

English Transcript

Story of the Old Testament

Lesson 2 - Preparation for God's Kingdom

Welcome back to The Story of the Old Testament. We are continuing with Lesson 2, The Preparation for God's Kingdom which begins on page 13 in your handout.

You will find a chart at the beginning of each lesson, like the one you see at the top of page 13.

The top line of the chart provides a high-level picture of key time periods related to world history.

The middle line of the chart reveals the biblical timeline. This is the story line we will follow from lesson to lesson throughout this course.

The bottom line of the chart shows how the books of the Bible align or connect with the story line of the Bible

For Lesson 2, I have circled Creation, The Fall, and the Flood. We will discuss Genesis chapters 1 to 11 as we tell the story of the Preparation for God's Kingdom.

Below the chart is a short statement that summarizes the book of Genesis.

"The God who created mankind also punished disobedience with death, which is physical and spiritual separation from God. God then began his great plan of redemption with his covenant to Abraham, whose descendants arrive in Egypt as God's cherished people."

This part of the Old Testament story begins with Creation and continues until about 2000 BC. We don't know the exact date of Creation. Young earth theologians believe this took place 4,000 to 6,000 years ago. We begin the story in Genesis chapters 1 and 2, it will take us through Genesis chapter 11.

A few of the primary characters in this part of the story are Adam and Eve, Cain and Abel. Seth is the son of the promise following the murder of Abel. Seth will continue to lineage all the way to Jesus ultimately. We will discuss Noah and his family leading up to the global flood and the ending with the dispersion at the Tower of Babel. We must not forget that God is a central character in this story. Satan also plays a key role.

On the right side of page 13 there is a box that highlights a few key points related to this portion of the story.

Major Themes are:

- The sovereignty of God. God is in control. He is the ruler of all. He is the king.
- The sinfulness of man.
- The promise of redemption.
- The gospel is introduced from the very beginning of the story of the Old Testament.

Genesis means “beginnings” or “to give birth”. In the book of Genesis we read how God created everything out of nothing. We are introduced to the first man and woman. There is the first marriage, the first family, the first sin, the first murder. The first sacrifice for sin. God's character is revealed through His mercy in sparing Adam and Eve from immediate physical death in response to their sin and God's grace to provide a plan for redemption is also revealed. The foundation for these doctrinal truths is prepared in these first eleven chapters of Genesis.

God is first revealed to us as Elohim, the Creator. “In the beginning, God created the heavens and earth.” The word “Elohim” is in the plural in Hebrews. From the first verse of the Bible, we are introduced to the Triune God. One God in three persons. This will be revealed progressively through the Old Testament into the New Testament as the doctrine of the Trinity is revealed for us through the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

Based on information revealed to us in the New Testament, we see Jesus, as the eternal Word of God, the Son of God, the second person of the Trinity, actively involved as the agent of Creation. Colossians 1 and John 1 reveal that all things were made by Jesus, for Jesus and, through Jesus.

Jesus is also introduced as the promised Seed of the woman in Genesis 3:15, who will provide redemption and deliverance from sin. Jesus is the atoning sacrifice for our sins. God's redemptive plan is introduced in Genesis and fulfilled through the person and work of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Man is also introduced at the start of this story. Man is created in the image and likeness of God. Man is the crowning act of God's creative work. Man is valued by God. Psalm 8:3-8 records God's heart through the words of King David when he writes the following:

“When I consider your heavens, the work of your fingers, the moon and the stars, which you have set in place, what is mankind that you are mindful of them, human beings that you care for them? You have made them a little lower than the angels and crowned them with glory and honor. You made them rulers over the works of your hands; you put everything under their feet: all flocks and herds, and the animals of the wild, the birds in the sky, and the fish in the sea, all that swim the paths of the seas.”

We also see that God gives man great responsibility to represent Him on the earth and to steward God's creation.

This story also introduces sin, death, depravity and rebellion. Sin has infected our entire being, our thoughts, our words, our attitudes, and our actions. And humanity is in need of redemption.

The Preparation for God's Kingdom introduces these important themes and doctrines and as the story of the Old Testament begins.

Let us return to the notes on page 13.

The story of the Old Testament is the story of the Kingdom of God. God is the King of glory, and the Old Testament tells the story of the establishment of God's kingdom.

There are markers in Genesis 1-11 that help us understand the story line. Look for the word "generation" or "account". In Hebrew, this word carries the idea giving birth or having a new beginning. This phrase is used 10 times throughout the book of Genesis.

In Genesis 1-11, there are 5 references.

- Genesis 2:4 – The account of the creation of the heavens and the earth.
- Genesis 5:1 - The account of Adam.
- Genesis 6:9 – The account of Noah
- Genesis 10:1 - The account of Shem, Ham, and Jephthah, the three sons of Noah as they come out of the ark after the flood.
- Genesis 11:10 - The account of the generation of Shem who continues the genealogy of the promised Messiah by God's grace.

There are 4 key events in Genesis chapter 1 to 11 that tell the story of God's preparation for His Kingdom.

These are very familiar to you, so we won't spend much time in review. It is good to refresh our minds though and understand how these events shape the story. We will review

- Creation (1-2)
- The Fall (3-4)
- The Judgment of the Flood (5-9)
- The Division of the Two Kingdoms (10-11).

Turn to page 14.

Creation (Genesis 1-2)

The story of the Old Testament begins with God. In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth. And the earth was without form and darkness was over the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God was hovering over the faces of the water. And then God spoke. He said, "Let there be light." And there was light. And the story continued over six days as God created everything out of nothing.

And from the very beginning of the Bible, we can see the Trinity introduced in a veiled way. We see God front and center. We see the Spirit of God hovering over the waters and the darkness. And then God speaks. The Word of God also exists from eternity past.

John 1:1-4 and 14 reveal this truth. All of this becomes clear as the story continues in the light of the New Testament.

The final act of the Creation story reveals God creating man and woman in His own image and likeness in Genesis 1:26-27. God gave Adam and Eve great responsibility to represent God on the earth, to have dominion over the earth, to care for it, to nourish it, to develop this kingdom that God was preparing. There was no sin present in the beginning. Adam and Eve were innocent and they experienced perfect relationship with God.

There was a sense of peace. The Hebrew word is “shalom”. This word means much more than an absence of conflict. It means wholeness, completeness, well-being. This shalom affected every relationship.

- There was peace in the relationship between God and man.
- There was peace in the relationship with others that existed between Adam and Eve and in their family before sin entered the world.
- There was internal peace within Adam and Eve as people. They had a sense of value and worth as being created in God’s image. They also had a good work ethic and a purpose for living. They were given responsibility that was important, to represent God in the world that He created.
- There was peace between Adam and Eve and the world. Adam and Eve were given responsibility to be good stewards of the world that God created.

This shalom or peace impacted all of creation, every relationship and every aspect of creation. And when God was finished with His creating, He was pleased. In Genesis 1:31 we read that when God finished the work of creation, He said that it was very good!

Let’s identify a few Red Threads of Jesus even as the first chapters of this story are told.

Jesus is the Creator. Genesis 1 points us to John chapter 1, where we read that all things were made by Him.

Jesus is the Bride Groom. Marriage is the first institution that God establishes in Genesis 2. Marriage is established before government, before calling Abraham, before the Law, before the church, before anything else. Marriage is the first social institution that was to be the foundation for society. And we look ahead to the New Testament we can see that marriage reveals Christ to us through the one flesh relationship between husband and wife. In the New Testament Jesus is revealed as the Bride Groom and the church as the Bride. In a veiled way, the establishment of marriage will eventually point us to Jesus as we learn in Ephesians chapter 5.

The Fall (Genesis 3-4)

As we continue in Genesis chapter 3, conflict and rebellion is introduced. Sin enters the world. Satan, a powerful angel by the name of Lucifer, rebelled against God. He wanted to be like God and pride was his downfall. In Genesis 3 we read that Satan worked through the serpent to tempt Eve to disobey God. In Genesis 2, God had said, you may eat from any tree in the Garden except for one. There was only one command for Adam and Eve to obey. It was not to eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. God said that when you eat of

this, you will surely die. That death would mean physical death and ultimately spiritual death, eternal separation from God.

Now the serpent was more crafty than any other beast of the field that the Lord God had made. He said to woman, “Did God actually say you shall not eat of any of the trees in the garden?” Notice that the first question in the Bible comes from Satan.

Satan is a liar. He is always looking to deceive. He is always looking to oppose the work of God. He comes to Eve and causes her to question, to wonder, what did God really say? He may have been saying things like this: God is holding out on you. You could be like God if you would just follow your own desires. God is not good. He just wants to control you.

The truth is that God had blessed Adam and Eve with everything good. God is good. He is holy and there is no evil in Him. He does not tempt others toward evil. He does not hold anything back. And Satan was trying to deceive Eve to have a wrong view of God.

Eve listened to Satan. She took the fruit, ate it, and gave it to Adam to eat. In Genesis 3:6 we read that when the woman saw that the tree was good for food and that it was a delight to the eyes and that the tree was to be desired to make one wise, she took of its fruit and ate. And she also gave some of it to her husband who was with her. And he ate. Then the eyes of both were opened and they knew that they were naked.

They sewed fig leaves together and made themselves loincloths. And they heard the Lord God walking in the garden in the cool of the day. And the man and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the Lord God among the trees of the garden.

But the Lord God called to the man and said, “Adam, where are you?” And Adam said, “I heard the sound of you in the garden. And I was afraid because I was naked and I hid myself.”

And God goes on to say, “Who told you that you were naked?”

We know from Romans 5:12, “Just as sin came into the world through one man and death through sin. And so death spread to all men because all sin.” Sin entered the world through the disobedience of Adam.

This is the consequence for sin that God warned Adam about. The result of sin is death, physical death and spiritual death, eternal separation from God. The Fall affected the shalom or peace of Genesis chapters 1 and 2.

Sin brought death and separation from God. The result of sin led to guilt (3:7), shame (3:8), and fear (3:10).

- Man’s relationship with God once filled with shalom and wholeness, was replaced by separation.
- The shalom of relationship between people was broken. Adam and Eve began to blame each other. In Genesis 4, Cain murders his brother Abel.

- Man developed a wrong view of himself as a result of the Fall. The strong work ethic and high value for work was damaged. Work would now be hard. Work existed before sin entered the world. Work was a joy before the Fall. Work would now be from the sweat of the brow. Work was meant to be as a way of honoring and worshiping God.
- Even the peace and wholeness in nature and the created order was affected. The ground was cursed. In Romans 8, we read that the creation is groaning and longing for the redemption that is going to come when Jesus returns in glory.

Genesis 3 is central to understanding the story of redemption.

God is holy. God is love. He created us to be in relationship with him. Genesis 3 says that sin entered the world and it broke that relationship.

The rest of the story of the Old Testament into the New Testament is the story of God's redemptive plan to establish His kingdom and to bring people back into a perfect relationship with God. His people will one day worship and honor God as their king.

There are consequences for every decision, and we have been experiencing the consequences of the Fall ever since. Adam and Eve lost Paradise. Death entered the world. Envy, strife, hostility and selfish pride began to flourish outside of the Garden. But a veiled prophecy to the serpent would now direct history, though it would take a few thousand years to unfold. The woman's offspring and the serpent's agenda would clash, and the former would crush the latter.

Genesis 3:15 reveals another Red Thread in the Old Testament story.

One of the consequences of sin was that Eve would have pain in childbirth. From her seed, the Seed, the promised Messiah would come. God said that there would be enmity or conflict between the serpent/Satan and the Seed of the woman. The serpent would strike the heel of the Seed of the woman, but the Seed of woman would crush the head of the serpent. This is a veiled picture of Jesus at the crucifixion and the resurrection. Satan thinks that he has defeated Christ at the cross, yet through the resurrection, Jesus crushes and defeats completely Satan.

There may also be a Red Thread in Genesis 3:21, with a veiled picture of the atonement for sin.

God sacrificed an animal of some sort to make clothing for Adam and Eve. And we know through the story of the Old Testament that without the shedding of blood, there can be no forgiveness of sin. Many look to this as the first sacrifice for sin to provide a form of atonement for Adam and Eve to cover over their sin.

God still had a plan for Adam and Eve. They did not immediately die physically. There was a spiritual separation that would only be removed in the future through Jesus' atonement on the cross. In God's grace though, he protected Adam and Eve from eating of the tree of life

that was in the Garden. If they ate that fruit in their sinful condition, they would have died in their sin because Jesus had not come yet to pay the penalty for their sin.

Adam and Eve placed their faith in the promise of God. They believed that God was still working in their lives. They didn't die physically. God had more for them. They were trusting in God's plan of redemption. They shared this with their children as well.

We know this because Cain and Abel knew how to offer right sacrifices to God in faith. Before the Law of Moses ever came into being, they knew something about coming to a holy God in worship, in humility, confessing and repenting of sin. In Genesis 4, Abel offered an acceptable sacrifice from the flock that involved the shedding of blood. Cain offered a sacrifice from the field that was less than what God desired. We can see that pride, unbelief, rebellion and sin was at the heart of Cain's behavior.

Judgment through the Flood (Genesis 5-9)

This pride and rebellious heart continued to grow over time as we read through Genesis chapters 5-9.

The genealogies from the time of Adam show that people lived for a set number of years and then they died. This was the reminder that death was, and still is, a consequence of sin. In chapter 6 we read that sin and rebellion continued to infect all people. Every thought of the people's heart was only evil all the time. And God said that He was grieved for making people. He would bring judgment on the earth because He is a holy and just God. In His grace, God chose Noah, to continue His plan for building His kingdom.

Noah found favor or grace with God. God did not choose Noah because of his goodness but instead to reveal God's grace and to bring glory to God. In faith, Noah responded to God in obedience and did everything God commanded. Noah built the ark over 120 years to prepare for God's coming judgment on the earth.

In the New Testament, we learn that Noah was a preacher of righteousness. As he worked to build the ark, he warned the people of the coming flood and that they could be saved by trusting in God and entering the ark.

The people mocked Noah and ignored the message. When the rain finally started, only Noah, his wife, his three sons, and their three wives entered the ark. Everyone living human and animal died as a judgment for sin since they did not turn to God in faith for salvation through the ark.

The ark is another Red Thread!

Noah and his family were saved from the judgment that would come by entering the ark. In the same way, we are saved from the judgment of sin, the wrath of God, through the blood of Jesus. Jesus is our ark of salvation.

After the flood waters receded from the face of the whole earth, Noah, his family and the animals come out of the ark. God commanded them to go forth and multiply and fill the earth. And God added a promise. He said that He would never judge the earth again with a

flood. To seal this promise or covenant, God placed a rainbow in the sky to remind the people of God's faithfulness. A future judgment for sin will eventually come as God establishes His eternal kingdom with the creation of the new heavens and new earth.

Division of the Two Kingdoms (Genesis 10-11)

The final event of this part of the story ends with the Division of the Two Kingdoms. These are the Kingdom of God and the kingdom of man.

Noah exited the ark in Genesis 9. He and his family were commanded by God to go, multiply and fill the earth. In chapter 10 we read of the account of Noah's sons as they begin to repopulate the earth as God commanded.

Yet, in Genesis 11, the sin of pride and rebellion rose up again. In Genesis 11:1-4 we read the following:

Now the whole world had one language and a common speech. As people moved eastward, they found a plain in Shinar and settled there. They said to each other, "Come, let's make bricks and bake them thoroughly." They used brick instead of stone, and tar for mortar. Then they said, "Come, let us build ourselves a city, with a tower that reaches to the heavens, so that we may make a name for ourselves; otherwise we will be scattered over the face of the whole earth."

The plains of Shinar were in the land of Babylon. The people chose to disobey God and began to build a tower to heaven instead of filling the earth. They wanted to make a name for themselves instead of obeying and honoring God as their king. The people rebelled against God. The kingdom of God was in conflict with the kingdom of man.

In 11:7, God said "Come, let us go down and confuse their language so that they may not understand one another's speech."

The Lord scattered the people over the face of the whole earth and He confused their language. This is why the area was called Babel or Babylon because that word "Babel" meant confused. There the Lord confused the language of all the earth.

As Chapter 11 concludes, God is finished working with creation in a general way to prepare for His kingdom. The people had rebelled against God. The nations had set themselves up against God. God said, I'm going to establish my kingdom in a different way. At the end of chapter 11 we read about the account of Shem from which Abraham would come. The next chapter of the Old Testament story will pick up in Genesis 12 with the Formation of God's Kingdom during the time of the Patriarchs. God will now begin to build His kingdom in a specific way.

God will call Abraham and a special people to be His very own. His people would love God and worship God and make Him known in the world. The whole world would have an opportunity to come to know the one true God.

If you turn to page 45 in your handout, you can see how the diagram on page 14 continues to build. In class, I would draw the next part of the diagram showing the conflict between the kingdom of God and the kingdom of man. On the left, God's kingdom requires a people, a land, and a purpose that His people will follow to honor the King. The purpose for God's people is to love the Lord their God with all their heart, soul, mind, and strength, and to love their neighbor.

As a result of Genesis chapters 3-11, the nations are separated from God because of their sin. They are in rebellion toward God.

As God begins to build his kingdom with His people loving Him and others, God will begin to draw people to Himself. He will reveal that He alone is the one true God. And that through Him they can be saved from their sin. They can cross over and receive forgiveness for sin and enter into a renewed relationship with God. This will restore the shalom that was broken, restore the peace and the wholeness that was broken in Genesis 3 because of sin.

In Lesson 3, we will continue the story from Genesis 12 through 50 as God begins to form His kingdom with a specific group or people.

Before listening to Lesson 3, take time to go back through the handout for Lesson 2. Read the Scriptures in the handout and reflect on these four key events that tell the story of the Preparation for the Kingdom, from Creation, to the Fall, to the Judgment through the Flood, and ending with the Division of the kingdom at the Tower of Babel.

Consider this:

- What is it about pride that elicits such a strong response from God?
- In what areas of your life are you tempted to be independent, to take charge, and push God aside to do things your own way as if you were the king?

I look forward to continuing with you in Lesson 3.