

RETURN TO GOD

Genesis – The beginning of Everything

Genesis – means - origin

- The book of beginnings – of the world, humanity and Israel

Primary focus of Genesis:

- the early development of God's relationship with humanity and
- his chosen righteous individuals through whom he unleashes a plan to redeem the world.

God chose Abraham, his descendants to bring about this plan – the Abraham family is the focus of most of Genesis.

The Genesis narrative: divided into two large sections:

- The Primeval (ancient/ original) History – **Gen 1-11**
 - Narrates creation and its subsequent corruption by sinning against God
 - Includes the fall of man – (**Gen 3**)
 - The story of Noah's ark (**Gen 6-9**) and,
 - The tower of Babel (**Gen 11**)
- The Ancestral Narratives – (**Gen 12 – 50**)
 - tell the story of Abraham – and God's promise to him
Gen 12:2 – *'I will make you a great nation, and I will bless you, and I will make your name great. And you will be a blessing'*
 - also talks about how Abraham and his descendants reacted to the promise.
 - Abram – Abraham – barren wife Sarah - Gen 12-25
 - Eventually Sarah – Isaac – bears twins Esau and Jacob (Gen 26-36)

- God changes Jacob – Israel – 12 sons – Joseph being most famous – becomes a royal in Egypt – joined by family (Gen 37-50)
- Story – sounds simple – it is packed with tension, suspense, difficulty, anger, doubt, betrayal, frustration
- But Throughout the narrative – God is chasing after his people who insist on running away from him and his ways
- The characters of Genesis struggle with God – just like us today

Reflections on Genesis:

Naivety, Thorns, Thistles, and Toiling

- God gives man everything that he needs for life and livelihood

Gen 2:7-9

Positioning and the command

Gen 2:15-17

Positioned to work and keep

Provision – eat of every other tree except - 2

Naivety – entertained discourse with the enemy Gen 3

- Always crafty
- Twisting words – Vs 2 *“Did God actually say, ‘You^[a] shall not eat of any tree in the garden’?”*
- Compares what God has given and what he has forbidden
- Gives advantages of partaking of the forbidden
- Very enticing
- Looks better than what God has offered
- Ate and then hid from the presence of God
- Fellowship/friendship/communion broken - rift
- Result – Curse instead of blessing – lost the provision
- Got thorns, thistles, and toiling

How is this scenario evident in our modern world?

- Origin of the issue – Rebellion against God
- The need to be somebody – to become like God
- Rebellion – not being satisfied with what their father had given them
- Things of God are not as attractive as the alternatives
- Dissatisfied with God's agenda
- Deemed it necessary to follow their own interests
- Chose to look outside their relationship with God for fulfillment – instead of trusting that he would fulfil their every need.
- In doing so – broke relationship with him

Question is: What broke the relationship?

James 1:12-15

Blessed is the man who remains steadfast under trial, for when he has stood the test he will receive the crown of life, which God has promised to those who love him. ¹³ Let no one say when he is tempted, "I am being tempted by God," for God cannot be tempted with evil, and he himself tempts no one. ¹⁴ But each person is tempted when he is lured and enticed by his own desire. ¹⁵ Then desire when it has conceived gives birth to sin, and sin when it is fully grown brings forth death.

Answer – our desires, cravings, aspirations, etc.

Physical practicality (**good for food**),
appealing beauty (**pleasing to the eye**),
and the potential **for gaining wisdom**—to be “in the know

- The desire to find satisfaction, identity and meaning in life rather than our relationship with God
- We are continually striving to make a name for ourselves – achieve the dream, climb to the top
- Look at your shopping list – prayer list

- Full of things that bring self-aggrandizement, self-fulfillment, self-glory, self-promotion – self-satisfaction – more about self than God.
- Yet we are here not to self-satisfy – but to satisfy God's needs – his agents

Devil/Enemy is still the same as the old serpent

- Very Crafty
- Market researchers and Manufacturers – play into this desires/craving
- Into our inmost insecurities – providing the alternative from what God gave us
- Using Advertising agents – deceive us that it's their products that – have the silver bullet – the secret formula or answer to all our desires and insecurities
- The spirit of consumerism
- Where we define ourselves by what we have and what we do
- It's not about us but about him – we were created to bring glory to him not to ourselves
- Like Adam and Eve – we find ourselves discontented with the path God ordained for us – in order to achieve his purposes
- We end up pursuing our own agendas – to feed our desires, cravings and satisfaction.
- We chase the forbidden fruits of this world which will never fill the hole in our lives.

Result – of this naivety and entertaining the devil - the thorns, thistles and toiling –

Gen 3:16-19

- Vanity

Eccl 1: 1- 26

We must not be as naïve as our Adam and Eve

- **Cannot entertain the devil – he will trick you out of your inheritance**
- **You will then flee the presence of the Lord**
- **God came looking for man**
- **Found him hiding**

- **There was a rift between them**
- **He sent a second Adam to repair that bridge**
- **Many times we still run away from His presence because we have been in conversations with the enemy of our progress – the devil**
- God is waiting for us to return to him in the cool of the day – where he can meet our every need – if we allow him.
- Let us return to the Lord – He is the answer – the only one we can ever have what we need and are looking for – coz everything is in him and if for him.

Mat 6:33

But seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be added to you.