

“God Creates”

Genesis 1:1-31, 2:1-2

Biblical principle: Because God created the heavens and the earth, all of it belongs to Him.

I. God created all things as perfect and good, (“ ... and God saw it was good”).

—No sin existed.

— Human beings were the climax of His creation. He created us for a relationship with Him: for Him to ENJOY US! (Genesis 1:26-27).

—The meaning of life is “to know God and to enjoy Him.”

— Because God is Creator, He has owner rights to set the standard of conduct. **God calls us as men to live a life of submission to Him.**

—Romans 10:3

35. Jesus, God’s Son, was there involved in the creation.

—Genesis 1:26 states “... let us,” note that ‘US’ is plural. This is a reference to Jesus (and the Trinity), (Colossians 1:15-17; John 1:1-4).

Application: God loved us from the very beginning and desired to have a relationship with His creation. We were created through Jesus and redeemed or recreated by Him as well.

~ Discuss the following verses on God’s plan for His creation.

John 3:16

John 1:1-14

Colossians 1:15-23

“Man Falls”

Genesis 2:8-9, 15-17, 3:1-24

Biblical principle: Man was separated from fellowship with God, the Creator, because of sin (emphasis on Genesis 3:1-7).

I. Satan tempted Adam and Eve to do wrong, to rebel against God's wishes and Word.

—Genesis 3:1-5

—The biggest temptation was “you will be like God” (v. 5). We want to be our own god instead of submission to the true creator God.

—Romans 10:3

—James 4:7-8

—Adam and Eve could no longer fellowship with God who loved them.

—Romans 6:23

— Adam and Eve broke God's heart over their willful sin (Genesis 3:8-15) and were not willing to take responsibility for their actions (v. 12 f)..

—Taking responsibility for our choices and behavior is crucial to growing as followers in Christ. Without honesty and transparency we will live a life hidden from his word and leadership.

—1 John 1:9

II. We all now suffer with the problem of sin. Sin separates us from God. Only Jesus, who died for our sin, can bring us back to God.

—Genesis 3:15-, “seed” is a reference to Jesus

—Romans 3:21-25

61. Our relationship with God is driven by gratitude not works.

—1 Thessalonians 1:2-3

Application: We need Jesus to redeem us from our sin.

~ Discuss the following verses on sin and forgiveness in Christ.

1 Peter 3:18

1 Peter 2:24

Titus 3:4-7

“Cain's Hate”

Genesis 4:1-12

Biblical principle: Hate and jealousy lead to harm, hurt, destruction and murder.

I. Sin continued to increase in Adam's family.

—Cain despised Abel because God had blessed him for his commitment and sacrifice. Cain became jealous of Abel and killed him. Cain's anger, due to his frustration and fear, triggered his coping mechanism of rage and violence (Addiction). (Faith verses fear, stress verses release)

— Cain always gave only second best to God, (Genesis 4:3-7).

—God always expects our very best as an offering of glory.

—1 Corinthians 10:31

—1 Thessalonians 4:1

II. Bitterness, jealousy, uncontrolled anger and hate become a prison of misery for the human soul. This sin harms others and ourselves. It affects family, marriage, children and society.

—James 4:1-3

—Matthew 7:12

—Ephesians 4:26

—God's remedy is forgiveness. Forgiveness releases us from the grip of bitterness and resentment. It also honors the blessing of God's forgiveness to us through Christ.

—Ephesians 4:31-32

—Matthew 6:14-15

—We must understand that forgiveness is instant, but trust is earned. They are not the same thing. Too many get those confused. We forgive, but until their character is proven trustworthy, we do not have to trust them. Always remember, character matters. Abusers will make others feel guilty by insisting they be forgiven and embraced and that the two are the same. They are not necessarily. Trust is an issue of **character** which is proven through behavior and time.

Application: God wants us free from bitterness so we can give our very best to Him.

“Noah Saves the Day”

Genesis 6:5-14, 17-22, 7:17-24, 8:6-17, 9:12-17

Biblical principle: God used Noah, a righteous man, to save a remnant from judgment.

I. Evil had become so wicked that God brought judgment upon the earth. God is grieved by sin because of its destructive effects upon all that is good, right, pure and holy. God's wrath is the protection of that goodness and his means of countering the effects of sins influence. It is an expression of God's love. Furthermore, that wrath demonstrates that God has his limits.

— Genesis 6:5-8

—Romans 1:18-32

—Revelation 21:1-8

II. Noah was not ashamed to stand up for the Lord and to live right before God. This stance made him unpopular. Many times we will suffer when we choose to trust God and be obedient. Don't be surprised. Obedience, however, blesses the heart of God and enables us to be used for his purpose.

— 2 Peter 2:5

—2 Timothy 2:21

—2 Timothy 3:12

—John 14:21

III. The ark was a demonstration of God's grace to an undeserving world.

It was salvation for a remnant. Christ, as our ark, has become for us our salvation from judgment. Noah had to **walk by faith** and it was through that faith that he and his family were saved (100 years). We too must respond to Christ in faith and through that response we receive grace and salvation. Noah even received grace when he caused his son to stumble because of his drunkenness. He wasn't perfect, just humble.

—Ephesians 2:8-10

—Romans 1:17

—Romans 5:9-11

—Hebrews 11:6

Application: Noah was a man who was not ashamed to stand for God in a wicked world. As believers we must stand for righteousness and for the Gospel as a testimony to others.

“Tower of Babel”

Genesis 11:1-9

Biblical principle: Sin, pride and rebellion cause man to work against God instead of with Him.

I. The people desired to exert *their* power and will for *their* own selfish intentions. Their efforts were self-centered not God centered. The people had one language but their unity was to oppose God, not honor Him. God had given them the directive (Genesis

9:1) to “fill the earth,” not congregate as one. Obviously, even after the flood, man still struggled with the effects of the sinful nature, rebellion and pride. Only Jesus can destroy the hold of the sinful nature. Faith is turning toward God, while sin is turning away from him. Jesus said the greatest thing we can do with our lives and the very reason why we were created is to bring glory to God and love him.

—Romans 8:1-11

—Romans 13:14

—Matthew 22:37-40

—John 14:21

—Psalm 20:7

II. God confounded the people by giving them different languages. This is why we have many different languages today, for example: Spanish, Chinese, English, German, etc. In Christ, however, God creates a oneness for us. There is no longer Jew and Gentile or separation by barrier of nationality or culture. He brings us as one in Christ Jesus. Oneness is an expression of the image of God—the Trinity, i.e., “Let us make man in our image” (Genesis 1:26)

—Ephesians 2:11-22

III. God desires unity for the sake of the church, His kingdom, the proclamation of the gospel and the truth. Unity is maintained through abiding under a Christ centered vision for the church (to make disciples) and upon God’s truth, His word. The vision and word guide and measure our direction as God’s people.

—Psalm 133

—John 17:20-23

—Matthew 28:19-20

—2 Timothy 3:16-17

—Colossians 3:16

Question to ponder: Am I self-centered or God centered? What does it look like to be God centered? (church, leadership, ministry, home, marriage? How can I help others to honor unity in the church?

~ In what way did Jesus exemplify God-centeredness?

John 5:19

Hebrews 12:1-3

“**The Call of Abraham**”

Genesis 12:1-9

Biblical principle: God called Abraham to be the start of a new nation which would be called *God’s people*, the Israelites.

I. God gave Abraham the promise that he would become the father of a new nation and a great nation. This new nation would be the beginning point of God’s redemptive plan

that he would fulfill through the people of Israel. It was through this nation that the Son of God, Jesus Christ, would come into the world. He would complete the prophecy in verse 3b, "all peoples on earth will be blessed through you." Jesus, the promised Messiah, would complete the requirements of the Law and meet all standards of righteousness at the cross so we could know salvation.

—Matthew 5:17-20

—1 Corinthians 1:27-31

(Note: At first Abraham is called *Abram*, meaning, "father is exalted" and later God changes his name to Abraham, meaning, "father of multitude").

II. Abraham obeyed God and gave up everything to follow God's will. He left home, family, familiar surroundings and his means of support in order to obey the Lord. He walked by FAITH. God blesses us when we walk by faith and when we put him as the priority over our lives. Jesus said we cannot serve two masters. Serving two masters, the world or God, creates an irreconcilable spiritual tension. We cannot experience the full life Jesus promised by trying to blend the two.

—Hebrews 11:6, 8-12 —Luke 14:33

—Matthew 6:19-24, 33 —John 10:10b

III. Abraham modeled two important aspects of being a follower of God.

First, he was a willing servant. He left everything and followed God's will so that God could use him to fulfill his plan. He was serving the future Israelites and us. We never know who we may bless. Serving is critical to being healthy as a believer.

—Mark 10:43-45

—John 13:12-17

Second, Abraham exercised the importance of worship along the way (Genesis 12: 7-8). Worship helps keep us focused on God's glory and goodness. It challenges us to stay God-centered and not self-centered. Worship is crucial to keeping us on track with God's mission.

—John 4:23-24

“Abraham's Fear”

Genesis 12:10-20

Biblical principle: Fear and worry are evidence of our lack of trust in God's love and provision.

I. Abraham was afraid that Pharaoh would kill him to take his beautiful wife, Sarah. His fears led him to a hasty decision to deceive Pharaoh and place Sarah's life in jeopardy. Our fears compromise sound decision making. They lead us to selfish behaviors such as anger outbursts, jealousy, envy, greed and many other sinful behaviors. **Fear of**

rejection or failure are two very common fears for many. Also, fear of not having enough can paralyze our generosity. Only the complete awareness of God's perfect love and grace can defeat their stranglehold.

—1 John 4:18

—Ephesians 3:14-21

II. Abraham trusted in his own plans and strength, not God's. This created a big MESS. He acted out of fear not faith. Fear blinds us to God's plan and leads us toward our coping mechanisms or addictions, which hinder God's work through us. His ways are always best.

—Isaiah 55:7-9

—Jeremiah 29:11

—Philippians 4:6-7

—Proverbs 3:5-8

III. God was displeased with Abraham's lack of trust, and proved He would have taken care of him all along (Genesis 12:20). God promises to take care of us always. He will never abandon us in the midst of hard times. He promises to walk with us through all of life. Jesus is our guarantee of his constant presence and power. **He does not promise life will be easy**, but He does promise eventual victory in His way. Even further, Jesus promises He will always meet our needs. Our job is to trust. Faith pleases God.

—Hebrews 13:5

—Romans 8:37-39

—Romans 8:28

—Matthew 6:25-34

—Philippians 4:19

“Abraham's Impatience”

Genesis 16:1-16, 21:1-10

Biblical principle: Patience is important to our spiritual growth in the Lord.

I. God *promised* Abraham in his old age that he would be given a son. This son would be the one through whom the promise of building a great nation and impacting a whole world would occur. God had spoken clearly to Abraham in chapter twelve when Abraham was at the age of seventy-five. He, like us, was expecting for the promise to happen right away, but it didn't (the promise was given at 75, but Isaac was not born until Abraham was 100 years old). He would have to wait on the Lord and learn the importance of patience. God desires of us to be patient because he wants the best accomplished and the perfect timing achieved. For us we do not see the bigger picture like God. Patience builds character.

—Isaiah 55:8-9 —Isaiah 40:31

—Galatians 5:22 —1 Corinthians 13:4

II. Abraham became impatient and instead of waiting on God he took matters into his own hands. (Genesis 16:1-4) He took Sarah's maidservant, Hagar, and slept with her. This was one of the maidservants acquired during Abraham's visit to Egypt during the famine when he tricked Pharaoh by telling him that Sarah was his sister (Genesis 12:16). It was one faulty decision upon another. Abraham was impatient with God in the famine and he was impatient with God for the promise of a son to be fulfilled in God's way.

Our impatience, like Abraham's will create chaos and harm. Our impatience comes out in hasty decisions, anger, frustration, aggression, resentment, disobedience and confusion. Marriages, families, ministries and churches are drastically affected by impatient decisions. We have a tendency to want to fix things for God. We also want to bale too soon when it doesn't happen right away. We need to trust God's word.

—Colossians 1:10-12 —Isaiah 55:11

—2 Peter 3:8-9 —Ecclesiastes 7:8

III. Ishmael became a problem child (He is the father of modern day Islam. God warned "... he will be a wild man; his hand will be against every man ..." Genesis 16:12).

Ishmael mistreated Isaac, Abraham's promised son from God. If only Abraham had been patient, there would not have been problems then and now. We must never forget that there are always consequences to our impatience.

—Galatians 6:7-9

“Abraham Tested & Passed”

Genesis 22:1-19

Biblical principle: Abraham learned, as we must, to make God the priority of his life.

I. God tested Abraham by asking him to give up his most prized possession, Isaac, as a burnt offering. (God does not condone human sacrifice. This was a practice and custom of the surrounding Canaanite nations. God condemned such behavior. Abraham did not know this. His understanding of God had to be sharpened as different from his neighbors. Psalm 106:34-40) Abraham was only being tested. His faith was being tried. There is a difference between being tested and being tempted. God **tests** us to draw us closer. Satan **tempts** us to draw us away from God. (James 1:12-15) When God calls us to obedience and action it will always cause a “**Crisis of Belief**” which demands faith and action (“*Experiencing God*”). It is designed to mature us in him.

—Hebrews 11:1

—Hebrews 11:6

—James 1:2-4

II. Abraham obeyed and didn't allow anything or anyone to come between him and the Lord. He trusted that God really knew the circumstances and really wanted the best for him and his family. He trusted that God would provide. We too should never allow anything to come between us and the Lord. Everything we are is to be surrendered to him and his care.

—Isaiah 48:17

—Luke 14:33

—Matthew 22:37-40

—Hebrews 12:1-3

III. God provided the substitution Abraham's offering. His son, Isaac, was spared. This was a foreshadow of when God would provide the ultimate substitution for our sin, Jesus, God's son. He has become for us the atonement for our sin. He was not spared. He gave his life, as the Lamb of God, to pay the penalty for all our offenses against the law of God. It is interesting that Mt. Moriah is the same location as the temple in Jerusalem, the city where Jesus, the lamb, was offered.

—John 1:29

—John 3:16

—Colossians 2:13-15

“Jacob the Deceiver”

Genesis 25:19-34; 27:1-40; 32:22-32

Biblical principle: God wants us to be honest and trustworthy as we walk with Christ.

I. Jacob was the son of Isaac and the twin brother of Esau. Even from birth, Jacob was a trickster. His name in Hebrew literally means deceiver.

He tricked his brother out of his inheritance from their father. He deceived his father and stole Esau's birthright. Esau was the first born of the twins. According to custom, Esau was to receive a special blessing with the position of leadership in the family to be passed on upon Isaac's death, but Jacob usurped that right. God desires for us to be men and women of honor and character. These are important to an effective testimony and a solid reflection of who Jesus is to this broken world. We are to be in the world, but not like the world.

—Micah 6:8

—Colossians 4:5-6

—Romans 12:2

II. Jacob wanted to get ahead in life by taking advantage of others. He did so by dishonesty and deception. We can quickly get ahead through dishonest ways, but we

decay on the inside. Jacob met his match in his uncle Laban. Laban had tricked him out of his possessions, relationships, and time. Perhaps it was from his experience with his uncle and his encounter with God (see Hosea 12:4) at the brook called Jabbok, that not only was his name changed to Israel, but his life changed to being honest and trustworthy. Unfortunately, just like with his father, Isaac, and his father, Abraham, and even with his own sons, the twelve patriarchs, there was an inherited recycling of bad behavior. We as leaders and followers of Christ need to address these cycles in our own life so that we do not pass them onto our families. God calls us to mature so others around us are blessed with our healthy choices.

—1 Peter 1:18-19

—2 Corinthians 5:17-21

—Galatians 2:20

—Matthew 7:3-5

—Matthew 5:16

“Joseph the Faithful”

Genesis 37-41

Biblical principle: Joseph remained faithful to God even when he was rejected and despised by others.

I. Joseph was a son of Jacob, one of the younger brothers among all of Israel's (Jacob's) sons. He was loved and favored by his father because he was “the son of his old age” (Genesis 37:3). Israel's favoritism, however, created an unhealthy environment among all his children. Joseph's brothers despised him (Genesis 37:4). Their hatred toward Joseph culminated when he was sold as a slave to the Ishmaelites (descendants of Abraham's first son Ishmael) because of his dream that one day he would rule over his brothers and they would bow down to him. Family dysfunction of jealousy and rivalry not only put Joseph's life in danger, but it tore apart the core of Israel's family. God wants healthy families that are built on love, grace and humility. I Corinthians 13:4-7 is the guiding principle of how to achieve and maintain a solid home life.

II. Joseph continued to experience setback after setback. He was taken to a foreign land, Egypt, and sold to Potiphar as a slave. While serving there he was tempted of Potiphar's wife, but he rejected the temptation and remained faithful to the Lord. Unfortunately, as it is many times with us, he had to suffer for choosing God's will for his

life. In fact, many times it is costly to do the right thing, to be obedient to the Lord. It is a matter of “when”, not “if”, we will face persecution.

—2 Timothy 3:12

—Matthew 5:11-12

—1 Peter 4:12-14

III. Joseph is a prime example that life can be unfair. Therefore, it is important to resist the urge to become bitter and resentful. We must maintain a soft heart. Joseph could have become cold and uncaring, especially when, once again, he was done wrong by the cupbearer. He had to continue to trust God no matter what. This is especially important when temptation gets so great it is hard to hang on and trust the Lord. God will always give us a way out of temptation if we will take it.

—Proverbs 3:5-6

—1 Corinthians 10:13

—Ephesians 4:31

—Matthew 4:1-11 (Discuss how Jesus overcame temptation).

—Never forget that God always rewards for faithfulness. Joseph is an example of that very principle. He remained faithful and God blessed him by making him a great leader over Egypt (Genesis 41:41).

—1 Peter 5:6-11

~ Discuss the following verses on remaining faithful to the Lord.

Matthew 6:33

Galatians 6:9

James 1:2-4

Philippians 4:1, 4-7

Paul—2 Corinthians 1:8-9; 4:7-10; 12:7-10

“Joseph Saves the Day”

Genesis 41-47

Biblical principle: God can turn around bad circumstances for good.

I. Joseph had risen from slave to second in command over Egypt. It was a true miracle. His journey, however, came at a high price. There were many occasions when Joseph had to suffer along the way. As was discussed last week, suffering is a part of being obedient to the Lord. It is a broken world which does not like truth and because of that fact, God's people suffer. Even further, it was because of hatred for truth that the world crucified Jesus, the way the truth and the life. Jesus, like Joseph, had to endure for the sake of others. Joseph saved the people from starvation, but Jesus, God's Son, saved us from our sin.

—I Peter 2:21-24

—John 14:6

II. God is faithful even in our darkest times. Joseph saw the hand of God holding him up time and time again. When he was sold as a slave, God blessed him in Potipher's household. When Potipher's wife falsely accused him of sexual misconduct (Genesis 39:7-18), God took care of him in prison by blessing him with favor from the Warden. When the cupbearer forgot Joseph's request to put in a good word for him with Pharaoh, God was still there. God never forgot about Joseph in spite of the many setbacks. He turned around the circumstances, honoring Joseph by putting him in charge of the nation of Egypt so the people didn't starve. Even his own family was saved by Joseph's leadership. The dream God gave Joseph had come true. His father and brothers came and bowed down to him.

—Every believer must understand the power of God's faithfulness. He promises that no matter what our circumstances may be, he will turn them around for good. No matter how dark things may seem, there is always light. Joseph understood this principle when he addressed his brothers in Genesis 50:19-21 by telling them that what they meant for harm, God turned around for good. God's plan will always prevail even when it may not make sense at the moment. Furthermore, God can use ordinary people, like Joseph to do extraordinary things, if we are willing to trust him through the dark times of our life.

—Jeremiah 29:11

—Romans 8:28

—I Corinthians 1:26-31 & 2:1-5

—John 15:5

—Ephesians 3:20

—Psalm 139:11-12

