

Foundations for Faith

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[0 : 00] We are recording. So last week, so last week we did the beginning of Genesis.

We got all the way to creation and did not finish what I could have said about creation. So it's, there's so much, so much.

I could have done five weeks on Genesis for sure, because I have an outline here that does not finish Genesis by any stretch. So I'm okay with that, because what I hope to do here is point us in a direction of a way to read Genesis and the other books of really the whole Bible, but especially the Old Testament, the foundational truths.

That's what I'm trying to pull out is some foundational big ideas. And I can't pull them all out, because there are a lot of them. But what I hope to do is sort of model a way of looking at Scripture to help us think that way.

So I'm a person who thinks details and events and this narrative portion, you know, this, the story of Noah and the flood.

[1 : 24] You know, and I think about that pretty contained. Like I do think about, well, what does it show us about Christ? What is it? What is it? How does it point to Christ? How does it? You know, I think about some of those things.

But what are the big ideas that undergird all of what we believe? And without which our neighbors, who increasingly don't have this foundation, our neighbors are thinking really differently from the way we are.

I forget if I said this last week, but I have an aunt who's, she's in her 80s. She's very much a child of the 60s and the sexual revolution and all of this.

Very bright, very interesting, very curious, really a wonderful, warm person. But we've had conversations, and I've realized we are on a different planet.

Like the way she thinks about God is not as a personal God at all. Like that's sort of where I start.

I've been a Christian for a long time, so this is what's in my head. And even as a child in a non-Christian home, the idea was that God was a personal God that you could like pray to.

[2 : 39] There was not a real faith in that God, but that's what I was taught as a child to the extent I was taught anything. But so anyway, the world has changed.

And so that's what I want to look at. So it's okay with me if we don't hit everything because, you know, you can go back and read Genesis and begin thinking about, for instance, we're not going to get to Abraham for Pete 6.

You know, the outline goes through Noah, and I may mention some other things a little bit about Babel and Abraham. But, you know, there are things all the way through.

So as you read, not just Genesis, but whatever you're reading, I just want to encourage you to say, so what? Like, okay, this happened. So what?

What does this tell us about who we are, who God is, how the world works, the givens that God has built into creation because he is the creator?

[3 : 46] So this week we're going to start with the fall, which is another, you know, big one. So the account is in Genesis 3.

And I'm not going to read the whole thing. But let me just read some of it.

So in Genesis 3, it begins, Now the serpent was more crafty than any other beast of the field that the Lord God had made. He said to the woman, Did God actually say, You shall not eat of any tree in the garden?

And the woman said to the serpent, We may eat of the fruit of the trees in the garden. But God said, You shall not eat of the fruit of the tree that is in the midst of the garden. Neither shall you touch it, lest you die.

But the serpent said to the woman, You shall not surely die. For God knows that when you eat of it, your eyes will be opened. And you will be like God, knowing good and evil.

[4 : 50] So 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 to her husband, who was with her, and he ate. Then the eyes of both were opened, and they knew that they were naked. And they sewed fig leaves together and made themselves loincloths.

And if you are familiar with this story, which I gather many of you are, we see how this eventually works out.

And this disobedience is a big deal. So I want to first talk about, what did we learn about sin in this passage?

This is the beginning of sin, right? And I want to look at Eve and what's going on in her head, right?

[5 : 50] We don't know exactly, but we know that Eve knows the command not to eat of the fruit. It seems pretty clear. She kind of expands on it by saying, neither shall you touch it, which we have no record of God actually saying.

So she's allowed a little more law to get in there. But she knows she's not supposed to eat of the tree. That's clear.

But she listens to the serpent. She gives him an audience. Might have been wiser not to engage once she realized he was going to call God into question, which is what he does.

He talks in these sort of half-truths, right? He said, you will not surely die. Now, that's an outright lie. They don't die immediately, and the death that they die is a bigger death than just a physical death.

As we recognize it, it results in much more than just their physical death, which does come. So that's a lie, the serpent says.

[7 : 03] And then he says, for God knows that when you eat of it, your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil. So then she looks at the tree. Oh, it looks really good.

Like, that looks good. And it sounds like, I mean, the serpent is saying, God doesn't really have your best interests at heart. God's really holding out on you. Well, I wonder if that's true.

So she's weighing these things. And even in weighing those things and wondering if what God says is true, she's put herself in the place of judge over what is right and wrong, right?

So she listens to the serpent. She's listened to God. And she's like, okay, what do I choose? And that what do I choose is her expressing her autonomy and her, I get to decide, right?

And deciding what is good and what is evil apart from what God has said. So the essence of sin, as we see it here and we see it throughout scripture, this is just a broad, there are many ways to talk about sin, but it's autonomy.

[8 : 18] It's autonomy that I can decide, I can decide good and evil. I can be the judge over what is right and wrong, what's right for me, what's going to be better for me, what's more desirable, what do I want?

And it's not that we don't have choices and options under God. We absolutely do. But the rational approach, right, is to trust that God, who created the world, he actually knows better than I do what is right and what is wrong, what is good and what is evil, what is going to be better for me.

And she thinks the fruit is going to be better. And she chooses that. So she takes over the role of God in her life, right? She has decided the law for her.

And we do this every time we sin, right? We weigh the options. Sometimes that happens really fast, right? We're not always deliberating over whether we're going to snap at our spouse, right?

We don't give it a lot of thought always, which is the problem. But every time we choose to disobey God, we're taking on that position of I get to decide what's right and what's wrong.

[9 : 43] And this is what I'm going to do because it seems better to me. So that's really the essence of sin. And as it enters the world, and if we look around now, and this has been true throughout history since the fall, which affected all of us, which resulted in an inability to always choose the good, which Eve had.

She had an ability to say no to the serpent. And Christ restores that to us, right? When he chooses us and gives us grace and he puts his spirit in us, we are able to say no to sin.

We will never do it perfectly. But that faculty of choosing the good is restored to us. But throughout history, apart from Christ, we see autonomy is like the thing.

And it becomes more and more evident as you proceed through history. So people in ancient days didn't have a lot of choices.

They still could sin or not. But autonomy wasn't all, that wasn't all their world. But in many ways, it is all our world in the West.

[11:07] Autonomy is the expectation everywhere we look in our culture. And it's not rational any more than it was for Eve, right? If God created the earth, which again, that's a big if for most of, you know, most, many of our neighbors, if God created the world, he probably knows better than I do.

Remember, we talked about the creator-creature distinction and how God is outside creation and we are inside it. So our perspective, we only have, if we ignore God, we can only judge by what's around us.

And that's not gonna, that doesn't provide enough information. But God, God offers it. So our society assumes that autonomy and choice are necessarily, and of themselves, both possible and the ultimate good.

Right? If you look around, what, what do we think of when we think of freedom? We think the ability to do pursuit of happiness, to pursue these goods in our lives?

Sorry. The biblical view is that autonomy, and this is a quotation, autonomy, understood in the sense of being independent from God in our judgments and evaluations, is metaphysically impossible and relationally destructive.

[12:42] So we really cannot be independent of God because we are created beings. We are finite. We're subject to God.

He created us. He can, he sustains us. He gives us breath. We are not independent. We cannot exist independently, whether we acknowledge it or not. And as I said, after the fall, we have the added corruption of what sin does to our minds and our wills and the way it turns us into ourselves. The result of this autonomy, of this sin, rejecting God and pretending we are God, is alienation. And you can see all kinds of alienation throughout as then God unveils the curses and the results of their sin in the rest of chapter 3.

We're alienated from God. We're alienated from one another. You see the immediate blame game that goes on between Adam and Eve and the serpent. We're alienated from our bodies.

Like they're suddenly super uncomfortable that they're naked and they need to cover it. They're shamed. We're alienated from the rest of creation. All of creation is affected by our sin and the fall.

[14:09] All of creation has been unsettled and is corrupt. Not necessarily, thoroughly, none of these, like this corruption, none of it is so much that God's good creation isn't evident and that there aren't good things in creation or that our being created in the image of God doesn't go away.

We are still created in the image of God but we're warped and twisted and the creation, too, is likewise warped and twisted.

It's not what it should be. So that idea of what is now is neither what it always was nor what it was meant to be.

So God created it. Remember last week, God created it good and he said, this is good. And then the fall and it's not good. But that implies, you know, what it says is that there was a really good time.

It was created good. Eden was real and beautiful and a place of abundance and blessing.

Something happened and we know it as sin entered the world and now the world is not so good.

[15:29] We see goodness, but we also see evil. We see cruelty. There's murder within the first few chapters of Genesis. The world is not as it should be.

And I think, I think we all, Christian and non-Christian alike, sense that. Like, this isn't, we're not really supposed to be, you know, embroiled in war and embroiled in fierce arguments with one another and hating each other and we know racism is not, that's not ideal and we know, so, you know, even apart from Christ, we recognize that this is not, this is not what it should be.

But where do we get that sense? Like, why, why do we think that? And it's only because it once was as it should be. And that echo of Eden, you know, sort of, it, it affects our hearts.

It affects even non-Christians who don't believe in Eden and don't believe in a fall. so for, for many non-Christians, history is, it's just always what we know now.

That's all it was and that's all it's ever going to be. So, that's a really different viewpoint from, from what the Bible lays out for us, which is, first, that there was a beginning, as we talked about last week, there was a beginning to history, which implies an end.

[17 : 04] it began good and full of blessing and abundance and love and sweetness, but something happened.

So now what we have is not what it was meant to be, is not what it was, and we don't see this, well, we see it, we see it, the very beginnings of it in Genesis 3, 15, there will be something different. Something different is coming. if we think about the world, if the world was always riddled with sin, cruelty, hardship, death-dealing, tornadoes, and all the rest, we can opt for despair, like this is what it is, man, life is rough, and this is what we got, and let's make the best of it, or not, or let's give up, or whatever, you know, there's many philosophies that are within that, and that, you know, nihilism, or existentialism, these all result from that view that this is what it is, and this is what it's going to be, or in many periods of history, and many, you know, people throughout history have taken a more utopian view, like, we can make it better.

we can, as people evolve, and get smarter, and our technology improves, and we learn to love one another, we can make it what it should be, right?

But that's not true either, because of the way we're bound in sin, and we're not, we're not God. Only God, who is outside of creation, can change the trajectory.

[18 : 48] history. We have had millennia to do that, and we have never done it, right? And I don't feel like anyone can look around the world today and say, we're almost there, right?

I mean, we're not saying that. There was a period in history before World War I, there were a lot of people who said, we're almost there, look at us, look at what we're doing, look at the technologies we're developing, and we're gonna, you know, we're gonna apply science and reason, and we're gonna make the world beautiful.

And then World War I came, and this utter, senseless carnage of World War I disillusioned a lot of people, and it was followed not that long after by the Depression and World War II, and like, where's the hope?

Like, that does not look good. These, these two cataclysmic conflicts in the, in the 20th century, in the first half of the 20th century, took the wind out of the sails of a lot of utopians.

But there's still that temptation. We desire to, to see it get better. We look at, oh, maybe AI will save us. You know, maybe, you know, maybe that will, maybe that's the key, you know, to making the world a better place and loving each other and, and ending war and violence and all of this.

[20 : 21] The other dimension, which I briefly mentioned, the Bible adds, so, the narrative tells us that something happened that destroyed something good or that marred something good, and something's going to happen.

So, in Genesis 3, chapter 15, the Lord is speaking to the serpent, and he curses him, and in verse 15, he says, 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. Which would you rather have bruised, your head or your heel? Who's going to win this battle?

We know. We know. There's, like, we know. We know for real. But this is a promise embedded right here at the very beginning, right here in whatever it is, hours after the first sin.

God makes a promise that, serpent, you are not going to survive this. But, the, by humanity, the offspring of the woman will survive and will triumph over you.

[21 : 39] So, this promise way back here in Genesis is the first of many subsequent promises, as we know, of an ultimate victory and something different, not more of the same.

Promises of a future and a hope abound throughout the Bible. I think we know this. But, at first, they seem to be in the near future. there are short, what seem to be short-term promises.

Even the promise to Abraham will be fulfilled over generations. But it seems kind of localized. It seems specific to Abraham and his offspring, his children.

And it is in many ways. But it's also pointing forward to what we know as the coming of Christ, the redemption from sin and eventually the new heavens and the new earth where righteousness dwells.

That will be, that's coming. That's coming. Now, we don't have to bring it about. The utopian wants to, you know, apply reason and science and technology and all this to bring it about.

[23 : 01] And it's not wrong to apply reason and science and technology to improve people's lives. That's a good thing. But to hope that that is going to be the answer is foolishness.

It's not going to be the answer. God is going to bring about the new heavens and the new earth. And he planned it way back here. He actually planned it before the foundation of the earth. Right? But here's the first hint and it's right after the fall. the plan of God for redemption is first promised immediately after the fall but the promises multiply and widen in application up to and through the incarnation of Christ.

And in the New Testament we have promises of a new heaven and a new earth where righteousness dwells. The Bible gives us perspective on the world we live in that the world doesn't naturally have.

Right? We have the perspective in the narrative of scripture laid down in Genesis that what God created was good was very good.

[24 : 14] And something happened. Humanity brought sin into the world with the help of the serpent. And that messed everything up.

but there's a promise here that points to a future where everything will not still be messed up. Everything messed up will be cleaned up. That's the promise of scripture.

So as we talk with our neighbors I think we need to remember that the reality of the fall is really good news in a broken world. This is good news. It means this is not how it was meant to be. This is not how it should be. This is not this is not part of the design. We're not stuck with this necessarily. Right? It's something happened. So how do we get back to Eden or how do we as the Bible tells us move forward into something even better than Eden?

But often you know our we talk about the fall in the church but out there they're not talking about the fall. Like they're recognizing evil and awfulness and all of that but they don't realize they don't really stay conscious of if they have it in their heads at all.

[25 : 31] It wasn't always like this and it will not always be like this. So this is this is hope. This is our hope as believers. This is the hope of the scripture way back here in Genesis.

God has something better in mind than even Eden and the sin of Adam and Eve and the sins of so many throughout millennia will not thwart God's plan. God is going to bring about something really good.

The fall points us to hope and it is a belief more and more foreign to our neighbors. Evil is not original and it will not last. So that's good news.

Right? That's good news. And as we talk to people around us who don't have this foundation and who don't see like just the idea is like will someone sinned back there in a garden and what I suffer for it like what the heck you know there's all kinds of like it doesn't make sense and it doesn't sound like good news right?

But if we put it in the context of God's big story it's really good news that there was a fall. Now obviously there are ways in which it's not good news but essentially that's what it is and it points just like the beginning of the world and creation in the beginning God created the heavens and the earth points to an end when the history as we know it will come to an end so does the fall and in the way it's presented in Genesis chapter 3 point us to something different that's going to be way way better.

[27 : 14] So any questions or comments on that? I've read how the perception that most people seem to have about there's so much that's good about the world and that there's so much that's bad about the world can provide an opening to the gospel as you just pointed out.

There is this tension or paradox as we look around this and well might I share with you what the biblical perspective is or what Jesus' perspective is on why do we have that?

Yep. Yep. Or like why do we have these good things? Why are these absolutely wonderful things built into our creation? Not just the physical wonders which are stunning and amazing but love between a husband and a wife.

The joy of raising children, the joy of a good conversation, the joy of hanging out with friends and laughing.

All these joys, they're only there because God put them there, right? And why would that evolve out of sort of nothing? Why would that just come about any more than why would there be so much evil?

[28 : 55] Like apart from the story of scripture, the story the Bible tells, we don't have reasons for any of this stuff. So, yeah, thanks.

Yeah? It just seems like in the world people that really don't really know about the Bible and God stuff, they think it's like a fantasy type God or a kind of storytelling thing, but if you look at, if you

read the Bible and you look at what story is the Bible, you realize how much God really feels in reality.

Yeah. Yeah. Yeah, it's a great point. Yep. Yep. All right, so let's move on.

We're going to look at Noah and the flood. And again, I'm not going to read the whole story. I'm going to assume some of that's in your heads, but I want to read Genesis chapter 6 verses 5 through 7.

The Lord saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every intention of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. And the Lord regretted that he had made man on the earth and it grieved him to his heart.

[30 : 16] So the Lord said, I will blot out man whom I have created from the face of the land, man and animals and creeping things and birds of the heavens, for I'm sorry that I have made them.

But Noah found favor in the eyes of the Lord. So, let's see.

so that's how this account begins, right? God looks at the earth and wow, it is really a mess, right? I mean, he doesn't pull any punches, like every intention of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually.

And it just like, yeah, I mean, it's a, it's a jarring indictment of what humanity has become, right? But then this, this striking verse 8 there, Noah found favor in the eyes of the Lord.

[31 : 24] Now, what is that about? Was Noah such a good guy that God just couldn't resist? Well, I gotta save him because he's really good. He's the one who's really righteous and all the rest are losers, right?

But if you read it in the context of the account and all of scripture, we recognize that's not how God ever works.

He never looks at someone and says, you're who I need because you are really good or you're, you have, you have what we need here, you need to be the leader, right?

That's not how he goes about choosing anyone in scripture. So why would that be true here with Noah? Noah found favor in the eyes of the Lord, and when we read verse 9, the very next verse, these are the generations of Noah.

Noah was a righteous man, blameless in his generation. Noah walked with God. So first, we have this word that says, God looked on Noah with favor, right?

[32 : 37] It's basically what he said, or grace is another way to look at that word favor, right? Noah found favor or grace in the eyes of the Lord, and only then do we hear that Noah was a righteous man.

God chooses unrighteous people, because that's all he's got to choose from, right? We're all unrighteous in this generation of Noah's generation, all the thoughts and intentions of their hearts were only evil continually.

God chooses Noah. Well, why? Well, we don't know. That's hidden in the mind of God. But I think we can be pretty confident that it wasn't because Noah was such a good guy, because that's never the way it works in Scripture.

God chooses sinners. He chooses people who are fallen and broken and sinful, who are rebellious. This is who he chooses.

And then what happens is, the pattern of Scripture, the chosen person, right, in this case Noah, responds to God, enabled by God to respond, responds in faith and obedience.

[34 : 01] God so, right here in the story of Noah, we have the reminder or the, like, it's one of the first accounts where we see God's grace.

Now, we've seen it in Adam and Eve for sure. He could have just wiped them out and just stopped right there, but God did not, and he continues his intention for the earth and his creation.

and here in Noah, we see it again. Noah found favor or grace. Noah was righteous, but the order is important. The pattern throughout the Bible is that God chooses a person and that person trusts and obeys God in consequence, not the other way around.

God's dealings with Noah reverse the performance leads to reward, dynamic, to one of blessing leads to response. God does not wait until Noah comes up to scratch before blessing him, nor does he wait until Noah has built the boat before declaring him righteous.

That's the big obedience that we see in Noah. He does what God tells him to do, and we see that, but that's after he's found favor in God's eyes.

[35 : 22] God's blessing comes unbidden gratuitously. We talked about how creation itself is gratuitous, that it doesn't need to happen, that it comes as a gift and as a blessing.

And here this blessing on Noah comes the same way. It comes out of the love of God's heart and not God responding to something good in Noah.

God's blessing comes, I said that, okay. It transforms Noah's action from performance orchestrated to win God's favor, which is how the world works, right?

We perform and we expect a reward. He transforms that into a grateful response to God's loving initiative. initiative. A number of these quotes here come from the book Biblical Critical Thinking by Christopher Watkin and that was a quote from Watkin.

And I am going to put together a little bibliography so you have these titles. So this is utterly foreign to the fallen world, from pagan religions to sophisticated stock traders outside the kingdom, and we who are believers as well need regular reminders of this pattern.

[36 : 48] So strongly does our culture and our sin push against it. God doesn't reward us because we perform well. God has grace, he chooses us, and he enables us to respond in faith and obedience.

And that's the pattern that we see. And, you know, on this side of Christ's death and resurrection and we have the New Testament that's a lot clearer to us.

But still, don't we all need reminders of this? Like, I mean, I need it every day. I need to remember that I'm not my good, whatever it is.

First, it's enabled only by God and not by me. And second, it doesn't make God love me more. God doesn't love me more than he did when I was screwing everything up.

Right? And the reality is I continue to screw everything up as I even do some good things. Right?

But it's all grace. It's all grace. The world is perform in order to gain the prize.

[38 : 03] This is what we do. Do what you have to do to get what you want. And we know this is how the world works. Right? You go to work.

You expect to be paid. You do well. You expect to be promoted. Get a raise. This is how it works. This is another quotation from Watkin.

It says, Grace is not an outworking of Noah's character, family situation, or culture. Such an event of grace is possible in the biblical world because God radically transcends the created order and is not contained or constrained by its logical or natural possibilities.

We do not live in a closed system, but in a creation whose creator is living and active. And again, that goes back to the foundation of creation.

He is outside creation, and he created it. And he is both transcendent, like outside and above, and imminent.

[39 : 12] He's active within his creation. So that's where we see, that's where grace comes in, right? Because he cares, because he loves us.

He created out of love and for blessing. And he continues to do that, to pour that out on us, even though we don't deserve it. We've shown that over and over again.

Another thing to think about with the flood is that God saves us from himself. The waters that drowned the human race were also the waters that floated the ark and saved Noah and his family. We have the judgment of God against evil, the righteous and good judgment of God against the evil rebellion of the world. And then we have him choosing Noah and saving Noah and his family right from out of the midst of that judgment.

And as we look through scripture, we see this over and over again, right? And we see it most poignantly, of course, on the cross. Jesus takes the judgment that we deserve.

[40 : 26] God pours out his judgment on this man, Christ Jesus, and he takes the judgment from us and saves us out of it.

Right? We deserved the judgment that Jesus took for us. God rescues us from his own judgment. God rescues us from God.

And in the world, we'll find judgment and grace, judgment and love, or whatever, as antithetical.

Like, they don't go together. But in scripture, we see them knit together in the heart of God. He is both infinitely just and will punish sin, and he is infinitely merciful, and he opens salvation to all.

He invites every person to come to him and trust and be saved. God rescues the heart. He offers the heart to us.

[41 : 38] Judgment and grace flow from the same source, not from a good God fighting against a bad God. You'll see that in religions throughout history. Noah is saved not because he flees from God's anger, but because in the midst of that anger, he trusts God's word.

It is God whom we fear because of his just wrath against sin, our sin, but it is in God that we hope in the promise of his grace.

So judgment and mercy are not contrary, and God is not one sometimes and the other sometimes. He's always all of it. God is and that's challenging for us to put together, right?

And that's true in the world. Again, in Genesis, we have the beginnings of themes, these big ideas that run through Scripture.

And the gospel of Jesus makes no sense. things that are not and if our neighbors, our co-workers, our family members do not have the biblical undergirding laid in the earliest chapters of the Bible, and many will not, we need to be mindful of that, or our communication will have no resonance.

[43 : 00] many, many years ago, there was some kind of evangelism campaign that was promoted in the church I was in as a teenager.

And I'm trying to remember, there was this key word, like this key phrase, and you were supposed to go around asking your friends, you know, something like, I shouldn't have even started because I can't remember the phrase.

But it had to do with God saving, right? And again, my aunt, the same aunt, she was like, from what? Like, it was not evident that there was anything to be saved from, and this is in the 70s, right?

And that was, and I'm not saying it was new in the 70s either, but here's this woman of the world, who's like, well, what are you talking about God saves?

Like, who needs it, right? So without the undergirding that we have, even in just these, you know, first 10 chapters of Genesis, without that, the gospel makes no sense.

[44 : 15] And we need to remember that our neighbors don't necessarily have that undergirding, whether they've heard the stories or not, right? I mean, and many people will have heard about the flood, they will have heard about, but they will not have, apart from God's grace, extracted from it what the Bible is teaching us, what Moses wants us to understand.

That is the foundation for all that we believe. So I'm not going to go into the rest of it, we're going to close soon, unlike last week, I'm sorry I really ran over.

As we move forward in the scriptures, we have Babel and the tower, in which, if you remember, people want to, they decide to build a tower to heaven, to reach into the heavens, to make a name for themselves.

How familiar is that to us in this culture? We want to make a name for ourselves, when in fact, God who created us has a name for us.

He has an identity for us, and we just need to walk into that. We don't need to make a name for ourselves, right? And that comes out of a sinful pride and autonomy.

[45 : 38] Like, I'm going to do it myself, I'm going to build this ladder up to heaven, or this tower, or whatever it was. So, all kinds of things to pull out of that, and how does our language, like, we didn't talk about in creation how God spoke, and it was.

What are the implications of that? That was, you know, this is some of the things that I just didn't unpack, because we don't have time, but God is a speaking God. What does that mean for us?

How do we see that in our culture, maybe being lost track of? What's the primacy of language supposed to be? What is it supposed to be? Okay, so here in Babel we get language again, right?

He confuses their language. We come to the promise to Abraham, it sets up the whole rest of the narrative about Israel, and this is the beginnings of God's plan, not really the beginnings, but this is a fresh moment in the ancient world where God calls Abraham and he's going to give Abraham all his descendants who are going to be a people of God.

So the story narrows to Abraham and his offspring. The remaining chapters of Genesis unpack the establishment of the people of Israel through whom God will carry out his plan of redemption.

[47 : 09] Over and over we see sinners who fail and a God who triumphs despite their sin. We see this throughout Genesis. Obviously we see it through the rest of Scripture, but we see again that the people God chooses are not necessarily good.

They're not good people, right? Abraham, like, throws his wife under the bus a couple times because he wants to protect himself. And we see the failures of his descendants as well.

And yet God continues his plan. We see God's providence at work to maintain that line of faithful Israel despite barren women, kidnapped sons, murderous brothers.

In Joseph in particular, Moses shows us God's providence as over years he protects and prospers Joseph, notwithstanding many serious setbacks, and he brings his people to Egypt.

What's that about? Well, so next week we're going to look at little bits of, I'll just say it this way, Exodus. Okay, so we're going to look at that, look at the Exodus from Israel and try and see what does this add to our picture of how the world works, of who God is, who we are.

[48 : 29] So that's basically what we're doing. But I just encourage you as you read, particularly through the Pentateuch, but all through Scripture, ask yourself, so what?

Why does it say this here? Why does it refer back to, you know, there are references that refer back to these earlier chapters, right? Adam and Eve come up.

You know, why is that here at this moment? Just to think about Scripture, not just reading the details and getting the story, which is important, the details are important and true and valuable, but also looking at what is this telling me about God?

What is this telling me about the world? And how do my neighbors look at this? How do my neighbors see this? So, that's it. So I'm going to close, and you're welcome to talk to me anytime if you have any questions or comments or anything like that, but let me close in prayer.

Father, as we look at what happened in the Garden of Eden, as we look at the sin of the world around Noah and his family, we see your grace, we see your determination to bless and to do good to the people you have created.

[49 : 56] Even in the midst of our rebellion and sin, when it looks like we can't get any worse, you choose a man and make him righteous, and he carries on the human race.

And we see you working out your promises. Throughout the book of Genesis and throughout the scriptures, we see your grace, and oh God, how we need your grace.

Remind us that it is not our performance that gains us the reward of relationship with you, but it is your grace. And help us, as we reflect on that, to then walk out and freely obey and trust the God who created us, who knows all things.

In Jesus' name, Amen.