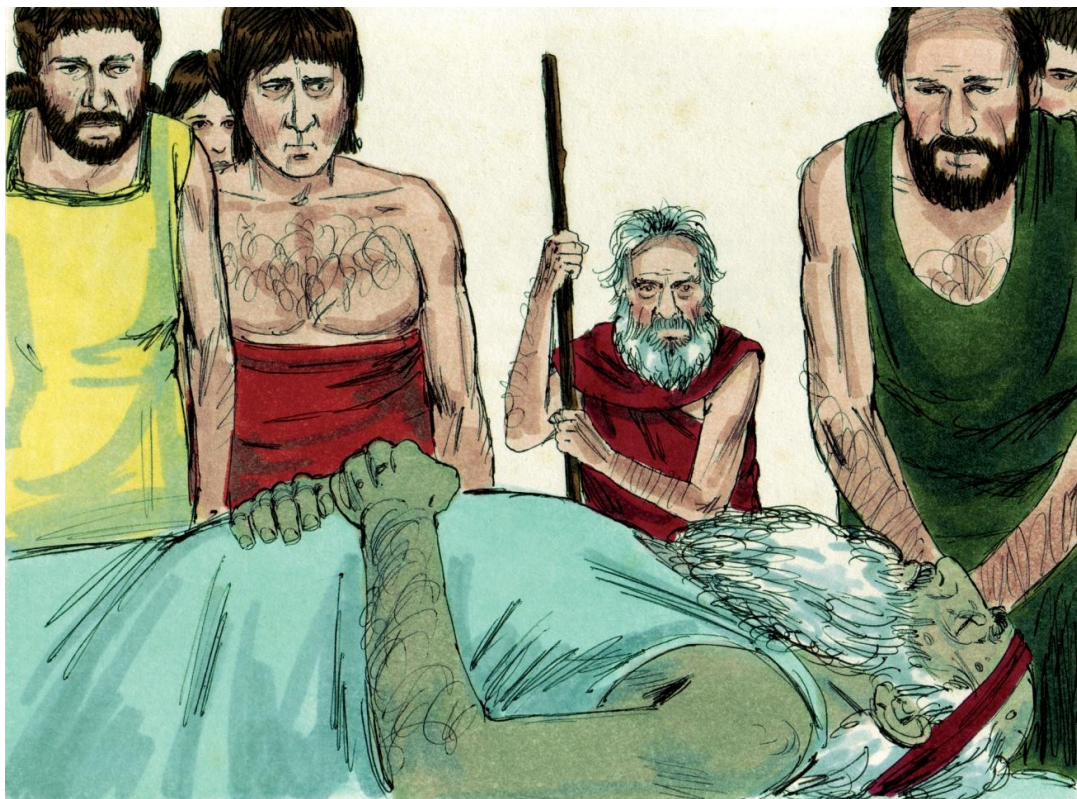


## Lesson 17 - The Beginning

In this lesson we will begin a survey of the Bible. We will begin in the first book in the Bible (Genesis) and work our way toward the last book in the Bible (Revelation). The first verse in the Bible is "In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth" (Genesis 1). Notice that it does not say that God created the universe, though that is certainly true. Instead we read that God created the heaven and the earth. This is significant because God has an eternal plan for the heaven and an eternal plan for the earth. The rest of the Bible gives us the details of God's plan for heaven and earth.

### The First Commission

The Bible begins by telling us about God's plan for the earth. "And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth" (Genesis 1:26). Satan led a rebellion against God on the earth. God charged man with the responsibility to "Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it . . ." (Genesis 1:28). This was the first commission that God gave to man. It was a great commission since it was given by God and encompassed the entire earth. Chapter three of Genesis records the failure of Adam and Eve to obey the commission they were given. The woman "took of the fruit" and "gave also unto her husband with her; and he did eat" (Genesis 3:6). This is when sin and death entered into the world (Genesis 2:16-17; Romans 5:12).



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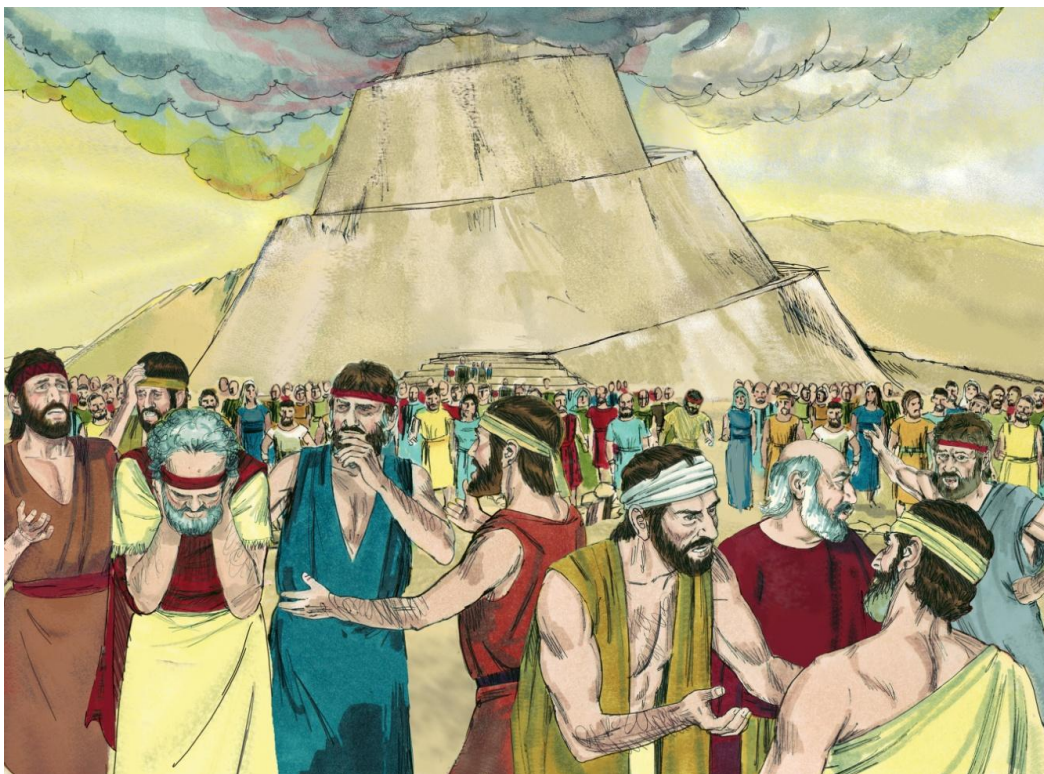
The first murder soon followed as Cain killed Abel (chapter 4). The population on earth increased rapidly, but so did the wickedness. Finally, God sent a flood in the days of Noah and destroyed all people except Noah and seven of his relatives (Genesis 6-8). When Noah stepped out of the ark that had kept him safe, God gave him a commission: "And God blessed Noah and his sons, and said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth" (Genesis 9:1). This is very similar to the commission given earlier to Adam. It involved subduing and renewing the earth.

### The Tower of Babel

Some years after the flood mankind united in rebellion against God. God had given them a commission to fill the earth. However, they had different plans: "And they said, Go to, let us build us a city and a tower, whose top may reach unto heaven; and let us make us a name, lest we be scattered abroad upon the face of the whole earth" (Genesis 11:4). A tower is significant in the Bible because it is associated with worship. Mankind decided to unite and form their own religion and government. This was a clear rejection of the true worship of God and submission to His rule over them.

Man's rebellion resulted in God's judgement upon them. "So the Lord scattered them abroad from thence upon the face of all the earth: and they left off to build the city" (Genesis 11:8). Romans 1:18-32 gives a doctrinal explanation of the events in Genesis 11. When mankind "knew God, they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened" (Romans 1:21). God "gave them up to uncleanness"; "gave them up unto vile affections"; "gave them over to a reprobate mind" (Romans 1:24,26,28).

Mankind fell out of a position of God's blessing and was given over to their own lusts.

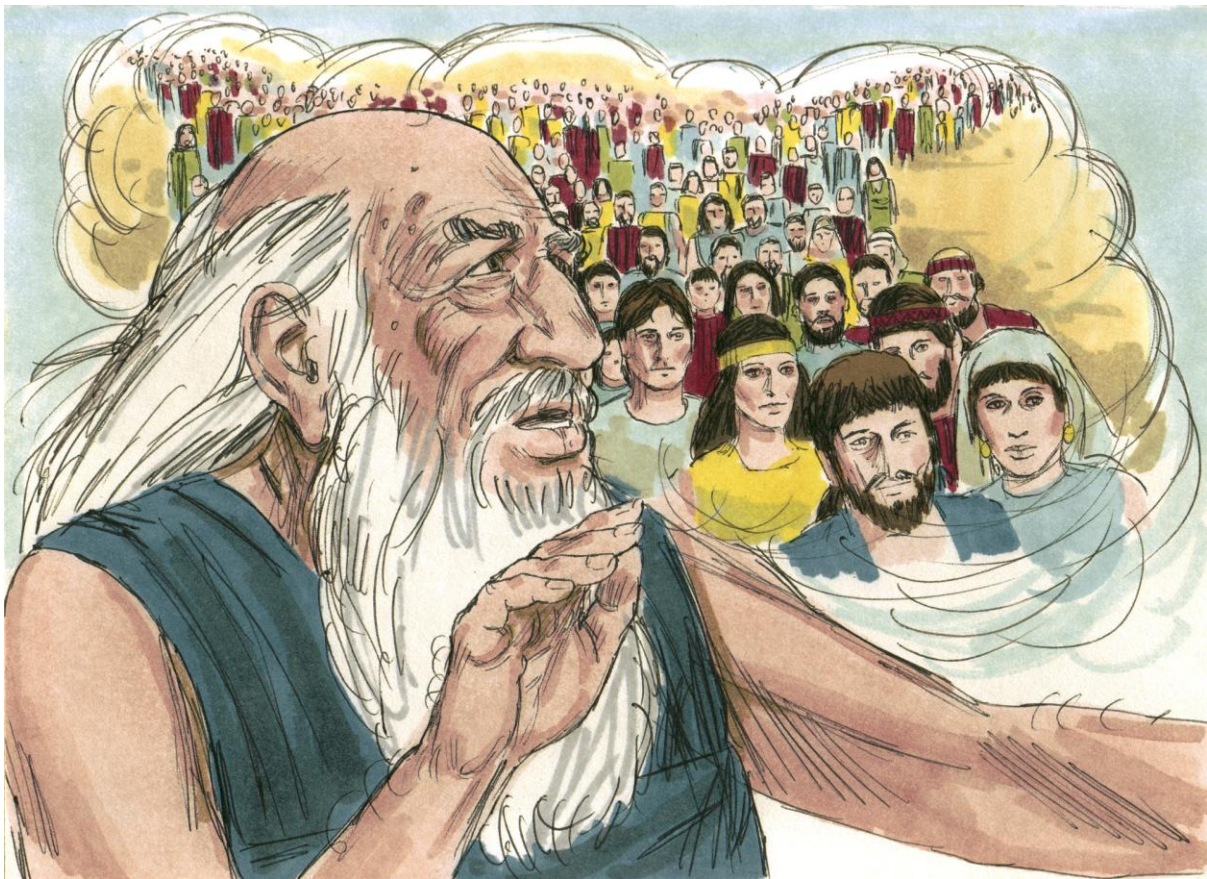


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### The Covenant with Abraham

God gave up the Gentiles in Genesis 11 as we have seen. However, His eternal plan had not changed. In chapter 12 He chose one man, Abraham, through whom He would carry out His purpose on the earth. God made a covenant with Abraham. "Now the Lord had said unto Abram, Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto a land that I will shew thee: And I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and thou shalt be a blessing: And I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee: and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed" (Genesis 12:1-3).

Notice that God promised Abraham a land and a nation. Abraham was told that God would give to him and his descendants "all the land which thou seest, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed forever" (Read Genesis 13:14-18). It is vital to understand that God's promise to Abraham was literal. God promised him land on this earth that he could see. The nation that God promised to Abraham was later known as the nation of Israel. Abraham and his descendants were to be blessed by God in a special way. God would then use them to bless "all families of the earth." This was the beginning of the dispensation of promise (Galatians 3:17).



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### The Covenant with David

Later God made a covenant with David. This covenant built upon the foundational covenant made with Abraham. David was a descendant of Abraham and was therefore included in God's covenant with Abraham. God's covenant with David is recorded in 2 Samuel 7:12-16. "He shall build an house for my name, and I will stablish the throne of his kingdom for ever" (verse 13). "And thine house and thy kingdom shall be established forever before thee: thy throne shall be established forever" (verse 16). David was promised a king and a kingdom. David was the king of Israel and God promised him that one of his descendants would be a king on his throne forever. Thus, the kingdom in Israel would be an everlasting kingdom. Again; it is vital to understand that the kingdom God promised to David was a physical kingdom on this earth. There are some that teach that God promised David a spiritual kingdom. A careful reading of the Old Testament makes it evident that David sat on a physical throne in Jerusalem and ruled over a physical kingdom. Clearly David understood God's promise to be about a physical kingdom centred in Jerusalem.

There is another wrong teaching that we must mention here. Some teach that God made a promise of a physical kingdom, as mentioned above, but then withdrew this promise when Israel crucified Jesus Christ. We will study this further in the lessons about the New Testament.

However, we will now show that this teaching is false. Psalm 89 deals with the covenant made with David: "I have made a covenant with my chosen, I have sworn unto David my servant, Thy seed will I establish for ever, and build up thy throne to all generations. Selah. " (Verse 3-4). God promises that His covenant "shall stand fast" and "his throne as the days of heaven" (verses 28-29).

And what if Israel disobeys God? This is addressed in the following verses. "If his children forsake my law . . . and keep not my commandments" (verses 30-31). Will God break His covenant with David? "Then will I visit their transgression with the rod . . . Nevertheless my lovingkindness will I not utterly take from him . . . My covenant will I not break" (verses 32-34). God's faithfulness is further stated: ". . . I will not lie unto David . . . His seed shall endure forever, and his throne as the sun before me. It shall be established forever as the moon, and as a faithful witness in heaven. Selah." (Verses 35-37).

In our next lesson we will learn more about the land promised to Abraham and the kingdom promised to David.

## Review Questions Lesson 17 - The Beginning

### True or False

1. Genesis is the first book in the Bible.
2. The book of Genesis is primarily about God's plan for the heaven.
3. Genesis 11 tells about how mankind worshiped and glorified God.
4. God chose the Gentiles to be His people in Genesis 11.

### Multiple Choice

5. God made a covenant with:
  - a) Abraham and David
  - b) Isaiah and Abraham
  - c) Abel and David
  - d) Daniel and Jeremiah
6. God's promise to David:
  - a) concerned a spiritual kingdom
  - b) was cancelled when Israel crucified Jesus Christ
  - c) was a physical kingdom that would endure forever
  - d) was a kingdom in heaven
7. The first verse in the Bible says that God created:
  - a) the universe
  - b) the heaven and the earth
  - c) light and darkness
  - d) plants and animals

### Fill in the Blanks

8. Chapter three of Genesis tells about the failure of \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ and to obey God.
9. Chapter one of the book of \_\_\_\_\_ explains that God gave up the Gentiles.
10. God promised that He would give Abraham all the \_\_\_\_\_ that Abraham could see.

#### Further Study

Jeremiah 23:5 – kingdom location

Genesis 15:18-21

Genesis 17:1-8 – 3 promises