

# THE KINGDOM OF GOD

••••• *GENESIS* •••••



## **God's Kingdom Reviewed - Genesis 1-17**

Pastor Anthony Ferguson

Church family, we began 2020 with our sermon series in Genesis titled The Kingdom of God. I was able to preach on Genesis 1-17 from January 5 to March 8, and today we are returning to this sermon series. We will be studying Genesis together for the next 9 weeks which will take us up to our thanksgiving sermon and Christmas advent series.

This year our advent sermon series will cover Isaiah 7-12. These are the chapters that describe our Messiah as born of a virgin (Isaiah 7:14), as the wonderful counselor and the mighty God (Isaiah 9:6), and as the one who brings about new creation (Isaiah 11-12). It is not an understatement to say that I am super excited to cover these chapters with you for this year's advent Christmas series.

Now that you have a roadmap for the rest of this year's preaching schedule, let's pick back up in Genesis. Now, our last sermon was March 8, so I am very aware that we may have forgotten a few things. So today, I am not beginning with Genesis 18; rather, today I want to review for us Genesis 1-17.

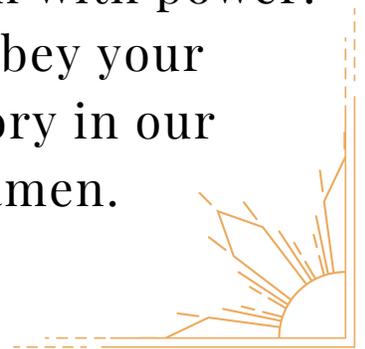
Church, my hope today as we review Genesis 1-17 is that you might know that the heinousness of sin does not derail God's plan.

As you behold this amazing refrain in these chapters, my hope is that you would be ...

- At rest in God's sovereignty
- Confidence in his faithfulness
- Satisfied in his grace

We need to hear this truth today for the good of our souls, so let's continue with prayer and ask God to give us the grace we need to hear, believe, and obey.

Oh God, please give us grace today to hear your word. Please remove all distractions from us. Do not let anything hinder your word from going forth with power. God, we want to believe your word and to obey your word today, so please work toward your glory in our faith. We pray these things in Jesus name, amen.



# GOD'S PLAN FOR CREATION (Genesis 1-2)

God's plan in creating all things was to establish his kingdom on earth. This plan unfolds on the very first pages of the Bible. This is the plan that is finally achieved in Jesus' ministry. He comes announcing the kingdom of God, and this the visions of eternity that the Bible leaves us with in Revelation 21-22. In those chapters, we see that the new heavens and earth are, none other, than the fulfillment of this plan. The world to come is new creation, and this new creation is God's kingdom. Church family, the bookends of Scripture is the kingdom of God. This means that God is faithful to his word; his plan is achieved because he is in control of all things.

Now, God's kingdom is described in Scripture as his reign and rule. This reign and rule is often expressed over a people and in a place, and each of these elements is evident in Genesis 1-2.

First, God's reign and rule is established over all of creation including humanity. This is evident since God establishes the rules that govern Adam and Eve. He commands them to be fruitful and



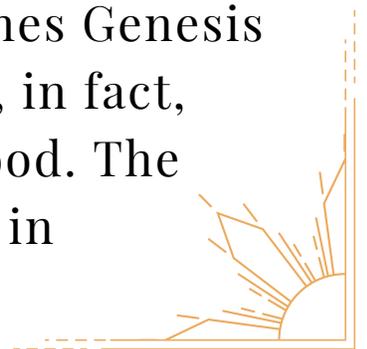
multiply and to rule and subdue creation (Genesis 1:26-28). As humanity spreads over the entire planet, God's image spreads. Moreover, he commands his people not to eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil (Genesis 2:9). God's people are to depend on God, which is good for them. They are not to depend on themselves. Clearly, God's reign and rule governs Adam and Eve, and this is for the glory of God and Adam and Eve's joy.

Second, God's reign and rule exists over all of creation, but the focus of Genesis 2 is that the Kingdom exists specifically in the garden of Eden. This is the home that God makes for his people and the place where he walks with them. This is where the tree of the knowledge of good and evil exists; the fruit of the tree that God commanded Adam and Eve not to eat (Genesis 2:9).

These truths demonstrate that God intends to establish his kingdom on earth for his glory and his people's joy.

## God's Plan despite Sin (3-11)

The good refrain of Genesis 1 that underlines Genesis 2 is undermined by Genesis 3. Genesis 3 is, in fact, kingdom rebellion, and this is not itself good. The enemy of God slithers into God's kingdom in order to undermine God's rule and take



prisoner God's people. The devil does this by assaulting God's word. He calls God a liar and questions his goodness. He portrays God as weak and Eve as powerful, and Eve believes the serpent. Moses describes for us the rapid-fire nature of the fall in Genesis 3:6: Eve saw; Eve took; Eve ate; Eve gave; Adam ate. The rebellion of Satan and his angels entered the human race at this moment. There was now kingdom warfare between God and humanity, and this would result in all kinds of evil.

At this moment in the storyline, there is utter tragedy. Adam and Eve are naked, so they hide themselves from one another (Genesis 3:7) and from God (Genesis 3:8). This hiding echoes ominously Genesis 2:25. There Adam and Eve, before the fall, were naked and not ashamed. That was good, but now they hide; they experience shame; and this is not good.

Despite this kingdom rebellion, God's plan will not be derailed. We must read carefully for when we do, we hear God whisper to us, "My plan will not be derailed despite the heinousness of sin!"

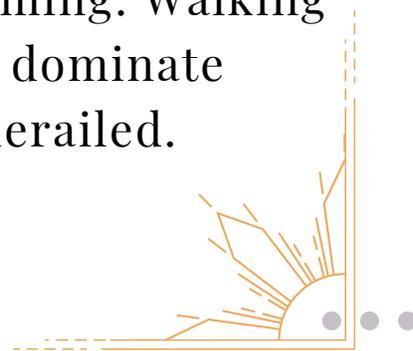
First, notice Genesis 3:15: "I will put enmity between you [the serpent] and the woman, and between your offspring and her offspring; he shall bruise your



head, and you shall bruise his heel.” A son will be born who will defeat the enemy of God's people. Although the serpent will bruise the heel of this Son, the serpent himself will suffer a head wound. This is a poetic way of saying, “A Son is coming who will reverse the curse with all of its tragedies!” God’s plan will be accomplished.

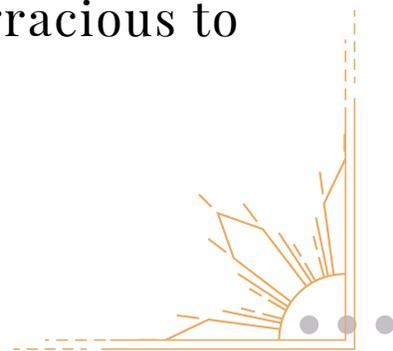
Second, notice Genesis 3:20: “The man called his wife’s name Eve, because she was the mother of all living.” Now, God said that on the day that eat of the fruit you will die; yet, Adam names his wife Eve! This is an expression of hope in God’s promises of Genesis 3:15. Physical death will not be immediate although spiritual death was immediate; rather, creation will continue toward God’s sovereign plan of establishing his kingdom on earth; this will happen despite our sin. The plan has not been derailed by the heinousness of our sin.

Third, the genealogical pattern of Genesis 4-5 is broken in a few places. We see, for example, that Enoch does not die. The curse of death does not have the final word in his mortal life. Why? Genesis 5:24 says: “Enoch walked with God, and he was not, for God took him.” Despite sin which ushered into history death, redemption is coming. Walking with God breaks sin’s power! Death does not dominate those who walk with God. God’s plan is not derailed.



Fourth, although every intention of the thoughts of humanity's heart were only evil continually (Genesis 6:6), Noah found favor in the eyes of the Lord (Genesis 6:8). Sin is universal according to Genesis 6:6 and extensive. There is not a part, even a small part, of humanity that is left untainted by sin. This applies to Noah too. He is not the exception here. We know this because of Genesis 6:6. The fact that Noah gets drunk and one of his son acts shamefully further demonstrates that Noah, and his family, is not the exception to this statement. Notice also God's statement in Genesis 8:21 – he repeats the fact that humanity is evil, but at this point, only Noah and his family are left alive! Overall, Noah can be described as righteous only because God first gave him grace (Genesis 6:9). Although the entire creation has been wiped out, hope remains because God showed grace to Noah. Hope depends completely on God showing grace, and when God shows grace, humanity can once again walk in righteousness.

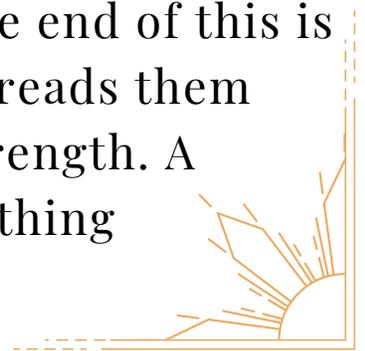
Moses describes for us in Genesis 3-10 that although sin is heinous, sin does not derail God's plan. God will establish his kingdom on earth! He is sovereign over all things and faithful to his word. Still, he is gracious to sinners!



## THE HEIGHT OF SIN (GEN. 11)

Moses describes for us the height of sin in Genesis 11. Here, we learn about the tower of Babel. We see humanity use their ingenuity, not for the advancement of God's glory, but for their own glory. They desire to make a name for themselves, not God (Genesis 11:4). They desire their own glory because they think little of God's. This is the course of sin. Satan thought little of God, and now the people of Babel think likewise. This is evident since the building they are constructing is a Ziggurat – a giant religious staircase that, according to the polytheistic culture of the ANE, gave God access to earth and humanity access to God. Think about how low they viewed God. They thought God needed a staircase to come to heaven. Moreover, they would sacrifice offering at the top of the Ziggurat to entice the gods to come to earth and to provide refreshment for them. What a low view of God!

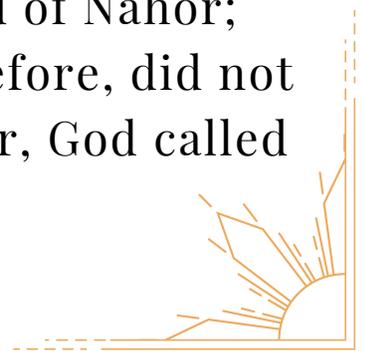
Typically, people have a low view of God because they have a high view of themselves, and this is true at Babel. They actually believed that they could reach God on their own strength. They thought they could enter the throne room of the heavens by building a tower. Truly, the end of this is curses. God confuses their languages and spreads them abroad. We cannot reach God on our own strength. A relationship with God must depend on something else entirely.



## God's Plan for Creation through Abraham (Genesis 12-17)

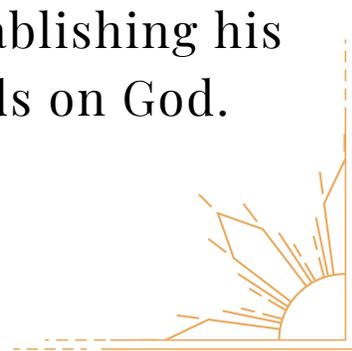
Although sin is extensive so that every thought we think is evil continually and grows so that it began with eating a piece of fruit but morphed into child abuse, polygamy, violence, and the pride of trying to reach God on one's own strength, God's plan of establishing his kingdom on earth will not be derailed. A Hebrew word for curses 'arar appears five times from Genesis 3-11, but a Hebrew word for blessings barak appears five times in Genesis 12:1-3. The balance of five curses and five blessings indicates that the appropriate solution to the curses of sin is the plan outlined in Genesis 12.

In Genesis 12, God comes to us. This is unlike Genesis 11 where man attempts to get to God. God calls Abraham not on the basis of his life but on the basis of his grace! Notice that prior to the Lord calling Abraham, he was a pagan who worshipped other gods. Joshua 24:2-3 tells us that "And Joshua said to all the people, "Thus says the LORD, the God of Israel, 'Long ago, your fathers lived beyond the Euphrates, Terah, the father of Abraham and of Nahor; and they served other gods.'" Abraham, therefore, did not earn or deserve to be called by God; rather, God called him because of his grace.



And the call is vitally important to the storyline of Scripture so far. God calls Abraham to leave his family so that God might establish his kingdom through Abraham. In Genesis 12, God promises Abraham a land (Genesis 12:1-2) and descendants (Genesis 12:3). This promise, then, is the promise that God's kingdom will crash into the kingdom of devil through Abraham and his offspring.

This promise is then guaranteed by a covenant in Genesis 15. A covenant is an agreement between two parties (e.g., nations or individuals) that is an elected relationship sworn under oath before witnesses. God swears that he will establish his kingdom through Abraham in Genesis 15. The ceremony of the covenant includes cutting animals in half. The two covenant partners then walk through the trail of blood. The parties announce, "Do onto me as you have done to these animals if I break this covenant." However, Abraham does not walk between the pieces, only God does (Genesis 15:17). This is therefore an announcement that the covenant depends on God, and God alone. He will uphold both ends of the agreement: humanity's end of the agreement of being faithful to God depends on God and God's end of the agreement of establishing his kingdom through Abraham likewise depends on God.



We hear the echo of the incarnation of Jesus in Genesis 15. God's plan to establish his kingdom on earth necessitates a faithful human partner; yet, because of sin, no human partner will do. What is needed is God to become man. We need Jesus.

We also hear the echo of the cross since God walked between these pieces announcing, "do unto me if I do not uphold this agreement." In fact, upholding this covenant would take the blood of God himself. Oh, how we need Jesus.

Genesis 17 is significant on multiple levels. First, there is tension between God's promises and their fulfillment. God promised that a child would be born of Abraham and Sara roughly 25 years ago, and yet, Sara is still barren. Yet, God persists. His promise of his kingdom will come through a son of Sara. To prove this, God reveals himself in this chapter as El Shaddai which means the almighty. God is going to do the impossible: Sara, who is a 90-year-old barren women, will have a son! This is how God's plan at creation will be achieved. It will be achieved through the Almighty God who works a miracle on behalf of God's people. It will not be achieved by human ingenuity. Babel's tower and the birth of Ishmael was human ingenuity and that is not how God's kingdom will be established on earth; rather, God's kingdom will be established

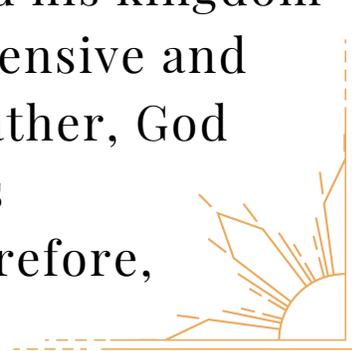


through God's strength and grace: Sara will have a child. Moses, thus, shows us in Genesis 17 that God's kingdom will be established on earth through the Almighty God.

Second, this chapter is significant because we learn about the sign of this covenant. The sign is circumcision, and this too is significant. Circumcision is a sign that indicates that a person is completely devoted to God; the essential quality that ought to mark God's people; yet, outside of God's grace, the quality is always lacking. The tragedy of sin is that we devote ourselves to far less beautiful and glorious things. Yet, again, circumcision functions to whisper to us the refrain of the universe, "God is faithful to his plan despite us." A son of Eve and Abraham will come who will indeed be completely devoted to God's plan. He himself will inherit God's kingdom and establish it on earth. Circumcision points to him, the devoted one of God.

## CONCLUSION

Church family, God has and will established his kingdom on earth despite us. Although our sin is extensive and heinous, God's plan is not derailed by it. Rather, God is sovereignty in control of all things and is completely faithful to his plan. We can, therefore,



rest in him and have complete confidence in his word. His word to those who truly believe is that we receive grace in Christ, and this promise is unstoppable because he is sovereign, faithful, and gracious.

Non-Christian friend, Christ can use your sin as means to glorify his name. He can and desires to forgive you from all of your wickedness. All of it can be gone and this would bring God immense glory. Your sin does not take God by surprise, so come to him today. Come to him repenting from you sin and trusting that he is your master. If this is your heart today, please reach out to us. Email us, call us, visit us, write us on social media. We want to connect with you and disciple you to live for God's glory.

## PRAYER

Oh God, please show us mercy. As we struggle with countless things in our life, please help us to remember that sin does not derail your plan. Let this truth sink into our hearts and give us peace. When we sin, help us to see sin's awfulness, but let that not be the final word. Let your grace be the final word. Let us see when we sin that despite us you pursued us, died for us, and forgave us. Please let this propel us to pursue holiness and to rest in your grace. We pray these things in Jesus' name, amen.