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**Faith Bible Church**

**2023 Church Retreat Notes**

**FBC Church Retreat Session #1**

The Answers to the Biggest Questions in Life

Genesis 1–11

We all have questions about our lives: some are personal questions like what’s going to happen to me when I grow up or what’s going to happen to me when I get old? Some questions are universal and apply to all of us. Questions like “Who is God? Who am I? What’s wrong with me and everything else? What went wrong to cause all of the problems in the world? Is there any hope for any of us? The Bible answers these questions with a story. That’s what the Bible is. It has a beginning that introduces the reader to reality. It has a middle with the climax of the story of history, and it has a corresponding ending that resolves the conflict in the story of history. So, in our time together, we will turn to the book of Genesis and let the Word of God answer the BIG questions in life for us from the story of Genesis.

**The Prologue to the Story of the Bible—Genesis 1–4**

1. According to Genesis 1 and 2 who is God?

2. Describe who/what humans are and why God created us.

3. Define the term “generation” (*toledoth*) in Genesis 2:4 and how it functions in the book of Genesis (2:4; 6:9; 10:1; 11:10, 27; 25:12, 19; 36:1, 9; 37:2).

4. Who/what is the serpent? Describe his attack on God and humans. What does he want? What does he achieve? Based on what he does, what is his role in the story of the Bible?

5. Describe the role of Genesis 3:15 in the introduction of the Bible.

6. How does Moses use Genesis 4 to show the role that Genesis 3:15 has in the Bible?

**The Problems in the Story of the Bible—Genesis 5–11**

1. In Genesis 5 what characterizes the story of man? From Genesis 5:3 what should the reader discern about everyone who will be born from Adam? What signs of God’s grace appear in Genesis 5?

2. Genesis 6:5 reveals in detail the problem with everyone born in Adam.

3. How does Moses characterize God’s judgment (6:17; 7:4, 11-12, 17-24)?

4. To what end does God, the Sovereign Ruler, give covenants (6:18; 8:1; 9:8-17)?

5. How is the creation mandate given to Noah different from the one God gave to Adam (Gen 9:1-7)?

6. Why does God curse Canaan? How was it and the mark on Cain used in American history?

7. What is the sin in Genesis chapter 11 and what permanent consequences do we live with in light of God’s judgment (Gen 10)?

**FBC Church Retreat Session #2**

The *Real* Good News for the World—God’s Promise to Abraham

Genesis 11:27–25:11

No writer in philosophy, history, or religion has captured the absolute brokenness of the world because of sin save the authors of the Bible’s story (Read Job or Ecclesiastes). Conversely, nothing points to a way of escaping our problems of sin, death, and futility, except for the God-inspired story of the Bible. Beginning in Genesis, the Bible reveals God’s promise to remove the curse on creation. Genesis 11–25 records cycles of God making and reaffirming His promise to do so through Abraham. God’s promise is rooted in grace and yet calls for faith. These chapters mark how God walks with those whom He is saving. At the climax of this cycle, God tests Abraham and reveals the faith that He has secured from him. God then swears by His own name that He would provide the way in which He would bring blessings through Abraham’s seed to all the families of the earth.

**Seven Cycles of God’s Faithfulness to Abraham and Abraham’s Journey of Faith**

1. God’s Promise of Blessing; Abram’s Response of Faith and Fear (Gen 12)

2. God’s Blessing of Prosperity; Abram’s Response Faith and Courage (Gen 13–14)

3. God’s Ratification of His Covenant; Abram’s Response of Faith and Compromise (Gen 15–16)

4. God’s Covenant Sign of Circumcision; Abraham’s Response of Faith and Laughter (Gen 17)

5. God’s Visitation, Revelation, and Judgment; Abraham’s Faith and Failure (Gen 18–20)

6. God’s Promised Seed and Sacrifice; Abraham’s Faith and God’s Sworn Oath to Save (Gen 21–22)

7. God’s Faithfulness to Continue the Seedline and Abraham’s Faith (Gen 23-25:11)

**FBC Church Retreat Session #3**

The BIGGEST Question Every Person Has to Answer

Genesis 25:19–35:29

It’s amazing what God promised Abraham (Gen 12; 15) and how He fulfilled that promise (Gen 21) and revealed through Abraham’s test how He will bless the world through Abraham’s seed (Gen 22:14, 17-18). The biggest question every reader is left with now is, “What does that have to do with my life? The answer is everything. What God has sworn to do through Abraham is the only hope for all of humanity and what every person now has to do is believe. Isaac’s story reveals his struggle with this question and his quest to be blessed by God.

1st The Struggle of Two Seedlines Continues (Gen 25:19-26)

2nd The Struggle of a Son Is Much Like His Father’s (Gen 26)

3rd The Struggle Is Spiritual and Not Physical (Gen 27)

4th The Struggle Is Won by Trusting God Who Is Faithful to His Promises (Gen 28–34)

5th The Conclusion: How have you answered the most important question every person has to answer?

(Gen 35:27-29)

**FBC Church Retreat Session #4**

God’s Good News for Our Brokenness

Genesis 37-50

The Bible is a story of redemption fully predicated on the faithfulness of God who promised to save sinners. Its central theme is “Good News!” and that good news isn’t new news (Romans 1:1-3; 3:21). Our Lord and Savior, Jesus, said that from the beginning of the Bible to its end it’s all about Him (Luke 24:27; John 5:39, 46). Let’s carefully follow these concluding chapters of Genesis to see how that’s true. In this last story (Gen 37:2), Moses reveals 7 truths about the hidden hand of God who prophesied (Genesis 3:15) promised (Genesis 12:3-7), swore (Genesis 22:16-18), and now in Genesis 37–50 pictures His Sovereign Son who saves sinners.

1st God Reveals His Plan to Fix the World Genesis 37:2-11

2nd God Allows His Plan to be Attacked by the Serpent Genesis 37:18-20

3rd God Documents the Seed-Trail of His Seed Promise Genesis 38

4th  God Uses the Suffering of His Sovereign Servant Genesis 39–41

5th God Sanctifies His Collective Seed through His Sovereign Servant Genesis 42-45

6th God Saves the Many Through His Suffering Sovereign Servant Genesis 46-47

7th God Pictures and Prophecies in the Beginning of His Story How He Will End His-Story

Genesis 48–50

Key Cross references:

**The Gospel According to Genesis Thematic Chapter Headings**

**I. The Introduction of God’s Story of Mankind and the World Genesis 1–4**

With the prologue of Genesis 1–4, the narrator accomplishes what prologues are intended to accomplish. He introduces his readers to the main characters, the conflict, the plot, and the foreshadowing of the resolution of his story. These critical elements of biblical narrative that Moses introduces, God continues and develops progressively throughout the entire Old and New Testaments. Hence, Jesus reveals the climax of the history and the Bible’s story as “the hour” (the purpose) for which He came (John 12:23-27) to redeem and restore blessings to mankind and creation and to defeat the Serpent (1 John 3:8). Also, as the reader should expect, the end of the story corresponds to the beginning of the story (Gen 1:1, 28; 3:15) and concludes it. The Serpent is finally crushed (Rev 20:10), and history is enveloped by eternity as God removes the intruders sin, and death from creation, and man is reconciled to God and reigns with Christ forever (Rev. 21:1-4; 22:3-5).

Gen 1. The Introduction of God—the Sovereign Creator-King over Everything

Gen 2. The Introduction of Man—the Coronated Vice-King in Paradise

Gen 3. The Introduction of the Story’s Antagonist, Protagonist, Conflict, and Outline

• The Antagonist is the Serpent later to be revealed as Satan (Rev 12:9; 20:2)

• The Protagonist is God, who promises to send *the seed of the woman*, the coming man, to defeat the Serpent (1 Cor 15:22, 45; 1 John 3:8).

• The Conflict is how will God restore what He called “good”—mankind ruling creation in a love relationship with Him now that the Serpent is ruling creation in mutiny against God. The protagonist will have to somehow reconcile mankind and creation back to God.

• The Outline of history will be characterized by spiritual warfare between those whom the Serpent would use, his seed, and those whom God would choose, the woman’s seed. The war will continue until the coming last Adam (the protagonist) crushes the serpent’s head, reconciles mankind back to God, and makes creation a paradise again (Genesis 3:15).

Gen 4. The Introduction to Life Outside of the Garden—Spiritual Warfare between the Seed of the Serpent and the Seed of the Woman

**II. The Introduction of the Story’s Problem for Mankind and the World 5–11**

The problem of man’s rebellion against God is nothing short of catastrophic. Death spreads universally. Spirit-beings continue to attack and corrupt mankind. The entire human race is filled with violence. God’s righteous universal judgment does not change the heart of man’s problem, his heart. Mankind unifies to launch a collective assault against God in an attempt to exalt themselves above Him. God, with amazing mercy and patience, scatters mankind into nations to slow down our effort to collaborate together in a unified mutiny. The whole of mankind is consumed by sin.

Gen 5. The Beginning of the Story of Man, a Story of Death with Hope

Gen 6. Man’s Corruption of the World and God’s Verdict to Judge it with a Universal Flood

Gen 7. God’s Punishment of Mankind and the De-Creation with a Universal Flood

Gen 8. God’s Salvation of Man through the Ark and a Re-Creation

Gen 9. God’s Reestablished Covenant Relationship with Mankind with Blessings and Curses

Gen 10. The Story of the Birth of the Nations Through Rebellion

Gen 11. The Mutiny of Mankind against God at Babel—the Backstory of God’s Chosen Nation

**III.The Introduction in the Story’s Solution God’s Promise to Bless Mankind and the World 12-50**

In spite of mankind’s sin, God out of sovereign grace, calls a man, Abraham, and commits that through him He would raise up a nation and from them a king, who would crush evil and restore blessings to all of the families of the earth. That nation is Israel, and that King would come from the line of Judah. Genesis gives pictures, prophecies, and a seed-line for the reader to follow that will lead them to the identity of the King who would defeat the serpent and rescue and restore the righteous kingdom of God over the earth.

Gen 12. God’s Promise to Bless the Families of the Earth through Abram and to Curse His Enemies

Gen 13. God’s Initial Blessing of Prosperity and the Reiteration of His Promise

Gen 14. God’s Shield as the Protector for Abram and the Type of the Coming King in Melchizedek

Gen 15. God’s Ratification of His Covenant to fulfill His Promise to His Seed, the People of Faith

Gen 16. Abram and Sarah’s Faithless Cultural Compromise for a Seed and Its Consequences

Gen 17. God’s Sign for the Covenant—Circumcision

Gen 18. God’s Reiteration of the Promise to Bless the Elect Seed and Punish the Serpent’s Seed

Gen 19. God’s Destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah—Representatives of the Serpent’s Seed

Gen 20. Abraham’s Lapse of Faith and Endangerment of the Promised Seed

Gen 21. God’s Miraculous Fulfillment of the Promised Seed Birth of Isaac

Gen 22. God’s Test that Leads to His Oath to Provide the Lamb to Fulfill His Covenant Seed Promise

Gen 23. Sarah’s Death—the Matriarch of the Promised Seed and the Hope for the Promised Land Gen

24. Isaac’s Marriage—God’s Providential Passing along of His Faithful Covenant Seed Promise

Gen 25. Abraham’s Death—the Patriarch of the Promise and the Question of the Future of the Promise

Gen 25b. The Seed Stories of Ishmael and Isaac—The Seed lines of the Flesh vs. the Seed line of Promise

Gen 26. The Struggles of the Promised Seed, Isaac—Like Father Like Son

Gen 27 The Struggle of the Promised Seed, Jacob, for the First-Born Blessing

Gen 28. The Struggle’s Result—The Promised Seed, Jacob, Flees, Meets and Receives God’s Blessing

Gen 29. The Struggle of the Promised Seed for a Wife—Results in Two Wives and Two Concubines

Gen 30. God’s Fulfillment of His Covenant Promise by Multiplying Jacob’s Seed and his Flock

Gen 31. The Struggle to Leave Laban—Yahweh Sends Jacob Home

Gen 32. The Struggle of the Promised Seed, Jacob, Wrestling with God and Reception of God’s Blessing and a

New Name, Israel

Gen 33. God’s Answer to Jacob’s Prayer—Peace in his Seedline War with Esau

Gen 34. The Struggle between the Seed of Jacob and the Seed of the Canaanites over Dinah

Gen 35. God’s Securing of Jacob’s Exclusive Trust, the Re-Giving of the Abrahamic Covenant, and the Deaths of

Rachael and Isaac

Gen 36. The Story of the Seed-line of Esau—The Origins of the Nation of Edom

Gen 37. The Story of Jacob’s Seed—Joseph, The Dream of the Coming Worldwide Ruler

Gen 38. The Story of Judah’s Seedline through the Woman Tamar

Gen 39. The Suffering of God’s Ruler in Slavery and His Imprisonment

Gen 40. The Suffering of God’s Ruler Abandoned in Jail and His Interpretation of Dreams

Gen 41. The Exaltation of God’s Ruler as He Interprets Pharaoh’s Dreams of Prosperity and Famine

Gen 42. The Fulfillment of God’s Ruler’s Dreams—His Brothers Bow to Him, and He Tests Them

Gen 43. The Promise of Judah to be a Sacrificial Substitute and the Brother's Return to Egypt

Gen 44. The Free Offer of Judah as a Sacrificial Substitute for His Brother’s Guilt

Gen 45. The Revelation God’s Ruler’s Exaltation as Ruler & Savior of the Nations

Gen 46. The Move of Israel to Egypt Where He Sees the Ruler Alive from the Supposed Dead

Gen 47. The Blessings Upon Israel Even While Egypt Struggles During the Famine

Gen 48. The Blessings of Israel upon Joseph with Firstborn Status and His Younger Son over the Older

Gen 49. The Prophecy of Israel Regarding the Twelve Tribes and the Promised Saving Ruler for the World from

 Judah and How the Nations Would Bow to Him

Gen 50. The Death and Burial of Israel and Joseph and the Concluding Reminder that Nothing Will Stop God from

Bringing about His Good New Promise to Bless All the Families of the Earth