

Behold Your God (Genesis 1-11 Overview)

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[0 : 00] Welcome to you if you are new here in town or visiting from the weekend. We are starting a new series today in the book of Genesis. And this morning we'll be taking an overview of the first 11 chapters that we'll be covering over the next three months.

One of the things that we are trying out this fall is we have bought a bunch of these scripture journals. So this has the text of Genesis on one side and a blank page on the other side. So if you would find this helpful over the next few months, you can take your sermon notes in it. You can take personal notes if you're reading through Genesis on your own. There's some copies on the back table and there's some down on the bookstall.

They're four bucks each. Just bring the money next week and put it in the offering next week if you don't have that today. So feel free to take one if this would be helpful to you and feel free to use them if that would be something you'd like.

So 20 years ago this weekend, I arrived in New Haven. Moved for the first time since I was three and I didn't remember that. For me, settling into New Haven was both exhilarating and disorienting.

[1 : 16] I was a first year college student. At first, it seemed like I had huge amounts of free time. And I was living in a city. I'd grown up in a small town.

It was all very exciting. But at other times, it also felt disorienting and overwhelming. I remember my first night at college around 11 p.m.

I walked over to the Dwight Hall Chapel and sat in a dimly lit corner of the room. My head was throbbing. I felt like I must have introduced myself to 500 people. On that long, hot, sweaty day. How would I find my place among all these people? Let alone in this fairly unfamiliar city. I would drive around downtown. I'd end up going around in circles because there's all the one-way streets. And I couldn't figure out which ones went which way. One morning, I decided I'd go for a run. I thought I'd explore some other parts of the city on foot. I got completely lost.

[2 : 12] It started pouring rain. I knew I wouldn't make it back in time for class. I thought I was heading back to campus. I was actually getting close to West Haven. Thankfully, a merciful shuttle driver pointed me back where I needed to go.

Well, whether you've just moved to New Haven or whether you've spent your whole life here, isn't this part of what it means to be a human being on this planet?

We find ourselves in a world that is both exhilarating and disorienting. Amazingly beautiful and deeply problematic.

And we can ask ourselves, what does all this mean? How do I make sense of it? Where did this all come from? Where do I fit within it? Where is my life going?

You know, these kinds of questions set human beings apart from every other species that we know of. Human beings long for meaning, identity, and purpose, and we don't flourish apart from those things.

[3 : 17] Over the years, writers and artists and philosophers and poets have wrestled with these big questions of life. But one of the texts that has been around the longest and that has consistently shaped cultures and societies, families, and individuals ever since it was first written is the book of Genesis.

For thousands of years, Genesis has not only told a story about our origins, that is where we came from, but it also speaks to our identity, who we are today, and it even hints at our ultimate destiny, where we're headed in the future.

This fall, we'll be looking at the first 11 chapters of Genesis. And week by week, we'll walk through these chapters and consider what they have to say to us today. There's a blue card in the pew in front of you that has a schedule.

So feel free to take one home with you if you'd like, if you'd like to sort of read ahead and prepare for, meditate on the text that we're going to be looking at each Sunday. But what I want to do today, today's going to be a bit unusual.

Usually we'll be staying close to a particular chapter or section of the text. But today we're going to do an overview of the terrain. So today we'll feel a little bit like going up to the top of East Rock or West Rock and looking at New Haven as a whole.

[4 : 36] If you're new in town, it's worth sort of driving or hiking up to one of these outlooks at some point because you can see the contours of the land. You can see the Long Island Sound on the south and the Quinnipiac River on the east and some smaller rivers on the west.

You can see the familiar landmarks, the tall buildings downtown, the tree-lined streets, the Yale campus, Southern Connecticut State, Wilber Cross High School. You can begin to grasp how the city fits together as a whole.

Like the city of New Haven, the opening chapters of Genesis can be both exhilarating and disorienting. On the one hand, these chapters are endlessly fascinating. They've inspired countless works of art and literature over the centuries.

Stories that might be familiar to you like Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden, Cain killing his brother Abel, Noah and the flood, the Tower of Babel.

But at the same time, reading these chapters can also feel disorienting. Now, in part, this is because these chapters have become the source or subject, I don't think they're the source, but they are the subject of numerous controversies and questions.

[5 : 48] So let me just acknowledge some of the questions that are out there, some of the questions that you may be bringing with you as we approach Genesis. So you may have questions about science. How does Genesis relate to modern scientific theories like the Big Bang and evolution?

Now, this is a big topic, so we're going to take two weeks at the end of September in Adult Sunday School to address it. So I'll teach one session from my perspective as a pastor.

Danielle Speller, who's a physicist, is going to teach another session from her perspective as a physicist. We'll be talking about science and faith. So that's one question. A more scholarly question is a question about authorship.

Who wrote Genesis? Now, the traditional answer is Moses. And I think there is a very good case to be made for Moses playing a primary role. However, many scholars completely dismiss that idea and don't even take it seriously.

Now, I won't try to resolve that question here and now, but I've written a handout, and it's on the back table, and you can take it, entitled, Who Wrote the Pentateuch? Just sort of overviewing some of the reasons why people think certain things.

[6 : 55] And if that's of interest to you, I'm happy to discuss that at another time. Here are some other questions. What about cavemen, Neanderthals, and other early hominids?

How do they fit in with the story of Adam and Eve? Where did Cain's wife come from? If you know this, Cain's the son of Adam and Eve, and then Cain's wife is mentioned in the text.

Well, where did his wife come from if he was the son of Adam and Eve and there weren't any other people around? Or does that mean there were other people around? Did the flood really happen? Like Genesis says it did. If so, where's the lost ark? More seriously, that was supposed to be a joke, the lost ark. More seriously, what does it mean that God made human beings in his own image? And then why did God want to wipe out the entire world that he had created in the flood? So many questions, and all of these are legitimate, some more important than others. Many we will address over the next three months.

[7 : 59] But you know, if we immediately focus on all the questions that we bring with us as modern people, many of which reflect our own cultural assumptions, it's possible to miss the point of Genesis itself.

So I want to acknowledge these questions, but I also want to put them to the side for right now, and begin by dealing with Genesis on its own terms. So open your Bible to the book of Genesis.

This morning, I want to focus on three things. Number one is the structure of Genesis. How is the book organized? Second is the audience of Genesis. Who is the book written to?

And third, the main character of Genesis. So first, the structure of Genesis. Now, when Genesis was first written down, there were no chapter and verse markers like we see in our modern Bibles.

The chapter numbers were added in the 13th century, and the verse numbers were added in the 16th century, simply so that it would be easier to explain to somebody else which part you were referring to.

[9 : 07] But we do see in the text of Genesis a very clear and orderly structure. Now, if you look in your bulletin, in one of the middle pages in your bulletin, I've outlined the important parts of this structure, the relevant verses.

But if you're looking at a Bible, Genesis begins by saying, in the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth. And in fact, in Hebrew Bibles, Genesis is known by that first Hebrew word, Bereshith, or beginning.

It's the book of beginnings. And Genesis describes two beginnings. So chapters 1 to 11, which we'll be looking at this fall, describe the beginning of the world. And these chapters have sort of a wide-angle, global view.

The rest of the book, chapters 12 through 50, describes the beginning of God's people Israel. Starting in chapter 12, the focus narrows way into Abraham and his family and his descendants. And you can see that these are the two major parts of Genesis because each of the parts has five sections that all begin with the same heading. If you look at chapter 2, verse 4, the first heading in the first part of Genesis, it says, these are the generations of the heavens and the earth when they were created.

[10 : 22] Then if you go to chapter 5, verse 1, it says this same similar phrase, this is the book of the generations of Adam. Chapter 6, verse 9, these are the generations of Noah. Chapter 10, verse 1, these are the generations of the sons of Noah.

And chapter 11, verse 10, these are the generations of Shem. In other translations, these verses might be translated, this is the family line of so-and-so, or this is the account of so-and-so.

But in Hebrew, it's always the same word, regardless of how it's translated. And you might notice a couple of things from this structure. First, the sections alternate between narratives, or stories, and genealogies, or lists.

And this was very common in many ancient writings. Story, list, story, list. The other thing you might notice is that the first chapter of Genesis, through to chapter 2, verse 3, stands apart from the rest of the book.

So it's not just another section. It's more like a prologue or a prelude. As we'll see next week, it's full of poetic patterns. It's sort of like a movie trailer that sets the stage for what is to come.

[11 : 35] So Genesis is very intentionally ordered, has a very clear and orderly structure. It's thoughtfully arranged, not randomly thrown together. And it highlights these two major movements, the beginning of the world, and then the beginning of God's people Israel, through whom he would renew the whole world, ultimately.

So that's how Genesis is structured. Second, let me speak a bit to the audience of Genesis. In other words, who was the book of Genesis originally written for?

Well, I think we can definitely say two things here. First, Genesis was written for the people of Israel. In other words, Genesis was written for people who had already experienced God's mighty power and rescuing grace, and it was written for them so they would come to know their God better. You might say, well, how do we know this? Because Genesis is connected to the four books that follow it. And it's always been connected to Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy. These are the first five books of the Bible. That's why they're sometimes called the Pentateuch five books. They contain the early history of the people of Israel. They contain the laws that the people of Israel were to live by.

[12 : 49] And these books were written down and read aloud over the centuries among the people of Israel. So Genesis was written to help people who were already believers in the God of the Bible to get to know their God better and to find their place in the world that he had made.

So if you're a Christian believer today, Genesis is for you. And Genesis is an invitation to behold your God.

To get to know this God whom you have begun to experience and already have come to believe, to get to know him better and to find your place in the world that he has made.

But second, I'd also argue that Genesis is also written for people who don't or don't yet believe in the God of the Bible. If you don't believe in the God of the Bible, I think that Genesis is an appeal.

Consider this God. Now, why would I say that? Well, the chapters we're looking at this fall, in particular, are written in a way that would have introduced the God of Israel clearly and powerfully to anyone from the surrounding nations who had different religious and philosophical and moral beliefs.

[14:11] You see, the people of Israel never lived on an island. They were never completely isolated from the rest of the world. They always had neighbors. The Egyptians, the Babylonians, the Canaanites.

Now, sometimes they're fighting them. Sometimes they're coexisting with them. Sometimes they're conquered by them. But they're always interacting with them in one way or another. And each of these surrounding nations also had their own stories of how the world came to be and how their nation came to be.

Now, there are three major stories that we'll see in the course of Genesis 1 through 11. First, the creation. And that's really chapters 1 through 4, how the world began, and then how it all went wrong.

Then there's the flood, which is really chapters 5 through 9. How everything got washed away and then made new again. And then there's the Tower of Babel.

That word Babel is referring to the ancient city of Babylon. Now, every one of these topics, the creation, the flood, the Tower of Babel, would have been familiar to people from the nations that surrounded Israel.

[15:25] So, for example, the Babylonians had a poem entitled Enuma Elish, which begins with a story of how the world was created from unformed waters, and it concludes with the building of a tower in Babylon as a temple to the Babylonian god Marduk.

Other nations also told stories about a great flood. The Epic of Gilgamesh, the Sumerian flood story, the Atrahasis epic, all speak about a great flood sent by the gods as a judgment on the human race.

So, you see, if you were living in the ancient world, the topics that Genesis covers and the questions that Genesis addresses would have seemed very normal.

We might read Genesis and think that some parts are unusual or strange, but they wouldn't have seemed unusual or strange in the topics that it is addressing. So, Genesis was addressing common questions that people had back then.

And I think if we can hear and interpret Genesis rightly, we'll see that it also speaks to many of the questions that people have today. So, Genesis speaks to believers, and it invites us to behold our God, and Genesis speaks to skeptics and appeals and says, consider this God.

[16:41] That brings us to the third point, the main character of Genesis. Genesis. The main character of Genesis is not Adam, or Eve, or Noah, or Abraham.

The main character in Genesis is God. In the first chapter alone, God's name is mentioned more than 30 times. And so, before we jump into any of our other questions about Genesis, the first question we need to ask is this, what is Genesis telling us about God?

God. You see, what would have been striking and distinctive to everyone else in the ancient world is not the topics that Genesis addresses, but it's the God who Genesis describes, who's unique and distinct.

As we look through these 11 chapters, we're going to see three things about the God whom Genesis describes, and for the rest of our time this morning, I want to focus on these three things. First, in the first two chapters, Genesis 1 and 2, we see that God is the good creator of everything and everyone.

You know, if you read these other creation stories from the ancient Near East, every one of them describes the creation of the world as a fight, a violent struggle between rival gods or a manipulative ploy by one deity trying to undermine another.

[18:05] But in the biblical account of creation, there's only one God who is not full of internal conflict, but rather who creates all things purposefully through his word.

If you look at chapter one, there's a repeated refrain, and God said, and then God saw that it was good. In the other ancient creation stories, the gods create human beings to be their slaves, to do their work so that the gods can sit back and relax.

Mankind shall be charged with the service of the gods that they might be at ease, says the Atrahasis epic Babylonian story. But in Genesis, it's different.

First, we see that God works. God is portrayed as an architect building the universe, and then as an artist, creating it, filling it, and then as a gardener, cultivating it.

There's a dignity to human work, and God is not trying to stop working by making human beings to do his undignified work.

[19 : 25] Rather, God works, and so do his people, and also God rests. How does the creation story end? Chapter two, verse one, thus the heavens and the earth were finished, and all the host of them.

And on the seventh day, God finished his work that he had done, and he rested on the seventh day from all his work that he had done. So God blessed the seventh day and made it holy.

You see, God rests. In other words, God has joyful delight in the world that he has made, and God shares that joyful delight with his image-bearing creatures.

You see, the Sabbath is not just something that only God can practice, but as we go on in the Old Testament, God gives it as a gift to his people. He says, I want you to experience the joyful delight that I have in looking at the world that I have made, and even joyful delight in the work that I'm doing in you.

You see, the biblical God, unlike the other gods of the ancient Near East, the biblical God is not simply a projection of greedy, fickle, selfish, conflict-prone humanity.

[20 : 41] The biblical God is not just a reflection of the ancient cultures in which these books originated. The biblical God is distinct and unique. He is the good creator of everything and everyone.

You know, not many people today still read the ancient Babylonian and Egyptian and Canaanite creation myths. Right?

Not many people, pretty much only scholars read the Atrahasis' epic, some of the other Sumerian and Egyptian creation stories, but billions of people still read Genesis.

It's never gone out of print. Around the world, in different periods of history and vastly different cultures from where it is written, people have found that Genesis has a message that is still worth considering, still thought-provoking.

One scholar who wrote a commentary on the book of Genesis is Leon Cass. He was a professor at the University of Chicago. He may still be there. But he wrote this in his introduction to his commentary.

[21 : 51] He did not identify himself as a religious believer, but he wrote this in his introduction. He said, More and more Americans are owning up to the fact that something is missing in their lives.

More and more of us are looking for spiritual direction and guidance. It seemed like only yesterday that the Enlightenment overthrew the rule of religious orthodoxy and promised an earthly paradise of human fulfillment based only on scientific reason.

Yet today, the enlightened children of skeptics, and he includes himself as a child of skeptics, he says, We are discovering for ourselves that man does not live or live well by bread alone, nor by bread and circuses, and that science's account of human life and the world is neither adequate to the subject nor satisfying to the longings of the soul.

So he says, We need to reconsider our present beliefs and reexamine seemingly rejected or abandoned alternatives. This includes, he goes on, a serious reexamination of the Bible.

And he says, The best place to start is at the beginning with a book known as Genesis. You see, Genesis continues to speak to people who are looking for these answers to these big questions of meaning and identity and purpose.

[23 : 19] You know, maybe you've, maybe you have come to believe in the God of the Bible. Maybe you've had an experience of God's goodness that has drawn you to him.

Maybe there's been an answered prayer or a merciful intervention or an undeserved gift or just an unexplainable but undeniable sense that God is there and God is real. And Genesis is saying that the God you've begun to experience is even greater than you can imagine.

The whole universe is a theater of his glory. Abraham Kuyper once said, There is not a square inch in the whole domain of our human existence over which Jesus Christ, who is sovereign over all, does not cry, Mine.

Genesis says, God made it all and he is present in it all. You know, imagine Moses. Imagine Moses standing in the wilderness.

He's led the people, he's led the children of Israel out of slavery in Egypt. They've experienced God's miraculous power. They've experienced this dramatic deliverance.

[24 : 26] They were once slaves and now they're free. And imagine Moses reading the first chapter of Genesis to them in the beginning. God created the heavens and the earth.

What's he saying? He's saying, The God who you've begun to experience who has, in a personal way, is the one who spoke the entire world into existence and rules over everything, who formed and filled the earth and rules over the nations.

Behold your God. He's not just the God of your little life or your little community. He's the God of everything. He's the one who created all nations.

The good creator of everything and everyone. That's the first thing we see about God. The second thing we see about God in Genesis is that God's not only the good creator of everything and everyone, but he's also the judge of all.

And his judgments are altogether righteous. And we'll see this throughout chapters three through eleven. You see, Genesis isn't just the story of how God's good and beautiful world began to be.

[25 : 34] It's also a story of how human beings mess things up over and over again. Of course, it all starts in the garden.

Chapter three tells the story of when Adam and Eve ate of the forbidden tree. And in doing so, they were deciding that the God who had planted the garden and placed them in it and installed them as king and queen over it, they were deciding that that God is actually not very good after all.

And instead, they decide that a serpent and intruder on the scene is far more trustworthy. And then they decide that they should have the right to draw their own boundaries and be accountable only to themselves and that the world would be better that way.

But have we not seen over and over in history that when every individual insists on being their own ruler and judge, drawing their own moral boundaries and being accountable only to themselves, social harmony and mutual trust quickly vanish.

Of course, that's what we see in the aftermath of Genesis 3. We see alienation from God resulting in shame and distrust within marriage. Genesis 3, 16.

[27 : 01] We see frustration and futility and work. Verse 17 through 19. We see pain and agony and childbearing and continuing the human race. Chapter 4 begins with a brother killing a brother and it ends with a husband threatening his wives.

Yes, wives, plural. By the time we get to chapter 6, the verdict is that the whole world is full of violence and exploitation and every intention of the thoughts of the human heart is only evil continually.

Chapter 6, verse 5. And there is no remedy in sight. And so God sends a flood to judge the wickedness of the world.

Now as I said, every other, almost every other ancient culture at the time had a story of a flood sent by the gods to judge the human race at some time or another. That by itself would not have seemed at all unusual or controversial to any of Israel's neighbors.

But in many of the other flood stories, the gods send the flood for rather petty reasons. So in the Atrahasis epic, Babylonian story, the gods get annoyed with people because they're having too many children and the world is getting too noisy.

[28 : 21] And so the gods decide to wipe out the world so they can have peace and quiet again. Yeah, that's what the story says.

But the god of the Bible is not petty or cranky or immature. Psalm 19, verse 9 says, the judgments of the Lord are true and altogether righteous.

You see, if you look at God's judgments, God's judgments are always based on reality. Now, Abraham Lincoln quoted that verse, the judgments of the Lord are true and altogether righteous, in his second inaugural address.

as he looked upon a nation nearly destroyed not by a watery flood, but by a bloody civil war. He said, this horrible war that we have endured could very well have been God's righteous judgment on our nation for 250 years of slavery.

Now, some of us hesitate to even suggest something like that, that God's righteous judgment could be manifested in human history. I think many of us want to be clear, rightly, that not every natural disaster is an expression of God's moral disapproval directed at particular individuals or cultures or movements.

[29 : 54] We want to be careful not to blame victims, and those are important concerns. The doctrine of God's judgment can be misused in harmful ways.

But in Romans 1, the apostle Paul says that God's judgment against human wickedness is manifested in the present day in part by God giving people over to their own unrestrained desires, by letting sin take its own inherently destructive course.

God is still the judge of all, and his judgments are still altogether righteous. And when we see that, we might ask, if human beings continue to mess things up, like Genesis shows us over and over again, if we continue to spoil God's good world, and if God's judgments are true and altogether righteous, does Genesis and the Bible offer any hope to people like us?

God's good God's good and the Bible is not God's good because the third thing that Genesis shows us about God is that God is a merciful Savior who offers new beginnings.

see, there are three times that we'll see in the opening chapters of Genesis where things go way south. First, in the garden with the treachery of Adam and Eve.

[31 : 25] God entrusts them with such a wonderful gift, and they betray God. Second, things go way downhill leading up to the flood in the spreading violence and exploitation.

And then third, in the ungodly ambitions of the Tower of Babel. We'll get to that in time. And each time God brings judgment, Adam and Eve get exiled from the garden because they've spoiled it. They've put the wrong person in charge. The wicked world gets destroyed in the flood so that the cycle of violence doesn't just continually perpetuate itself over and over again.

The people at Babel end up confused with their ambitions frustrated. But every time that God brings judgment, God also shows mercy.

Look at chapter three and verse 15. God is speaking after what's gone wrong in the garden.

[32 : 44] The Lord God said to the serpent, verse 15, I will put enmity between you and the woman and between your offspring and her offspring. He shall bruise your head and you shall bruise his heel.

Now this is sort of an verse that's hard to understand. It's a bit enigmatic, but it's basically talking about an ongoing conflict between the deceitful serpent and the offspring of Eve.

But it says, he shall bruise your head. In other words, a child of Eve would one day crush the head of the deceitful serpent.

See, everybody knows you kill a snake by crushing its head. And of course, the New Testament says that Jesus Christ is that one who has defeated, trampled down death by death, who has killed sin or overcome sin.

And the New Testament says that the deceiver and liar and enemy of our souls will not ultimately have the last word because Jesus Christ has come. See, one more sign of mercy in chapter 3, verse 21, as God prepares to send Adam and Eve away from the garden.

[34 : 00] It says, the Lord God made for Adam and his wife garments of skins and clothed them. Adam and Eve are sent away from God's presence and they're ashamed and vulnerable in their nakedness and in his mercy God clothed them.

Of course, an animal would have had to die for those clothes to be made and eventually God's son himself would have to die but God would take it upon himself to restore the honor of his own image-bearing creatures and to clothe us in his righteousness and to call us once more his children. So God shows mercy to Adam and Eve in chapter 3 and then God shows mercy to Noah and his family after the flood. You read the story of the flood and everything is getting destroyed and then you get to chapter 8 verse 1 which is the center of the flood story and it says but God remembered Noah.

God makes a wind blow and the waters subside and then chapter 9 verse 1 it says God blessed Noah. You see on the other side of the flood there's hope of a new beginning.

brothers and sisters Jesus Christ is even better than Noah because he brings us through the flood of God's judgment into his promise his covenant of grace.

[35 : 31] And Jesus God remembers us in his mercy and he blesses us with his favor. And then we might get to the third failure of humanity chapter 11 the tower of Babel and you might think man three strikes what happens when you get three strikes you're out.

Right? Okay God gave Adam and Eve another chance. Okay God gave Noah another chance. Tower of Babel forget it. Wipe them out and done. Maybe make another universe millions of years later.

But no. Once again God chose mercy. Out of the blue God makes a promise to Abraham in chapter 12 and says I'll bless you and make you a great nation and through you all the families of the earth will be blessed one day.

I will take your family and your descendants and I will work through them to renew the whole world. You see the God who made the world and called it good has not abandoned his creation.

God hasn't given up on us. Genesis isn't just about what God did long ago to get everything started.

[36 : 56] No. Genesis shows us that the God of the Bible is a God of new beginnings. It's not just that God can start with nothing. With a formless and empty template and build it up and fill it up and make it into everything that we see today.

It's that God can start with broken people who have been twisted by sin and hurt and who have hurt others and God can renew us through his son Jesus Christ.

He can make us even better than new. 2 Corinthians 4 verse 6 said God who said let light shine out of darkness has made his light shine in our hearts to give us the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.

See we see that God is the good creator of everyone and everything we see that God is the judge and his judgments are altogether righteous but we also see that he is a merciful savior who offers a new beginning.

What's your anchor in this world in this exhilarating and disorienting world? Where are you looking to find meaning and identity and purpose that lasts?

[38 : 17] I pray that you would find your anchor in the character of this God. Let's pray. God we praise you that you are the good God whose mercy is over all that you have made.

We praise you that you are a just God. Your judgments are true and altogether righteous. We thank you for the mercy and grace that you've shown us in sending your son Jesus Christ.

We thank you Lord for those words that if anyone is in Christ there is a new creation. The old has gone and the new has come. Lord we pray today.

We pray that as we look into the book of Genesis this fall we pray as we go throughout this week ahead of us that we would be anchored in these truths about who you are. We pray Lord that where we need your mercy and grace for a new beginning would you pour that into our hearts and lives and relationships.

Lord would we know that the same power that spoke the world into existence and the same power that raised Jesus Christ from the dead is at work in all who believe in Christ.

[39 : 53] Lord would you strengthen and renew us for the sake of your son Jesus Christ we pray. Amen.