, “Please give me a little drink of water from your jug.” 18 “Yes, my lord,” she answered, “have a drink.” And she quickly lowered her jug from her shoulder and gave him a drink. 19 When she had given him a drink, she said, “I’ll draw water for your camels, too, until they have had enough to drink.” 20 So she quickly emptied her jug into the watering trough and ran back to the well to draw water for all his camels. 21 The servant watched her in silence, wondering whether or not the LORD had given him success in his mission. 22 Then at last, when the camels had finished drinking, he took out a gold ring for her nose and two large gold bracelets^b for her wrists. 23 “Whose daughter are you?” he asked. “And please tell me, would your father have any room to put us up for the night?” 24 “I am the daughter of Bethuel,” she replied. “My grandparents are Nahor and Milcah. 25 Yes, we have plenty of straw and feed for the camels, and we have room for guests.” 26 The man bowed low and worshiped the LORD. 27 “Praise the LORD, the God of my master, Abraham,” he said. “The LORD has shown unfailing love and faithfulness to my master, for he has led me straight to my master’s relatives.” 28 The young woman ran home to tell her family everything that had happened. 29 Now Rebekah had a brother named Laban, who ran

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out to meet the man at the spring. 30 He had seen the nose-ring and the bracelets on his sister's wrists, and had heard Rebekah tell what the man had said. So he rushed out to the spring, where the man was still standing beside his camels. 31 Laban said to him, "Come and stay with us, you who are blessed by the LORD! Why are you standing here outside the town when I have a room all ready for you and a place prepared for the camels?" 32 So the man went home with Laban, and Laban unloaded the camels, gave him straw for their bedding, fed them, and provided water for the man and the camel drivers to wash their feet. 33 Then food was served. But Abraham's servant said, "I don't want to eat until I have told you why I have come." "All right," Laban said, "tell us." 34 "I am Abraham's servant," he explained. 35 "And the LORD has greatly blessed my master; he has become a wealthy man. The LORD has given him flocks of sheep and goats, herds of cattle, a fortune in silver and gold, and many male and female servants and camels and donkeys. 36 "When Sarah, my master's wife, was very old, she gave birth to my master's son, and my master has given him everything he owns. 37 And my master made me take an oath. He said, 'Do not allow my son to marry one of these local Canaanite women. 38 Go instead to my father's house, to my relatives, and find a wife there for my son.' 39 "But I said to my master, 'What if I can't find a young woman who is willing to go back with me?' 40 He responded, 'The LORD, in whose presence I have lived, will send his angel with you and will make your mission successful. Yes, you must find a wife for my son from among my relatives, from my father's family. 41 Then you will have fulfilled your obligation. But if you go to my relatives and they refuse to let her go with you, you will be free from my oath.' 42 "So today when I came to the spring, I prayed this prayer: 'O LORD, God of my master, Abraham, please give me success on this mission. 43 See, I am standing here

beside this spring. This is my request. When a young woman comes to draw water, I will say to her, “Please give me a little drink of water from your jug.” 44 If she says, “Yes, have a drink, and I will draw water for your camels, too,” let her be the one you have selected to be the wife of my master’s son.’ 45 “Before I had finished praying in my heart, I saw Rebekah coming out with her water jug on her shoulder. She went down to the spring and drew water. So I said to her, ‘Please give me a drink.’ 46 She quickly lowered her jug from her shoulder and said, ‘Yes, have a drink, and I will water your camels, too!’ So I drank, and then she watered the camels. 47 “Then I asked, ‘Whose daughter are you?’ She replied, ‘I am the daughter of Bethuel, and my grandparents are Nahor and Milcah.’ So I put the ring on her nose, and the bracelets on her wrists. 48 “Then I bowed low and worshiped the LORD. I praised the LORD, the God of my master, Abraham, because he had led me straight to my master’s niece to be his son’s wife. 49 So tell me—will you or won’t you show unfailing love and faithfulness to my master? Please tell me yes or no, and then I’ll know what to do next.” 50 Then Laban and Bethuel replied, “The LORD has obviously brought you here, so there is nothing we can say. 51 Here is Rebekah; take her and go. Yes, let her be the wife of your master’s son, as the LORD has directed.” 52 When Abraham’s servant heard their answer, he bowed down to the ground and worshiped the LORD. 53 Then he brought out silver and gold jewelry and clothing and presented them to Rebekah. He also gave expensive presents to her brother and mother. 54 Then they ate their meal, and the servant and the men with him stayed there overnight. But early the next morning, Abraham’s servant said, “Send me back to my master.” 55 “But we want Rebekah to stay with us at least ten days,” her brother and mother said. “Then she can go.” 56 But he said, “Don’t delay me. The LORD has made my mission successful; now send me back so I can

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GENESIS 24 – MORE WAITING

return to my master.” 57 “Well,” they said, “we’ll call Rebekah and ask her what she thinks.” 58 So they called Rebekah. “Are you willing to go with this man?” they asked her. And she replied, “Yes, I will go.” 59 So they said good-bye to Rebekah and sent her away with Abraham’s servant and his men. The woman who had been Rebekah’s childhood nurse went along with her. 60 They gave her this blessing as she parted: “Our sister, may you become the mother of many millions! May your descendants be strong and conquer the cities of their enemies.” 61 Then Rebekah and her servant girls mounted the camels and followed the man. So Abraham’s servant took Rebekah and went on his way. 62 Meanwhile, Isaac, whose home was in the Negev, had returned from Beer-lahai-roi. 63 One evening as he was walking and meditating in the fields, he looked up and saw the camels coming. 64 When Rebekah looked up and saw Isaac, she quickly dismounted from her camel. 65 “Who is that man walking through the fields to meet us?” she asked the servant. And he replied, “It is my master.” So Rebekah covered her face with her veil. 66 Then the servant told Isaac everything he had done. 67 And Isaac brought Rebekah into his mother Sarah’s tent, and she became his wife. He loved her deeply, and she was a special comfort to him after the death of his mother.

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SERMON TAKEAWAY FOR THE WEEK:

WEEK 16

GENESIS 24 – MORE WAITING

EXAMINE:

- In verse 1, we notice God's relationship and continued faithfulness regarding His covenant with Abraham. These blessings show that God had continued to remain true to His word, not only regarding the physical but also with the covenant promise to Abraham that through Isaac would come the blessing to the nations.
- Described as Abraham's oldest servant, this man was held in high esteem and no doubt trustworthy, as he had charge of all of Abraham's possessions. It is very likely that, while unnamed in this passage, this servant is Eliezer, who was mentioned in Genesis 15:2 as Abraham's heir if no sons were born to him.
- It was important that Isaac not marry just anyone. The region of Canaan was inhabited with the rebellious Canaanite people who worshiped their own gods, rejecting the true God and His ways. It was reasonable for Abraham to request his servant find someone from his homeland, while not wanting Isaac to go there. God's promise to Abraham was that his descendants would dwell in Canaan. Sending Isaac to live with his wife would be an act of disobedience. At this point in his life, Abraham trusted God too much to allow that to happen.
- The servant putting his hand under Abraham's thigh might seem odd to us today. A contemporary type of oath would be to place one's hand on a Bible before testifying in court. The servant would also carry Abraham's authority, as his representative.
- In verses 12-14 we see the servant, like Abraham, is reliant on the LORD to find this bride for Isaac. Although rather specific, notice that the servant's request in verse 14 wasn't motivated by skepticism or as a way to test God. Rather, he earnestly desired to serve his master and receive guidance from God in doing so. It is safe to say that he was also aware of the covenant promises between God and Abraham.
- In verse 60, we see a blessing given to Rebekah that also functions as a prophecy. This closely echoes Genesis 22:17, reminding the Israelites in the time of Moses of their current victories and of the future when the male offspring of the woman would strike the head of the serpent, thus defeating him.

GENESIS 24 – MORE WAITING

DISCUSS:

1. Showcasing God's faithfulness, verse 1 highlights that Abraham had been blessed in his old age. What are your thoughts on God's faithfulness? What examples come to mind of God being faithful toward you?

2. How do Abraham, his servant, Laban and Bethuel's words and actions reveal their belief that God orchestrated the events of Chapter 24? (Refer to verses 7, 12, 31-37 and 50)

3. What can we say about the character of Abraham's servant from Genesis chapter 24?
 - a. Do you take a moment to worship and praise God when you see Him reaching into the events of your life?

4. Not knowing what her life might be like, or even what her future husband may look like, Rebekah faithfully agreed to leave with Abraham's servant that next morning. What are some details in the passage that may have given Rebekah assurance about her decision?
 - a. In what ways does your walk with Jesus resemble Rebekah's decision to leave her old life to start a new life with Isaac?

 - b. How can you learn from and be encouraged by Rebekah?

5. What insights does this chapter give us regarding the character of God?

GENESIS 24 – MORE WAITING

REFLECT:

This passage contains a thread of symbolism that opens our understanding to the beauty of God's redemptive plan for humanity. We read about a father who sends his servant in search of a bride for his beloved son. As we explore this theme, with the understanding we have through Jesus Christ, we also see that God the Father has sent the Holy Spirit into the world in order to draw the humble and lowly in spirit to His Son, Jesus. We see in Genesis 24, that the servant remains unnamed. In like manner, the Holy Spirit comes not to glorify Himself, but to glorify Christ, the bridegroom. The humble who, seeing their need and then receiving the Gospel, are blessed with gifts from the Holy Spirit; like the servant blessing Rebekah with gifts upon her reception of him. Received as the bride of Christ, born again believers in Jesus then journey through the spiritual desert as they make their way home to be with their beloved forever, in the New Heavens and New Earth. The New Testament reveals this thread to us in a much more vivid way, while opening our eyes to see it throughout the Old Testament as well. In his letter to the Ephesians, the Apostle Paul recalls the original commandment for marriage, recorded in Genesis 2:24, that a man leaves his father and mother and is joined to his wife and the two are united into one. In reminding his readers of this, he writes that this is a great mystery that ultimately refers to Christ and the church. Passages like this, when viewed through the entirety of Scripture, bring validity to Jesus' words when He said, "You search the Scriptures because you think they give you eternal life. But the Scriptures point to me!" (John 5:39)

APPLY:

- Abraham's servant and Rebekah both showed the desire to be led by God. In His faithfulness, God let them know that He was the one who orchestrated the events that transpired that day. Do you earnestly desire to be led by God? How can you be intentional this week to pray for opportunities to help others and then follow through with doing so, glorifying God?

S.O.A.P.

Monday – Genesis 12:1-3; 15:1-6

Tuesday – Isaiah 62:1-12

Wednesday – Revelation 19:7-16

Thursday – Revelation 21:9-27

Friday – Psalm 118

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WEEK 17

GENESIS 23; 25:1–11 – DYING WELL

CHAPTER 23

1 When Sarah was 127 years old, 2 she died at Kiriath-arba (now called Hebron) in the land of Canaan. There Abraham mourned and wept for her. 3 Then, leaving her body, he said to the Hittite elders, 4 “Here I am, a stranger and a foreigner among you. Please sell me a piece of land so I can give my wife a proper burial.” 5 The Hittites replied to Abraham, 6 “Listen, my lord, you are an honored prince among us. Choose the finest of our tombs and bury her there. No one here will refuse to help you in this way.” 7 Then Abraham bowed low before the Hittites 8 and said, “Since you are willing to help me in this way, be so kind as to ask Ephron son of Zohar 9 to let me buy his cave at Machpelah, down at the end of his field. I will pay the full price in the presence of witnesses, so I will have a permanent burial place for my family.” 10 Ephron was sitting there among the others, and he answered Abraham as the others listened, speaking publicly before all the Hittite elders of the town. 11 “No, my lord,” he said to Abraham, “please listen to me. I will give you the field and the cave. Here in the presence of my people, I give it to you. Go and bury your dead.” 12 Abraham again bowed low before the citizens of the land, 13 and he replied to Ephron as everyone listened. “No, listen to me. I will buy it from you. Let me pay the full price for the field so I can bury my dead there.” 14 Ephron answered Abraham, 15 “My lord, please listen to me. The land is worth 400 pieces of silver, but what is that between friends? Go ahead and bury your dead.” 16 So Abraham agreed to Ephron’s price and paid the amount he had suggested—400 pieces of silver, weighed according to the market standard. The Hittite elders witnessed the transaction. 17 So Abraham bought the plot of land belonging to Ephron at Machpelah, near

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Mamre. This included the field itself, the cave that was in it, and all the surrounding trees. 18 It was transferred to Abraham as his permanent possession in the presence of the Hittite elders at the city gate. 19 Then Abraham buried his wife, Sarah, there in Canaan, in the cave of Machpelah, near Mamre (also called Hebron). 20 So the field and the cave were transferred from the Hittites to Abraham for use as a permanent burial place.

CHAPTER 25:1-11

1 Abraham married another wife, whose name was Keturah. 2 She gave birth to Zimran, Jokshan, Medan, Midian, Ishbak, and Shuah. 3 Jokshan was the father of Sheba and Dedan. Dedan's descendants were the Asshurites, Letushites, and Leummites. 4 Midian's sons were Ephah, Ephher, Hanoah, Abida, and Eldaah. These were all descendants of Abraham through Keturah. 5 Abraham gave everything he owned to his son Isaac. 6 But before he died, he gave gifts to the sons of his concubines and sent them off to a land in the east, away from Isaac. 7 Abraham lived for 175 years, 8 and he died at a ripe old age, having lived a long and satisfying life. He breathed his last and joined his ancestors in death. 9 His sons Isaac and Ishmael buried him in the cave of Machpelah, near Mamre, in the field of Ephron son of Zohar the Hittite. 10 This was the field Abraham had purchased from the Hittites and where he had buried his wife Sarah. 11 After Abraham's death, God blessed his son Isaac, who settled near Beer-lahai-roi in the Negev.

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SERMON TAKEAWAY FOR THE WEEK:

WEEK 17

GENESIS 23; 25:1-11 – DYING WELL

EXAMINE:

- In chapter 23, Abraham decided to acquire a piece of property for the first time since God called him out of his homeland of Ur. This purchase will forever associate his descendants with the land of Canaan, which the Israelites in Moses' day would have also been aware of.
- In verse 6, the Hittite elders refer to Abraham as, "...an honored prince..." Other Bible translations render this phrase as: "...mighty prince..." (KJV, NKJV, NIV, NASB), "...prince of God..." (ESV, CSB), "...God's chosen one" (HCSB). This phrase in the original Hebrew translates literally as, "prince of God..." These elders clearly recognized the special relationship that Abraham had with God and they respected and honored him for it.
- It is significant to note that, as described in chapter 23:19-20 and 25:9-10, Abraham and Sarah were both buried in "the promised land." The Israelites who came out of Egypt would have been encouraged by this as it would have given them confidence about God's faithfulness.

DISCUSS:

1. Why might Abraham's description of himself in 23:4 be significant, especially considering the promises (Genesis 12:7; 13:14-17; 15:18-21) that God had made him regarding land?
 - a. What insight does Hebrews 11:9-10 give us about Abraham's mindset during his earthly life? What was Abraham waiting for?

GENESIS 23; 25:1-11 – DYING WELL

2. In chapter 23, why might it have been so important for Abraham to purchase this field and cave, rather than receive it as a gift from Ephron?

3. In chapter 25:6, why did Abraham send his concubines and other sons “...off to a land in the east, away from Isaac.”?

4. Genesis 25:9 is the first mention of Ishmael in several chapters. Being together for the first time in what may have been years, how does death reunite families today, just as it did with Ishmael and Isaac?
 - a. How have you grown during times of grief?

5. As you read the description of Abraham’s life in 25:7-8, what are your desires for your own life?
 - a. What impact did Abraham’s faith and obedience to the Lord have on his life?

GENESIS 23; 25:1-11 – DYING WELL

REFLECT:

As disciples of Jesus Christ, we know that death is not the end. These sections of Scripture bring the lives of Abraham and Sarah to a close and begin the next phase of the story that ultimately led to the birth of the Messiah. As we reflect on the life of Abraham, it should encourage us to remember God's continued faithfulness. Abraham and Sarah were far from perfect, but they served a God whose plans cannot be stopped. Let your heart be filled with awe and your voice be filled with praise to the only true God, who has chosen to make Himself known to us.

APPLY:

- How can you comfort someone who is currently grieving? What promises from God encourage you and give you the strength to keep moving through your pilgrimage here on earth?

S.O.A.P.

Monday – Luke 14:7-14

Tuesday – John 5:25-32

Wednesday – Romans 6:1-14

Thursday – Philippians 3:7-16

Friday – John 11:1-46

NEXT STEPS

We would love to CONNECT with you and help you take your next step in faith. Text CONNECT to 904-204-2876 or scan the QR code.



PRAYER JOURNAL



A series of 21 horizontal lines spaced evenly down the page, providing a template for writing in a journal.

