

Genesis 1-11

Study Guide

Redeemer
BAPTIST CHURCH

Creation, Fall, Judgment, Mercy, and the Promise of Life

Genesis 1-11 shows us the good world God made, the ruin sin brought into it, the mercy God shows in judgment, and the promise that God will one day send a serpent-crushing Savior to bring His people life instead of death.

This section is the foundation for understanding the rest of the Bible. Before we meet Abraham, Moses, Israel, David, the prophets, or the church, we first learn who God is, who we are, what went wrong with the world, and what God has promised to do about it.

This section does not give us a shallow explanation of the world. It gives us a deep one. The world is beautiful because God made it. The world is broken because sin has corrupted it. Human beings are glorious because we are made in God's image. Human beings are dangerous because sin crouches at the door of the heart. Judgment is real because God is holy. Mercy is real because God is gracious.

And from the very beginning, God does not abandon His creation. He promises that the serpent will be crushed, death will not have the final word, and life with God will one day be restored. That promise is the thread that leads us from Genesis to Jesus.

Key Passages

- Genesis 1:26-31
- Genesis 3:1-15
- Genesis 4:6-10
- Genesis 6:5-8
- Genesis 11:1-9

Major Themes

1. God Brings Life, Sin Brings Death

Genesis begins with life everywhere. God fills creation with light, beauty, plants, animals, and people. But once sin enters, death spreads. The story moves from garden life to exile, murder, corruption, flood, and Babel. The rest of the Bible asks: How will God bring life back to a world under death?

2. God Defines Good and Evil

The fall centers on humanity's attempt to take the knowledge of good and evil for itself. This is one of the basic problems of sin. We do not merely break rules. We try to become the rule-maker. The rest of the Bible asks: Will humanity trust God's word, or will we keep defining good and evil for ourselves?

3. The Image of God Gives Human Life Sacred Worth

Genesis teaches that every human being has dignity because mankind is made in God's image. This remains true after the fall. It remains true after murder. It remains true after the flood. The rest of the Bible asks: How will the image of God be restored in fallen humanity?

4. Work and Rest Are Both Distorted by Sin

Genesis 1-2 shows rest and work as gifts. Humanity is placed in the garden to work and keep it, not as slaves under a cruel master, but as image-bearers living under God's good rule. Work was meant to flow from rest and fellowship with God. After the fall, both work and rest are distorted. Humanity still has the

command to be fruitful and multiply, but fruitfulness now comes through difficulty. The rest of the Bible asks: Who can free us from our striving and bring us back into God's true rest?

5. Sin Multiplies Faster Than Righteousness

Adam sins. Cain murders. Lamech boasts. The earth fills with violence. Babel rises. Sin spreads through individuals, families, cities, cultures, and nations. The rest of the Bible asks: Who can stop the spread of sin and crush the serpent?

6. God Judges, But His Judgment Is Filled with Mercy

God exiles Adam and Eve, but He clothes them. God curses the serpent, but promises a Savior. God judges Cain, but marks him. God floods the earth, but saves Noah. God scatters Babel, but preserves the nations. The rest of the Bible asks: How can God judge sin and still save sinners?

7. Humanity Keeps Moving East, Away from God's Presence

Adam and Eve are exiled east of Eden. Cain goes farther east. Humanity keeps moving away from the place of life. This eastward movement becomes a picture of exile from God. The rest of the Bible asks: How will God bring His people back into His presence?

8. The Promised Seed Is Coming

Genesis 3:15 gives the first promise of the gospel. A child of the woman will crush the serpent. From that point on, we are watching for the promised one. Abel? Seth? Enoch? Noah? None of them is the final answer. The rest of the Bible asks: Who is the serpent crusher?

Christ Connection

Genesis 1-11 prepares us for Jesus by showing us the problem only He can solve.

- Jesus is the true image of God who perfectly reflects the Father.
- Jesus is the faithful Son who obeys where Adam failed.
- Jesus is the serpent crusher promised in Genesis 3:15.
- Jesus is the better Abel whose blood speaks a better word.
- Jesus is the greater Noah who carries His people safely through judgment and is the true giver of rest.
- Jesus is the true sacrifice who covers our shame.
- Jesus is the way back into God's presence.
- Jesus is the one through whom God will bless all nations and undo the curse of Babel.

Genesis 1-11 leaves us asking, "Will God answer His promise to bring a serpent crusher and give His people life instead of death?" The rest of Scripture answers, "Yes, and His name is Jesus Christ."

When you look at the world around you, what feels most obviously true: the goodness of God's creation, the brokenness of sin, or the hope that God is still at work?

Break it Down

1. Creation: God Forms and Fills His Good World

Genesis 1:1-2:3

Genesis begins with God. Before there is sin, death, nations, Israel, or even mankind, there is God. He creates by His word, bringing order, beauty, life, and fruitfulness into existence. The

world is not an accident, a prison, or a mistake. It is the good creation of the good God.

God forms spaces on days 1-3, then fills those spaces with life on days 4-6. He separates light from darkness, waters above (sky) from waters below (oceans), He brings forth land from sea. Then He fills the heavens with lights, the waters above and below with creatures, and the land with animals and mankind. Creation is ordered, beautiful, and purposeful.

Humanity is made in the image of God. This means mankind is created to reflect God's character, represent His rule, and steward His world. Men and women together are given dignity, purpose, and blessing. They are called to be fruitful, multiply, fill the earth, subdue it, and exercise dominion under God's authority.

But creation does not end with humanity working, ruling, and multiplying. It ends with God resting on the seventh day. This does not mean God was tired. It means God completed His work and took His throne over a finished, ordered, good creation. The seventh day shows us that the goal of creation is not endless labor, but life with God under His blessing. Sabbath rest becomes one of the Bible's great pictures of creation as it was meant to be: God dwelling with His people in peace, blessing, order, and joy.

Key Threads Introduced

- God is Creator and King.
- Creation is good and beautiful.
- Human life has sacred dignity.
- Mankind is made to reflect God's character.
- Men and women together bear God's image.
- God's rest is the goal of creation.
- Work is a gift before it is affected by sin.
- Fruitfulness and multiplication are blessings.
- God's word defines what is good.

Important Questions

- What does Genesis 1 teach us about God before it teaches us anything about ourselves?
- What does it mean that creation is “good”?
- How does being made in God’s image shape the way we see human life?
- Why does Genesis 1 end with God resting rather than with mankind working?
- How does Genesis 1 challenge the idea that work is only a curse?

2. Eden: Life with God in His Place

Genesis 2:4-25

Genesis 2 shows us a different perspective of creation. Instead of the well-ordered and fruitful land in the midst of the chaotic waters, here we see God forming a lush garden in the middle of a barren desert. God forms the man from the dust and breathes life into him. Then God places him in Eden, a garden sanctuary full of beauty, provision, life, and purpose. Adam is not placed there to lounge around aimlessly. He is placed there to “work it and keep it.”

Those words carry the idea of serving and guarding. Adam is called to cultivate what God has given and protect the holy place where God has placed him. This matters because before sin enters the world, Adam already has responsibility. He is supposed to guard the garden, honor God’s command, and lead in faithful obedience.

God also gives the gift of marriage. The woman is not an afterthought or a lesser creature. She is the necessary companion, corresponding helper, and fellow image-bearer. Marriage is given as a covenantal union between man and woman for human

flourishing, fruitfulness, companionship, and worshipful life before God.

Key Threads Introduced

- The garden is an image of life with God.
- Work is purposeful and God-honoring.
- Marriage is a gift for human flourishing.
- Gender is part of God's good design.
- Adam is called to serve and guard.
- God's command is life-giving.

Important Questions

- What does Eden show us about what humanity was made for?
- How does Genesis 2 present work as a gift?
- Why is it important that marriage appears before the fall?
- What was Adam supposed to guard?

3. The Fall: Grasping What God Has Not Given

Genesis 3

Genesis 3 introduces the deceiver. The serpent is crafty, a liar, and an adversary who desires the destruction of humanity. He is created and compared to the beasts of the field. Adam passively fails to guard and keep what God entrusted to him. The serpent does not begin by denying God outright. He begins by twisting God's word and questioning God's goodness.

The temptation centers on authority. Will humanity uphold God's definition of good and evil, or will humanity seize that authority for itself? The tree of the knowledge of good and evil represents a boundary. God says, "Trust Me. Receive wisdom from Me. Do not take for yourself what belongs to Me."

Eve sees that the fruit is good and takes it. Sin enters through failed responsibility, rebellion, deception, and desire. The pattern of “seeing, desiring, and taking” will repeat throughout Scripture.

Yet even in judgment, God gives promise. The serpent will not win forever. A child of the woman will come who will crush the serpent’s head, though His own heel will be bruised. This is the first promise of the gospel. The story of the Bible now moves forward with a question: Who is the promised serpent crusher?

In addition, sin turns God’s good gifts into painful struggles. The woman was created for fruitful life and multiplication, but now bringing up children will be marked with pain, infertility, loss, and conflict. What was given as a gift for flourishing will now be touched by conflict, sorrow, and difficulty. Also, the ground is cursed because of Adam’s sin. The earth will still produce food, but it will resist him. From now on, the command to be fruitful and multiply will be harder. Bringing forth life from the womb and bringing forth fruit from the ground will both be marked by pain, frustration, and toil. Humanity was made to work out of God’s good rest, but now we toil and strive while longing for rest.

However, before Adam and Eve are driven from the garden, God shows mercy. They had tried to cover their shame with fig leaves, but God provides a better covering. He clothes them with garments of skins, which means death enters the story not only as judgment, but also as the means by which shame is covered. The Bible’s later sacrificial system will develop this pattern more fully, but already we are meant to see that sinners cannot adequately cover themselves. God Himself must provide the covering.

Exile from the garden, away from the tree of life, is judgment, but it is also mercy. God does not allow humanity to live forever in a fallen, cursed, death-bound condition. The way back into the place of life is now guarded. Humanity needs more than access to Eden. Humanity needs redemption.

Key Threads Introduced

- The serpent is created and under God's authority and judgment.
- The serpent is a liar and destroyer.
- Temptation begins by questioning God's word and goodness.
- Humanity tries to seize God's authority.
- Adam fails to guard what God gave him.
- The pattern of seeing, desiring, and taking begins.
- Sin distorts marriage, fruitfulness, work, and rest.
- The ground is cursed, and work becomes toil.
- Multiplication is now marked by pain.
- God promises a coming serpent crusher.
- God provides covering through sacrifice.
- Exile begins.

Important Questions

- How does the serpent distort God's word?
- Why is the tree about more than fruit?
- Where do we see Adam's failure before he eats?
- How does sin affect the woman's fruitfulness and marriage?
- How does sin affect the man's work?
- How does the fall distort both work and rest?
- How is Genesis 3:15 a promise of hope?
- Why does God clothe Adam and Eve?
- Why is exile from the garden both judgment and mercy?

4. Exile, Sacrifice, and the Spread of Sin

Genesis 4:1-16

Adam and Eve are exiled east of Eden, away from the place of life. But life continues, and even worship begins outside the garden. Cain and Abel bring offerings before the Lord. Here we see sacrifice, God's presence, and God's sovereign choice.

Cain's anger reveals that sin is not merely "out there." God tells Cain that sin is crouching at the door, and its desire is for him, but he must rule over it. Sin is pictured like a beast waiting to devour. Humanity was made to rule over the beasts, but now beastly sin seeks to rule over humanity.

Cain murders Abel. This is the first human death recorded in Scripture, and it comes through murder. The tragedy is enormous. Death is not natural to God's good creation. Death is the distortion and enemy that sin has brought into the world.

Yet even Cain receives mercy. God marks him, protecting his life even after he has taken another life. This does not excuse Cain's sin, but shows that human life is sacred to God, even the life of a murderer.

Cain then wanders away from God's presence and builds a city. Instead of seeking life with God, mankind begins trying to build a place of security, culture, and flourishing apart from Him. Creativity, music, tools, cities, and industry appear, but sin stains them all. Human brilliance and human violence grow together.

Key Threads Introduced

- Exile east of Eden.
- Sacrifice before God's presence.
- God's sovereign choice.

- Sin as a beast to be ruled.
- The tragedy of death and murder.
- God hears innocent blood.
- Human life remains sacred.

Important Questions

- Why does God warn Cain before Cain kills Abel?
- What does it mean that sin is crouching at the door?
- How does Cain's city show both human creativity and human rebellion?
- What does God's mark on Cain teach us about mercy and human life?

5. Two Lines: The Seed of the Woman and the Seed of the Serpent

Genesis 4:17-5:32

Genesis begins tracing two lines. Cain's line is marked by human achievement and escalating violence. Lamech boasts in vengeance that goes far beyond Cain. Sin is not staying contained. It is multiplying.

But another line appears through Seth. This line is associated with calling upon the name of the Lord. Genesis 5 then traces the line from Adam to Noah. The repeated phrase is sobering: "and he died." Even among those in the covenant line, death reigns.

Yet there are signs of hope. Enoch walks with God and does not die. Noah's name sounds like the Hebrew word for rest or relief. His father says in 5:29, "*Out of the ground that the LORD has cursed, this one shall bring us relief from our work and from the painful toil of our hands.*" That means Noah is introduced as a hoped-for rest-bringer. After generations of death, toil, and curse,

Noah's birth raises the question: Could this be the one who brings humanity back toward Eden's rest?

Key Threads Introduced

- Cain's line builds culture apart from God.
- Human creativity is good but stained by sin and violence.
- Seth's line is associated with worship and walking with God.
- Death reigns over humanity.
- Enoch gives a glimpse of life beyond death.
- Noah is connected to rest and hope.
- The search for the promised seed continues.

Important Questions

- How do Cain and Seth represent two different directions for humanity?
- Why does Genesis 5 repeat "and he died"?
- What hope do we see in Enoch?
- Why might Noah's birth raise expectations?

6. Spiritual Rebellion, Human Corruption, and the Flood

Genesis 6:1-8:22

By Genesis 6, rebellion has spread across the earth. Human wickedness is great, and every intention of the thoughts of the human heart is only evil continually. Sin has moved from one act in the garden to corruption filling the world.

Genesis 6 also shows boundary-crossing rebellion involving the "sons of God" and the "daughters of man." However one understands the details, the larger theme is clear: God has

established proper boundaries between heaven and earth, spiritual and human, Creator and creature. Rebellion presses against those boundaries and brings destruction.

The flood is judgment, but it is also mercy. If mankind is left to itself, it will destroy itself. God washes the earth clean, preserving life through Noah. Noah becomes a kind of representative, chosen by grace, righteous in his generation, and used by God to preserve a remnant through judgment.

The ark is like a floating Eden space, filled with life and provision to endure the waters of judgment. God remembers Noah. The waters recede. Dry land appears again. Noah exits into a world that has been judged, cleansed, and preserved.

But the flood does not remove sin from the human heart. After the flood, God acknowledges again that the intention of man's heart is evil from his youth. Yet, He still promises not to destroy the earth in this way again. God is determined not to abandon His creation, but to preserve it until His promise is fulfilled.

Key Threads Introduced

- Sin spreads across the earth.
- Spiritual rebellion crosses God-given boundaries.
- God judges corruption.
- The flood is judgment and mercy.
- Noah is chosen as a righteous representative.
- The Bible's story moves toward restored rest with God.
- The ark preserves life through judgment.
- God remembers His people.
- The earth is washed, but the human heart remains sinful.
- God commits to preserving creation.

Important Questions

- Which comes first, God’s favor or Noah’s righteousness?
- Why does God send the flood?
- How is the flood both judgment and mercy?
- How does the ark remind us of Eden?
- What does the flood solve, and what does it not solve?
- Why is it important that God “remembers” Noah?

7. Noah After the Flood: A New Beginning, Same Old Sin

Genesis 9

After the flood, God blesses Noah and his sons with language that echoes Genesis 1:28, “Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth.” This is a new beginning. Humanity is still called to fill the earth with image-bearing life under God’s rule.

God also reaffirms the sacredness of human life. Whoever sheds man’s blood, by man shall his blood be shed, because God made man in His own image. Even after the fall, even after the flood, mankind still bears God’s image. Human life matters because God says it matters.

After the flood, God gives Noah and his sons a covenant sign in 9:13: *“I have set my bow in the cloud, and it shall be a sign of the covenant between me and the earth.”* This is not merely a pretty rainbow after a storm. The word for “bow” is the word for a warrior’s bow, a weapon of judgment and battle. But now the bow is no longer aimed at the earth. It is hung in the sky.

That means every storm cloud carries a reminder of God’s mercy. The floodwaters showed that God has the right to judge a violent and corrupt world, but the bow shows that God is also determined to preserve His creation. The weapon is suspended. Judgment is restrained. God binds Himself by covenant promise not to destroy all flesh by flood again.

Noah is not the serpent crusher. Soon after the flood, Noah plants a vineyard, becomes drunk, and shame enters the story. Even the best man we have seen so far is still stained by sin. The problem is deeper than environment. It is deeper than bad examples. The problem is in the human heart.

Key Threads Introduced

- New creation language after judgment.
- Humanity is still called to be fruitful and fill the earth.
- The image of God remains after the fall.
- Human life is sacred.
- God makes covenant with Noah, his offspring, and every living creature.
- The bow is a sign of mercy after judgment.
- God restrains judgment and preserves creation.
- Noah is righteous, but not sinless.
- Sin continues after judgment.
- The promised Redeemer must be greater than Noah.

Important Questions

- How does Genesis 9 echo Genesis 1?
- Why is human life sacred even after sin enters the world?
- What does the bow in the clouds teach us about God's judgment and mercy?
- Why is Noah not the final answer?
- What does Noah's failure teach us about the depth of sin?

8. Nations, Nimrod, and Babel

Genesis 10-11

Genesis 10 shows the spread of the nations. This is not a side note. God's purpose has always been global. Humanity was commanded to fill the earth, and the nations matter in God's plan. But tucked into this genealogy is an important figure named Nimrod. He is described in 10:8 as "the first on earth to be a mighty man" and "a mighty hunter before the LORD." His kingdom begins with Babel and expands to other major cities.

That language should make us pause. In Genesis 6, the "mighty men" were connected with the violent, boundary-crossing corruption that filled the earth before the flood. Now, after the flood, we meet another "mighty man." Nimrod is a kingdom-builder, city-founder, and power figure. He represents human strength, ambition, and empire-building in a world still stained by sin. The flood has washed the earth, but it has not washed sin from the human heart.

Nimrod's kingdom begins with Babel. That means Babel does not appear out of nowhere in Genesis 11. It grows out of the same old human desire for greatness, security, and a name apart from God. The people gather in one place, build a city, and raise a tower with its top in the heavens. They want to make a name for themselves. Instead of receiving God's blessing and filling the earth, they try to build their own place of blessing, unity, and glory.

Babel is Babylon, throughout Scripture, Babylon becomes a symbol of human pride, false worship, political arrogance, rebellion, and civilization organized against God. Babel is not merely ancient architecture. It is humanity's attempt to build life without God while trying to seize heaven on its own terms.

God confuses their language and scatters them. This is judgment, but again it is merciful judgment. God restrains evil and forces humanity to do what He commanded from the beginning: fill the earth. Human unity apart from God is not salvation. It is dangerous. Babel shows us that mankind's greatest achievements can still become monuments to rebellion when they are built for our name instead of God's.

Key Threads Introduced

- The nations matter in God's plan.
- Nimrod is introduced as a post-flood "mighty man."
- The violence and ambition of Genesis 6 continue after the flood.
- Nimrod founds Babel and other cities associated with human empire.
- Babel is the seed of Babylon.
- Humanity tries to make a name for itself.
- Mankind reaches beyond its proper place.
- God scatters in judgment and mercy.
- God's command to fill the earth will not fail.

Important Questions

- Why does Genesis pause to tell us about Nimrod?
- How does Nimrod connect the pre-flood world to the post-flood world?
- Why is Babel more than just a building project?
- What does it mean that the people wanted to "make a name" for themselves?
- How is God's scattering merciful?
- How will Babylon become a major theme later in Scripture?