

PART 1:

THE BEGINNING

It is easy to dissect the Bible into many different passages and stories. However, while it is helpful to look closely at the individual pieces, it is also important to understand the overall story. Think of it like a puzzle. If you look at just the pieces, you may gain some knowledge, but you will really struggle to understand it. However, by looking at the picture of the entire puzzle, you can better appreciate how each piece of the puzzle fits together. This series, then, is intended to help you see the big picture of the Bible story by looking at eight major sections. In each lesson, we will attempt to consider some major scriptures that help to tell the story of that section. Let's begin with the first major section: "The Beginning."

GENESIS 1:1-5, 24-27, 31

The story of the Bible begins with God (the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit) creating everything in the universe in six literal days. On day one, God created light (vv. 2-5). On day two, God created the sky (vv. 6-8). On day three, God created dry land and vegetation (vv. 9-13). On day four, God created the sun, moon, and stars (vv. 14-19). On day five, God created the birds and sea creatures (vv. 20-23). On day six, God created land animals and people (vv. 24-31). On day seven, God rested from His work (Genesis 2:1-3). Notice, however, that God created the man and woman in His image (as spiritual beings with free will, John 4:24). God placed the man and woman (Adam and Eve) in a beautiful paradise in the Garden of Eden (Genesis 2:4-25).

GENESIS 3:1-6, 22-24

In the Garden of Eden, God forbade Adam and Eve to eat from the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil, under the punishment of death (Genesis 2:16-17). Yet, the serpent (the devil, Satan, Revelation 12:9; who is the enemy of mankind) tempted Eve to satisfy her own desires and violate God's law. When she violated God's law, she sinned (1 John 3:4; James 1:14-15). Adam also sinned. This sin brought all physical pain, suffering, and physical death into the world (vv. 16-

24). Then, it also brought spiritual death (separation from God) on them the day they sinned (vv. 8-9). From this point, they were separated from the original paradise God had created them to experience and needed a Savior!

GENESIS 6:1-8

Sin did not stop with Adam and Eve. As people multiplied, sin also multiplied. It had become so bad that God regretted making mankind and determined to destroy people by a worldwide flood. However, amid the wickedness, God saw that Noah pleased Him and determined to save Noah and his family (eight people). God told Noah to build an ark that would provide a place of safety for himself, his family, and the animals God would bring on board to survive the flood. For 40 days and nights, God sent flood waters, which remained on the earth for roughly one year until the world was able to be re-inhabited. After this, God used a rainbow to signify His covenant with Noah, that He would never again flood the entire earth (Genesis 6-9).

GENESIS 11:1-9

After the flood, God gave people the responsibility of multiplying and spreading out over the earth (Genesis 9:1, 7; Genesis 1:28). However, at this point, the people all spoke the same language and settled in one area together. They determined to make a name for themselves rather than obey God's plan, and attempted to build a tower that reached into the sky. In response, God confused their language so that they could not understand one another, stopped building, and were scattered throughout the earth. This place became known as Babel (later known as Babylon).

GENESIS 12:1-7

God instructed a man named Abram (later known as Abraham) to leave his homeland and family to go to a land God would show him – and Abram trusted God enough to obey God! The three main promises God made to Abram help to tell the Bible story: Nation, land, and Seed. First, God would make his descendants into a great nation (Israel). Second, God would give his descendants the land Abram would travel to (Canaan). Third, God would bless all peoples of the earth through Abram's Seed (Jesus Christ).

GENESIS 15:1-7, 13-16

Abram trusted and obeyed God to leave his homeland and travel where God instructed, despite being an old man (75, Genesis 12:4) with no children! Now, God again assured Abram he would have a son, and his descendants would be as numerous as the stars. God eventually blessed Abram with a son named Isaac. Isaac later fathered Jacob. These three (Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob) are often called the “three patriarchs” (fathers). God repeated the same three promises to Isaac (Genesis 26:2-5) and Jacob (also called Israel, Genesis 28:13-15). Jacob then had twelve sons (Genesis 29:31-30:24; 35:16-18). Also notice that God told Abram that his descendants would live and be slaves in another land for 400 years before God would give them the promised land.

GENESIS 37:1-11

As Joseph was Jacob’s favorite son, most of his brothers were jealous and hated him. This passage paints a prophetic picture of Joseph being elevated above his family. As the story of Genesis continues (Genesis 37-50), Joseph is sold into slavery by his ten older brothers, resulting in Joseph being brought to Egypt. There, Joseph is falsely accused and imprisoned. Joseph then meets and interprets dreams for two of Pharaoh’s (the king of Egypt) servants. When those interpretations came true, one of the servants mentioned him to the king when the king had some troubling dreams. Joseph interpreted the dreams for the king (concerning a severe famine) and was eventually made the second highest ranking person in Egypt (behind the king). Joseph helped many people survive the famine, including his own family, who came to Egypt searching for food. Jacob and all his family (70 people) moved to Egypt during this time.

CONCLUSION

Part one of the Bible story highlights the beginning. We have seen the beginning of the world and humanity, the beginning of sin, and the beginning of God’s promises. God has made it clear that He planned to do something special through the descendants of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob that not only concerned their direct descendants, but also all peoples of the world throughout time! As we wait for the fulfillment of these promises in the Bible story, the descendants of Abraham were temporarily relocated to the land of Egypt to survive a great famine.

DISCIPLESHIP QUESTIONS

What are some benefits of understanding the big picture of the Bible story?

What did God make on each day of creation?

What is the special way that God created people?

What were the consequences of sin?

Why did God flood the entire earth?

Why did God confuse the languages at Babel?

What promises did God make to Abram, Isaac, and Jacob?

How did Joseph become great and impact his family?