

WHO WE ARE

GENESIS 1-12

CREATION • IDENTITY • COVENANT • MISSION



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WELCOME

Who We Are: Genesis 1–12

AI, helpful or steer clear? euthanasia? the death penalty? politics? gender? relationships? money? time? work? family? purpose?

Every day we are faced with questions and decisions about how we should live and what we should think. Some decisions we make almost without thinking. Others we wrestle with deeply. Some we later regret; others prove to be wise. But beneath all these decisions lies a more fundamental question: What shapes the way we see the world?

All of us view life through a particular lens...a worldview. It shapes what we believe about what is true and good, what it means to be human, what gives life meaning and purpose, and ultimately how we choose to live.

As Christians, we believe that God has not left us to work these things out for ourselves. God has revealed himself to us through his word, the Bible, and in the person of Jesus Christ. If we want to live wisely and faithfully in an increasingly complex world, we need more than opinions, instincts or the prevailing ideas of our culture. We need a worldview shaped by God and his word.

And that takes us back to the beginning. In Genesis 1–12 we encounter some of the foundational truths of the Bible. We discover who God is, who we are and what we were created for. These chapters give us a framework through which we can know God, understand ourselves, our relationships and the world in which God has placed us.

‘Who We Are: Genesis 1–12’ has been designed to help us build that foundation. As we explore these chapters together, our hope is not simply that we will understand Genesis more deeply, but that God will increasingly shape our thoughts and actions, the choices we make, and the people we are becoming.

MADE IN HIS IMAGE

Big idea

Genesis gives us the basis of a Christian worldview. It tells us who God is, who we are, our identity and purpose, and God's plan for the world. We are purposefully made in God's image, blessed by Him, and given both privilege and responsibility.

Read Genesis 1:1-31

We all have a worldview – underlying beliefs that shape how we view time, relationships, work, ourselves and the decisions we make. Genesis begins to form a Christian worldview with four simple words: 'In the beginning God.'

We must be careful not to ask Genesis 1 to answer questions it was not primarily written to answer. Its purpose is to tell us about God, about us, and about God's purposes. The first thing it tells us is that there is a God, and He makes Himself known.

God is independent and self-sufficient. He is powerful and creative: He speaks the world into being. Where there was formlessness and emptiness, God creates form and fullness. Creation has structure, logic and purpose; it is not a haphazard affair.

Then the chapter reaches its climax: human beings. God creates male and female in His image and calls what He has made 'very good'. We are purposefully made, able to know our Creator, called to bear something of His glory, and entrusted to care for His world.

Discuss

- What does Gen 1 teach us about God before it tells us anything about ourselves?
- Where do you see God's power, creativity, structure and purpose in the chapter?
- If Genesis 1 is primarily about God, us and His purposes rather than being a scientific account. How does that affect the way you read the chapter?
- What does it mean to you that human beings are 'purposefully made' rather than accidental?

- From verses 26–28, what privileges come with being made in God's image? What responsibilities?
- Why is it significant that God calls His creation – including humanity – 'very good'?
- How does God's way of ruling by caring and providing, shape the way human beings should 'rule' creation?

NURTURE

Let us ask the question, 'Who am I?' We can build identity around profession, relationships, possessions, culture, what others think of us, or what we achieve. Genesis gives us a deeper answer: we are made by God, in God's image, to know Him and represent Him.

Jesus is the perfect representation of God's image. In knowing our Creator through Jesus, we find our true value and worth – and the life we were made to live.

Discuss

- Where do you most naturally look for your identity and worth?
- How would your decisions change if your starting point was: 'I am purposefully made, valued and loved by God'?
- Who around you may have been made to feel worthless? How could you help them see their God-given value?
- How should being God's representative affect the way you use your time, resources and care for creation?

ACT

Each morning remind yourself: 'I am made in God's image, valued by Him, and given privilege and responsibility.' Then let that truth shape one concrete decision.

- As someone valued and loved by God, what will you do differently this week?
- As someone made with privilege and responsibility, how will this shape the way you spend your time?
- What could you do to help someone else discover their value and worth?

You may like to pray:

Powerful and creative God,

Thank You that You made us purposefully in Your image.

Help us to find our identity and worth in You, to know You through Jesus, and to live as Your faithful representatives in the world. Amen.

MADE FOR CONNECTION

Big idea

Relationships are essential to life because God designed us that way. We were made for friendship with God and friendship with one another – to live in dependence, commitment and love.

Read Genesis 2:4-25

Relationships give us great joy and sometimes great sadness. They can be tricky to navigate, but they matter deeply to all of us. Genesis 2 says that this is not accidental – it is by God's design.

God forms human beings from the dust and breathes into them the breath of life. We are dependent on God. The picture is one of close, personal contact: human beings are made to find fulfilment in God and to relate to Him at the deepest level of commitment.

Then, for the first time in the creation account, God says something is 'not good': 'It is not good for the man to be alone.' The word 'Helper' does not imply inferiority – the word is most often used in the Bible of God Himself. The woman is alongside the man, his equal, sharing privilege and responsibility. Marriage expresses this relational design uniquely, but not exclusively. Friendship, family and Christian community also reflect the truth that we were made for relationship.

Discuss

- What do the dust and God's breath in verse 7 tell us about both our creatureliness and our dependence on God?
- What does the garden show us about God's provision, beauty and generosity?
- How do verses 15-17 hold together privilege, responsibility, freedom and obedience?
- Why is verse 18 – 'It is not good for the man to be alone' – so striking after the repeated 'good' of Genesis 1?
- What does the passage teach about the equality and partnership of men and women?
- How does the phrase 'bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh' express closeness and belonging?
- Where do you see the wider principle that human beings were made for relationships, not only marriage?

NURTURE

Relationships can be a source of loneliness, loss, conflict and pain. The perfect harmony of Eden is no longer our experience. But the good news of the Bible is that through Jesus our brokenness is healed and relationship with God is restored. Jesus came in human form that we might know Him, and He says to His followers, 'I have called you friends.' Reconciled to God, we are also called into reconciled relationship with one another.

Discuss

- How would you describe your friendship with God at present?
- Where have relationships brought you joy? Where have they brought pain or loneliness?
- Who has God placed 'alongside' you to share life, responsibility, friendship or service?
- Is there a relationship in which Jesus is calling you toward forgiveness, reconciliation, patience or deeper love?

ACT

This week, treat relationships as part of your God-given calling rather than as an interruption to everything else. Make deliberate space for friendship with God and with another person.

- Spend unhurried time with God in prayer and His word.
- Contact someone who may be lonely or carrying relational pain.
- Practise Jesus' command: 'Love each other as I have loved you.' What would that look like in one relationship this week?

You may like to pray:

Relational God, thank You that You made us to know You and to know one another. Restore what is broken through Jesus, deepen our friendship with You, and teach us to love others as Christ has loved us. Amen.

MADE FOR HOPE

Big idea

Genesis 3 explains why the world we experience does not match the good world of Genesis 1-2. Human beings reject God's word and rule, bringing shame, blame, broken relationships, pain and death. Yet right here, at the beginning of the Bible, God gives a hope that shapes all of Scripture.

Read Genesis 3:1-24

The children's story 'Who Sank the Boat?' exposes something familiar in all of us: 'It wasn't my fault.' As soon as things go wrong in Genesis 3, Adam blames Eve and Eve blames the serpent.

Genesis 1 showed a powerful, creative God and people made in His image with privilege and responsibility. Genesis 2 showed that we were designed for friendship with God and one another. Genesis 3 explains how that identity and purpose became distorted and how God will reverse this.

The serpent tempts Eve to disobey God's word; Adam joins her. Their relationship with God is immediately marred. They are ashamed, they hide, and they blame. The consequences spread through relationships, work, childbirth and creation itself. Most significantly, death enters: 'for dust you are and to dust you will return.'

In Genesis 3:15 we see a promise of hope: one descended from the woman will crush the serpent. Descending from Eve and born of Mary comes Jesus. 'In Adam, we all sunk the boat; but in Jesus, all can be rescued.'

Discuss

- How does the serpent distort or challenge God's word in verses 1-5?
- What do Adam and Eve's actions suggest about what they believe about God?
- Trace what breaks after their disobedience: relationship with God, relationship with one another, work, the body, creation and life itself.
- Why do you think hiding and blame appear so quickly?
- Where do you see the instinct to say 'It wasn't my fault' in yourself or in society?
- What hope is introduced in verse 15?
- How can we connect that hope to Jesus, Romans 5 and the contrast between Adam and Christ?

NURTURE

The hope of Genesis 3 enables us to begin living out our true identity and purpose again. We remain in a world where pain and suffering are real, but through Jesus we can be reconciled to God and begin to live differently.

Those who follow Jesus live between what Jesus has already accomplished and the future God has promised. As we work for reconciliation, love, justice and restoration now we know evil, pain and death will not have the final word.

- Where do you see Genesis 3 most clearly in your own life – hiding, blame, shame, broken relationship, frustration, pain?
- Where do you need to stop blaming and take responsibility before God?
- What difference does it make that Christianity's answer to human brokenness is not simply 'try harder' but rescue and reconciliation in Jesus?
- Where could you begin living now in the light of God's promised future?

ACT

Do some 'business with God' this week. Name one area of sin or brokenness honestly, receive God's grace in Christ, and take one practical step toward restoration.

- Is there someone you need to forgive, apologise to, or seek reconciliation with?
- Is there suffering or injustice where you could bring a small glimpse of God's promised restoration?
- How could your life this week show that, in Jesus, sin and death do not have the final word?

You may like to pray:

God of grace, we confess that we hide, blame and turn from Your word.

Thank You that from the beginning You promised hope, and that in Jesus You rescue and reconcile.

Help us to live now in the light of Your coming restoration. Amen.

MADE TO BELONG

Big idea

We were made to live in relationship with God and with one another. But sin turns relationship into rivalry, comparison into resentment, and other people into threats. Cain refuses responsibility for his brother and finds himself increasingly isolated from God and others. Yet even here, God continues to confront, protect and show mercy.

Read Genesis 4:1–16

Genesis 3 showed sin entering the world and relationships beginning to fracture. Genesis 4 shows how quickly that brokenness spreads.

Cain and Abel both bring offerings to God. Abel and his offering are looked on with favour, while Cain and his offering are not. The passage focuses particularly on Cain's response: he becomes angry and his face falls.

Before Cain acts, God comes to him and warns him that sin is "crouching at your door." Cain has a choice about what he does with his anger. Instead, Cain allows his resentment to grow and kills his brother.

God then asks, "Where is your brother Abel?" Cain replies, "Am I my brother's keeper?" The implied answer is yes. We are not made to live as isolated individuals concerned only with ourselves. The life of the person beside us matters.

Cain's actions have consequences, but judgment is not the only thing we see. When Cain fears for his life, God protects him. God does not ignore what Cain has done, but neither does He abandon him.

Discuss

- What seems to happen inside Cain before anything happens between Cain and Abel?
- What do you notice about the way God approaches Cain in verses 6–7?
- What do you think it means that sin is described as "crouching at your door"?
- How can comparison change the way we see another person?
- What does Cain's question, "Am I my brother's keeper?" reveal?
- Where do you see both God's justice and God's mercy in this passage?

NURTURE

Comparison is easy to fall into. We compare our work, families, gifts, friendships, achievements and even our faith. Someone else doing well can begin to feel like something has been taken away from us.

Genesis 4 challenges that way of thinking.

Our identity does not have to be built by proving that we are better, more successful or more worthy than someone else. In Jesus, we are welcomed into God's family and called to love one another as He has loved us.

Belonging is not only something we receive. It is something we help create. Following Jesus means noticing the person beside us, celebrating another person without feeling diminished ourselves, and taking anger and resentment seriously before they take root.

- Where are you most tempted to compare yourself with other people?
- Is there someone whose success or gifts are difficult for you to celebrate?
- What happens when we ignore anger or resentment rather than bringing it honestly before God?
- Who has God placed around you that you could easily think, "They're not my responsibility"?
- What would it look like for you to help another person experience belonging?

ACT

This week, practise being someone who creates belonging.

- Notice someone who may be new, lonely or easily overlooked.
- Choose celebration over comparison. Thank God for something good in another person.
- Deal with resentment early. Name it honestly before God.
- Take responsibility for a relationship. Is there someone you need to contact, apologise to, forgive or check in on?

You may like to pray:

God of love,

*Thank You that You made us for relationship with You and with one another.
Forgive us when comparison becomes jealousy, when hurt becomes resentment,
and when we look away from the needs of others.*

Help us to see the people around us as people You have made and love. Amen.

MADE FOR SALVATION

Big idea

The story of Noah is not just a cute children's story. It demonstrates the terrible reality of human evil, the justice of God, the grace of God, and a salvation that ultimately points us to Jesus. Human beings fail, but God's glorious purposes do not.

Read Genesis 6:5-22

Genesis 6 describes a world where every inclination of the human heart is evil and the earth is full of violence. God sees it, and He is grieved. He is not distant or unaffected by what sin has done to His creation.

God's judgment on evil is real because God is both holy and loving. He abhors what destroys His good creation. Yet judgment is not the whole story: 'Noah found favour in the eyes of the LORD.' Noah is righteous, blameless among his generation, and he walks faithfully with God.

God provides the ark and establishes His covenant. Noah is not presented as someone who saves himself; grace flows from the heart of God and Noah responds in faith. Hebrews 11 describes him acting on God's warning about things not yet seen.

The chapter can be summarized in three movements: humanity brings destruction on itself; the wages of sin is death and God judges evil; but judgment and death are not the last word – God in His grace provides salvation and His creation purposes continue.

Discuss

- What phrases in verses 5-13 describe the state of humanity and the earth?
- What does God's grief tell us about His relationship to His creation?
- Why is God's judgment an expression of both holiness and love?
- How is Noah described in verses 8-9? What does it mean to 'walk faithfully with God' in a corrupt culture?
- Where do you see God's grace and initiative before you see Noah's obedience?

- What is the significance of verse 22: 'Noah did everything just as God commanded him'?
- How do Hebrews 11:7, 1 Peter 3 and 2 Peter 3 help connect Noah's story to faith, final judgment and salvation in Christ?

NURTURE

The story of Noah is not the story of God's failure. It is the story of human failure and 'the glory of God and his incredible plan for the world.'

The ark becomes a picture pointing forward: as Noah and his family were sheltered by God's provision, Christians find salvation in Christ. God will not allow evil, pain and suffering to continue forever, but in His grace He has made a way of salvation through Jesus.

- What evil or suffering in the world causes you to grieve? How does it matter that God sees and is grieved too?
- Do you tend to emphasise God's judgment or God's grace? How does Genesis 6 hold them together?
- What does Noah teach us about being faithful when the majority around us are not?
- Where might God be calling you to trust what He has said even when you cannot yet see the outcome?

ACT

Follow Noah's pattern this week:

Hear God's word, trust God's grace, and obey.

Choose one area where faith needs to become action.

- What command of Jesus do you already know but need to act on?
- How could you be a faithful person through whom God blesses others?
- Who needs to hear that despair and judgment are not the last word because God has provided salvation in Jesus?

You may like to pray:

Just and loving God, You see the evil and suffering of our world and You care. Thank You that Your judgment is not the last word, and that in grace You provide salvation through Jesus. Give us Noah's faith to trust You and obey. Amen.

MADE FOR COVENANT

Big idea

After judgment, Noah steps into a new creation. God blesses humanity, reaffirms the dignity of human life, and establishes an everlasting covenant. The covenant is marked by God's initiative, breadth, permanence and undeserved generosity:
God's faithfulness is our guarantee.

Read Genesis 8:15-22; 9:1-17

Noah and his family step out into a new creation after being sheltered in the ark. Noah's first action on dry ground is worship. God's response is a promise, and His commitment is not based on humanity suddenly becoming worthy.

Genesis 9 echoes Genesis 1. God blesses Noah and again says, 'Be fruitful and increase in number and fill the earth.' God's purposes still incorporate humanity. People still bear God's image, and therefore human life has unique dignity and must not be treated cheaply.

The covenant has four emphases: its breadth – every living creature; its permanence – everlasting; its generosity – unconditional and undeserved; and God's initiative. The rainbow is reassurance, a sign and seal of what God has promised.

This is 'covenant living': covenant blessing, law and grace. God's blessing and God's commands are given in a disordered and fallen world. Even faithful Noah will fail, but God's purposes and promises continue.

Discuss

- What is significant about Noah's first response after leaving the ark in 8:20?
- What does God's promise in 8:21-22 tell us about the basis of His commitment?
- What echoes of Genesis 1 appear in 9:1-7? What has remained the same, and what has changed?
- Why does Genesis 9 connect the sanctity of human life with the image of God?
- In verses 8-17, who takes the initiative in establishing the covenant?
- How do breadth, permanence, generosity and God's initiative appear in the covenant?

- What does the rainbow signify in the passage? Why is 'God remembers' important?
- What does the idea of 'covenant blessing, law and grace' mean?

NURTURE

Noah's new beginning has connection to Paul's language of 'new creation' in 2 Corinthians 5:17: the old has gone and the new has come. We can see the covenant pattern moving forward toward the New Covenant in Jesus.

The central comfort is not Noah's perfect faithfulness but God's. In a disordered world, God's people can live with confidence because 'God's faithfulness is our guarantee.'

- Where do you need to rely on God's faithfulness rather than your own worthiness?
- How does the image of God shape the way you think about the sanctity and dignity of human life?
- Why do we need both God's blessing and God's law in a fallen world?
- What helps you remember God's promises when circumstances make them difficult to see?

ACT

Practise covenant remembrance. When you see a rainbow, rain, changing seasons, or another sign of the created world, use it as a prompt to remember God's faithfulness and worship Him.

- Begin one day this week with worship before moving to your tasks.
- Choose one practical way to honour the dignity of another person as someone made in God's image.
- Name one promise of God that you need to hold onto in a difficult or uncertain situation.

You may like to pray:

Faithful God, thank You that Your promises rest on Your character rather than our worthiness. Teach us to worship, to honour the life You have made, and to live with confidence in Your covenant faithfulness fulfilled in Jesus. Amen.

MADE FOR MISSION

Big idea

God speaks to Abram and makes a promise that unfolds through the whole Bible: nationhood, a great name, divine protection and blessing for the world. Abram's faith rests on God's word, and his actions demonstrate that faith. God works His strong and powerful purposes through people who trust Him.

Read Genesis 12:1-9

Reading the whole Bible helps us see God's great plan and purposes being worked out. We may be very aware of our shortcomings and disappointments, but Genesis reminds us that God's purposes do not depend on our being strong and powerful.

God tells Abram to leave his country, people and father's household and go to a land He will show him. Then comes an extraordinary promise: God will make him a great nation, bless him, make his name great, protect him, and through him bless all peoples on earth.

We can follow that promise forward through Israel to Jesus: Matthew introduces Jesus as 'the son of Abraham'. God's promise to Abram comes to fulfilment in Christ. What begins here becomes part of God's great plan of blessing for the world.

How does Abram respond? 'Abram went, as the LORD had told him.' Faith involves trusting God and His promises. Abram did not receive fireworks in the sky; the basis of his faith was God's word. God speaks and Abram acts.

Discuss

- List everything God asks Abram to do in verses 1-3, and everything God promises to do.
- Which parts of God's fourfold promise – nationhood, a great name, divine protection, blessing for the world – can you identify in the text?
- Why is 'all peoples on earth will be blessed through you' such a significant promise?
- What does verse 4 show us about the relationship between faith and action?

- How might Abram have felt when he reached the land and found the Canaanites already there?
- How does God respond to that apparent obstacle in verse 7, and how does Abram respond?
- What do the altars tell us about Abram's trust and worship?
- How does the wider Bible story connect God's promise to Abram with Jesus and with those who belong to Christ?

NURTURE

'What does your action say about you, about your faith?' Abram is not saved by works, but his actions demonstrate his trust.

Sometimes the voice in our head says we are not worthy or capable. God's word gives us another voice: you are loved; you do not need all the answers; trust Me.

Faith means trusting God and His promises and acting on that trust.

The role we play in God's purposes may seem insignificant to us – but it is not. God calls His people, individually and together, to be part of His plan of blessing.

- What stops you from trusting God – fear, uncertainty, a sense of inadequacy, the need to know the whole plan?
- Are you waiting for a dramatic sign when God has already spoken clearly in His word?
- What does your present pattern of action reveal about what you actually trust?
- What might God be asking of you that feels difficult or even impossible?
- What might God be asking of your church community as part of His plan to bless others?

ACT

Take one 'Abram step' this week: act on something God has already made clear, even if you cannot see how the whole journey will unfold.

- What is the next faithful step for you?
- Who could encourage you – and whom could you encourage – to keep stepping out in faith?
- How can your response to God become part of His blessing to someone else?

You may like to pray:

God of promise, thank You that You are working out Your great purposes in the world. Help us to listen to Your word, trust Your promises and act in faith. Use our faithful response as part of Your blessing to others through Jesus. Amen.

AN INVITATION TO READ TOGETHER

Whether you are new to church, part of a long-standing Connect Group, or simply curious about reading Genesis with others, you are warmly invited to join in.

If you would like to be part of a Connect Group reading Genesis together, please scan the QR code and let us know.



Our prayer is that this resource draws us
closer to God and to one another.

Come and read with us.

