

Adam to Abraham

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[0 : 00] We are, in a sense, this morning beginning a new sermon series, but also continuing an old sermon series.

! Quite a while ago, in fact, most of you weren't even here when we went through, Genesis 1 through part of chapter 11. We covered those early chapters of the book of Genesis before we broke off to do Romans and a few other things. And so now, this morning, we're returning to Genesis. And for the next few months, our focus is going to be upon the patriarchs, upon the fathers of the nation of Israel, Abraham and Isaac and Jacob. And then we will break off from Genesis again and move back to the New Testament. And then, Lord willing, we will come back and finish Genesis at some point in time. But we are beginning this morning to look at this middle section of Genesis in which we get to see the lives of the earliest heroes, the fathers of the nation of Israel themselves. And there's no better way to start a new sermon series than with a genealogy, right?

That's an exciting way to get things going. So that's how we're going to begin this morning in chapter 11 of Genesis, verse 10. And we're going to move all the way down to the end of chapter 11. And our goal is actually ambitious yet simple this morning. Our goal, as we look at this genealogy, is to consider it in light of everything that's come before it. So we have in front of us a task this morning of trying to understand and summarize the first ten and a half chapters of the book of Genesis to prepare us for chapter 12 moving forward. So would you all stand? We're going to read beginning in verse 10. Moses writes, These are the generations of Shem. When Shem was 100 years old, he fathered Arpachshad two years after the flood. And Shem lived after he fathered Arpachshad 500 years and had other sons and daughters.

When Arpachshad had lived 35 years, he fathered Shem. And Arpachshad lived after he fathered Shem for 103 years and had other sons and daughters. When Shem had lived 30 years, he fathered a bear.

And Shem lived after he fathered a bear for 103 years and had other sons and daughters. When a bear had lived 34 years, he fathered a bear. And a bear lived after he lived after he had fathered a bear for 130 years and had other sons and daughters. When a bear had lived 30 years, he fathered Ru, and Peleag lived, after he had fathered Ru, 209 years and had other sons and daughters.

[2 : 49] When Ru had lived 32 years, he fathered Sarog, and Ru lived, after he fathered Sarog, 207 years and had other sons and daughters. When Sarog had lived 30 years, he fathered Nahor, and Sarab lived, after he fathered Nahor, 200 years and had other sons and daughters.

When Nahor had lived 29 years, he fathered Terah, And Nahor lived after he had fathered Terah 119 years and had other sons and daughters. When Terah had lived 70 years, he fathered Abram, Nahor, and Haran.

Now these are the generations of Terah. Terah fathered Abram, Nahor, and Haran, and Haran fathered Lot. Haran died in the presence of his father Terah in the land of his kindred in Ur of the Chaldeans.

And Abram and Nahor took wives. The name of Abram's wife was Sarai, and the name of Nahor's wife, Milcah, the daughter of Haran, the father of Milcah and Issachah. Now Sarai was barren. She had no children. Terah took Abram his son, and Lot the son of Haran, his grandson, and Sarai his daughter-in-law, his son Abram's wife. And they went forth together from Ur of the Chaldeans to go into the land of Canaan.

[4 : 00] But when they came to Haran, they settled there. The days of Terah were 205 years, and Terah died in Haran. Fathers, we come now to ponder the wonders and mysteries of your word.

And of the movement of your sovereign plan from Adam to Abram. I pray that you would give us insight into the word, and that you would sanctify us by it.

We ask these things in Jesus' name. Amen. You guys take a seat. You may have heard it said, I've certainly heard it said many times, that you can't really know where you're headed unless you know where you've been.

You can't know where you're going in the future unless you know where you've come from in the past. Well, this morning I want to modify that statement a little bit as we consider these first several chapters of the book of Genesis and what they mean, both for the story of Abram and the other patriarchs, but most importantly for us as well.

I want us to say that you can't really know who you are. You can't know why you're here and what you're supposed to be about in the present unless you know where you've come from and where you're headed.

[5 : 19] In other words, it's difficult for us to grasp our purpose and what we're supposed to be about unless we understand the purpose of God for ourselves and for our ancestors in the past as He originally created us.

And it's difficult for us to understand and rightly consider our role in the world if we don't have some idea of where we are headed and where this world is headed, of what God's plan, insofar as He has revealed it, happens to be for the future.

So this morning as we look at these first several chapters of Genesis and try to summarize them in preparation for our journey through the lives of the patriarchs, I want us to do that in such a way that we are looking toward the past but also looking into the future so that we might better understand both the lives of the patriarchs in this book and our own lives right now in the present.

So let's consider this story that leads up to Abram. We know that the story is pointing in that direction. We know that the story is headed in that direction because as we just read, we are confronted with a genealogy here in the middle of chapter 11.

Now we tend to not find these genealogies to be particularly riveting. Most of the time we want to speed our way through them and that's perfectly understandable. Part of my Bible readings this week included the first several chapters of 1 Chronicles and that's genealogy after genealogy after genealogy and after a while your head just starts to hurt and all the names begin to blur together.

[6 : 49] So it's perfectly understandable that at times we fly through these genealogies and we don't recognize their full significance. But here in the book of Genesis, the genealogies that are recorded for us, they serve a number of purposes.

Chief among those purposes though is to move the story along and to connect later events with earlier events. So this genealogy moves very quickly from Noah's son Shem down to Abram.

And it reflects and mirrors a genealogy that comes a few chapters before that takes us very quickly from Adam up to Noah. In fact, I want you to turn back to chapter 5 and look quickly.

We'll have reason to do this in a bit again. But look at chapter 5 and you can see that the genealogy in chapter 5 is very similar to the genealogy that we have here in chapter 11.

Over and over you have so and so lived this many years and then they fathered someone and then they lived a certain number of years after that. And you get a straight line type of genealogy from Adam all the way down to Noah and Noah's sons Shem, Ham and Japheth.

[7 : 56] And then you get the story of the flood and God's judgment on mankind in chapters 6, 7, 8 and 9. The Tower of Babel at the beginning of chapter 11. And now finally here we are at another genealogy.

But it picks up where the genealogy of chapter 5 leaves off. So if you bring these two together, you can see that what Moses is doing as he writes the book of Genesis is he's drawing a direct line for us from Adam all the way to Abram or as he's later called Abraham.

He wants us to see that there are significant connections between Adam, the creation of Adam, God's purposes for Adam and the call of Abraham that he will issue in chapter 12.

We need to see and understand those connections. So this morning as we turn back all the way to chapter 1, we're going to do it with an eye to spotting a few themes that we're going to see crop up in the life of Abraham and the other patriarchs.

And then we're going to glance ahead and see where those themes find their ultimate fulfillment in Christ and in his people in the New Testament. But first we need to journey all the way back to Genesis chapter 1.

[9 : 09] So I'd like you guys, if you would, to turn back there. In asking the question, what is the purpose of all of this? Why does God call Abram in chapter 12?

Why does God set him apart and give him great promises and tell him that he's going to bring blessings into the world through him? Why does he do that? Well, the way to answer that question is to move back through Abram's line all the way back to Adam and say, why did God create Adam in the first place?

Why did God place any human beings in the world? Why are we here and why do we exist? And the answer is found most clearly in Genesis chapter 1.

If you'll glance down at verse 26, this is what we read. Then God said, Let us make man in our image. Now the word man is the same as the word Adam.

Let us make man in our image after our likeness and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over the livestock and over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth.

[10 : 16] Verse 27. So God created man in his own image. In the image of God he created him. Male and female he created them. So God created Adam.

God brought man into the world so that man could be his image bearer. Which is to say so that man could be God's representative upon the earth to the rest of creation.

So that man's ultimate purpose is to be God's stand in and to mirror and to reflect all of God's beauty and his perfections to the rest of creation.

And man does that mainly by the way in which he exercises rule over the rest of the world. That's what man is supposed to do. Notice there. He is to rule or to exercise dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the heavens, over the livestock, over all the earth.

That's what man is here to do. That's why God put Adam on the face of the earth. That's why God calls Abram as we'll see in a moment. There's a purpose. We are to reflect God's glory to the rest of the creation in the ways in which we represent God and exercise dominion over the rest of creation.

[11 : 33] That's the original purpose for man. And that purpose is closely tied to the business of the land or the earth. In fact, look how God summarizes this in verse 28.

And God blessed them and God said to them, Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and subdue it, and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over every living thing that moves over the earth.

I want you to notice that to have dominion over the fish, the birds, and the animals is parallel with be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and subdue it. In other words, dominion over all of these other created things is summarized as subduing the earth, or quite literally, subduing the land.

Now, why am I pointing that out to you? Because I want you to see that closely tied to man's purpose throughout the book of Genesis is this issue of land.

We don't see it quite so clearly sometimes when we read Genesis chapter 1, but the word land is spread all throughout Genesis chapter 1. In fact, if we ignore the occurrence of the word land in verse 1, because there it has a special usage, the heavens and the earth refers to the entire created order.

[12 : 48] But if we ignore that one instance, then we find the word earth occurring 19 other times in Genesis chapter 1. And it refers in those instances to what we would call land.

And that's significant because when God calls Abram, He calls him to go to a land. He promises to give to Abram a land. And then as you move throughout the book of Genesis, you see the central importance of this land and how it continues to elude Abram.

It continues to elude Jacob. It continues to elude his descendants. Until finally we arrive at the book of Exodus, where God begins to call the descendants of Abraham out of Egypt.

Why? So that He can put them into the land. And then we have the rest of the Torah, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy, which are largely devoted to giving to the Israelites rules and laws to govern their life in the land that God is calling them to.

So this issue of land is highly significant. We oftentimes think of the promised land as meaning nothing more than that small piece of land there in the center of the world in the Middle East, Israel or Palestine.

[14 : 01] But if we understand and we realize that there was from the beginning a mandate, a command, an order for Adam, for humanity to exercise dominion and subdue the land, all of it, then we will see that there is a clear connection to the call of Abraham, the promises given to Abraham

and passed on to his descendants, and the original purpose, the creation, order, and mandate of God given to Adam and Eve all the way back in Genesis chapter 1.

And so one of the themes that we need to trace and that we need to be able to see is the theme of the land, or as it's translated throughout chapter 1 of Genesis, the theme of the earth in this book. But not only the theme of the earth, but we also need to understand the purpose of man upon the earth. That is to be image bearers, to be God's rulers upon the land and in the earth.

So we're going to track these themes of the land, man's purpose and work and calling to the land. And then lastly, turn over to chapter 2.

I want you to see something else. Where is this headed? Where is this going? Chapter 2, we are told in verse 4, we read these familiar sounding words, these are the generations of the heavens and the earth.

[15:30] Now I say that those are familiar words because they're the same words, these are the generations, or this is the generation of Shem that we find in chapter 11. In fact, this terminology, the terminology of this is the generation, or these are the generations, this phrase occurs at really important times throughout the book of Genesis.

It occurs at these moments in which we are called upon by the author of Genesis, by Moses himself, to pause and to remember that all of these stories are interconnected.

But this is the first instance in which we see this particular phrase. This is the first instance in which we find Moses describing the unfolding of history as, these are the generations.

Now we think, well, that means a genealogy. And sometimes what follows is a genealogy, like we have in chapter 11. But sometimes we don't get a genealogy at all. Sometimes we simply get a story.

So that we should probably understand this particular phrase, these are the generations, to mean something along the line of, this is the family history of so and so. But not the family history that came before this person lived, this is the family history that comes after them.

[16:46] Here's the story of their descendants. So chapter 2 of Genesis begins by telling us, here's the story of those who come from the heavens and the earth, those who belong to it.

In other words, here's the story of people. We've seen people created in chapter 1. Now chapter 2 zooms its focus in so that we can have a closer look at how God went about creating people in His image and what His purposes for them as He created them in His image were.

And when we do that, we run upon this third theme that I want us to track through. And that is the theme of relationship. We have the land. We have man's vocation, his calling to subdue the land, to subdue the earth.

But now we see more clearly in chapter 2 than we saw in chapter 1, though it's there. We see now in chapter 2 that man is to do this in relationship.

In other words, we're not supposed to be solitary creatures. We're not supposed to be those who try to take it all upon ourselves and accomplish everything by ourselves. That's why Christ created the church.

[17:54] Because there's no such thing as a lone ranger Christian. Just as Adam was not meant to be alone, so we are not meant to be alone. In chapter 2, that's highlighted. As God brings the animals to Adam, Adam is able to see that none of these are suitable for him.

None of them make a fitting companion for him until finally God creates Eve. He creates the woman. And at that moment, Adam's desire and need for a relationship with someone like him is finally fulfilled.

We get hints of that in chapter 1 because we're told that man was made male and female in the image of God. But now it's highlighted in chapter 2. In fact, there's a refrain that we see over and over and over throughout Genesis chapter 1.

Every day of the six days of creation, God says at the end of the day, and it was good. And it was good. And it was good. Till you get to day 6 where it's very good.

And that is not broken until we arrive in chapter 2 and Adam looks around himself and he sees upon all the animals coming to him, there's no one like him.

[19:05] There's not another image bearer. There's no one to join him in this great task that God has given to him until God finally makes Eve. But in the moment when Adam realizes that, we come across two words.

Not good. And they stand out in contrast, in bold contrast to chapter 1. How can anything be not good? Because it's not complete.

Adam needs and is created to exist in relationship. So here we have Adam created in the image of God, designed to rule over the land, over the earth, and mirror forth God's glory, but to do it in concert with another, to do it in relationship with someone else.

Those are the three themes that I want us to track all the way up to Abram and then past Abram to the New Testament beyond to the new heavens and the new earth.

But you can't see them clearly and you can't really understand them if you don't see them in light of the events of Genesis chapter 3. In fact, when theologians normally outline biblical history, if you want to give a summary, a simple outline of all of the history recorded in the Bible, past, present, and even future, they usually summarize it in these terms.

[20 : 25] You have creation, then you have fall, and then you have redemption, and finally you have new creation, or sometimes they say renewal. So it runs from creation to fall, to redemption, to new creation.

But those themes run through every stage. And you can't understand the way that they work in all the other stages unless you understand what happens to them in stage 2, that is, the fall.

Chapter 3 of Genesis records for us the saddest of all events in the Scriptures, and that is the fall of Adam and Eve. Turning away from their God-given role of mirroring forth the glory of God to the world and being God's representatives and determining rather, instead, that they would rather represent themselves.

They would rather decide for themselves what is good and what is evil. They would rather make that determination for themselves, mirror forth to the world their own desires, rather than God's character and nature.

And because of that, because of the entrance of sin into the world, there comes along with sin the curse. Now, we'll come to the curse again in a minute as we look at the promise in the midst of the curse.

[21 : 40] But before we do that, I want you to let your eyes glance in chapter 3 down to verse 17 where God is speaking to Adam. And we'll jump in in the middle of verse 17. God says to Adam, Cursed is the ground because of you.

In pain you shall eat of it all the days of your life. Thorns and thistles it shall bring forth for you. And you shall eat the plants of the field. By the sweat of your face you shall eat bread till you return to the ground.

For out of it you were taken. For you are dust. And to dust you shall return. So one of the consequences of sin, one of the consequences of the fall is that Adam's original mandate to rule over the earth is now confronted with resistance.

Now the earth will no longer willingly submit to Adam, but the ground itself will fight against him and fight against his descendants. Life will become difficult now.

What should have been a glorious ruling over the earth is now a burdensome, toilsome attempt to get the earth to bend to man's will.

[22 : 48] Now sometimes in our daily lives that reality is not as obvious to us as it would have been to the original readers of the book of Genesis. And that's because we simply go to the grocery store when we want food.

You notice how it's so closely tied to food? Food? You're going to eat of it, of the ground all the days of your life? You're going to have to get bread from grain? It's going to take a lot of work? Well, we're distant from that.

When we want bread, we don't grow wheat in a field and cut it down. Someone else does that. And we normally don't see them and don't have anything to do with them. And we just show up at the grocery store and we buy our bread, we buy our fruit, we buy our vegetables.

And we are oftentimes ignorant of all the toil that lies behind that. But talk to a farmer and they will tell you about the great burdensome toil that lies behind getting a loaf of bread to the grocery store. It's not easy. It's been made easier. We now have tractors and all sorts of farm equipment and we're able to do things on a massive scale.

[23 : 50] It's not just individuals sitting out in the field picking things and shucking things and threshing things. It doesn't work like that. We have machines that do it. But it's still a lot of work. And even the work of today's farmer, though, has been made easier because of the work of literally generations, century after century, of the work of farmers.

I mean, we go to the grocery store and we can pick any number of apples that we want. We can pick from any number of bananas that we want or all the different kinds of tomatoes that we want. How did we come to have all of those things? There are literally centuries of human beings laboring and toiling to bring about the kinds of fruits and vegetables that they want from these plants. They don't just pop up like that in the wild. It takes a long time of cultivating and crossing things. It's work. It's labor. And though we are somewhat distant from it, most of us, because we are not farmers and even if we are, we rest upon the shoulders of all those others, we're distant from it. We can imagine it. We can see it. We can sense it. And we can feel it. The earth itself is in rebellion against its rulers. It's in rebellion.

[25 : 02] So the first thing that we see fractured by the fall is this close relationship between man and the earth. We should have been rulers. We should have been reflecting the glory of God as we ruled in godly and righteous ways over the land.

And yet we don't. And we see toil and pain and labor. But we don't even see it in relation to the land. We also see it in our own relationships. If you look there to what God says to Eve, He tells to Eve, not only will our pain be multiplied in childbearing, that's bad enough.

He says though there in verse 16, your desires shall be contrary to your husband, but he shall rule over you. In other words, there's going to be now a breakdown in human relationships.

There's going to be frustration. There's going to be difficulty. Not just between husbands and wives, but between the image bearers of God as a whole.

So now we see this great breakdown. Yes, we still exist to mirror forth God's image to the rest of the world, but in our relationships we find that difficult and we fight with one another rather than joyfully giving glory to God together.

[26 : 14] In our ruling over the earth, we fight and toil with the earth as it rebels against us so that our purpose is frustrated over and over again because we live in a fallen world.

And those realities, the difficulty that we have in subduing the land or the earth, the difficulties that we have in relationships with one another, they are highlighted for us as we move toward the story of Abraham.

You only have to go to Genesis chapter 4 to see the highlighting of the tensions that exist between image bearers as Cain kills his brother Abel.

There's great tension there. There's great difficulty. And then you only have to move to chapter 6 before you're able to see in a more clear fashion the connection between the land and its fate and the difficulty that we have with the land and the judgment that God brings upon our own sin.

Take a look in Genesis chapter 6 verse 5. The Lord saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, literally the land, and that every intention of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually.

[27 : 28] That's mankind after the fall. That's who we are by nature now. That's how we come into the world with this bent towards sin. That's who we are.

And God, as He looks down, He sees that our wickedness is great upon the land. The land that we were meant to stand upon and image forth His glory. The land that we were meant to rule.

And so what does God determine to do? Verse 7, So the Lord said, I will blot out man whom I have created from the face of the land. And what happens?

What happens in the story of the flood? What happens to the land? The land. It's swamped and covered by water. Returning us back to the state in which we find ourselves in Genesis 1, verse 2. No land in sight. Just water. Just water. When God had not yet begun the process in Genesis 1 of preparing the land and the world for man to live upon and rule.

[28 : 34] God returns us to that place in the flood. But after the flood there's a kind of new creation. There's a kind of recreation. There's a kind of second chance for humanity.

And yet, even there, we find that the effects of the curse endure. The flood waters subside. Noah and his sons embark and they come off of the ark.

And what do we see as they stand upon the land? It starts well building an altar but before you know it Noah is drunk. What has he done? He has taken the land.

He has exercised dominion over it. He's grown a vineyard. And what does he do with the fruit of his labor? He's drunk. It's not just Noah. Noah's descendants.

A few generations later what do we find? We find them constructing a tower. Now what's the significance of the tower of Babel when we consider the issue of the land?

[29 : 34] Because people, humanity, we were commanded to be fruitful and multiply, that is, spread out over the face of the earth and then subdue the earth.

And man does the opposite in Genesis chapter 11. Rather than spread out, rather than go about the work of subduing the earth for the glory of God, man once again seeks his own glory. huddles up together, does not spread out until God finally forces them to spread out. Verse 9 of Genesis chapter 11, Therefore its name was called Babel because there the Lord confused the language of all the land and from there the Lord dispersed them over the face of all the land. He's going to make them go out. He's going to make them move out. He's going to make them continue this mandate though they are broken and fallen. Until we finally come to chapter 12 where Abram is called to go out to a land.

A land set apart for him. The land of promise. And if you picture in your mind this land of promise and where it's situated, I want you to picture in your mind a map.

[30 : 49] Now most of our mental maps begin with either America or Europe at the center. In fact, we call France and England and then America, we call all of that the West, don't we?

That's the West. And we call the East anything East of Central Europe because we're Eurocentric in our thinking. In other words, we think like white people most of the time.

Our history is taught in that way and from that perspective. And so we see everything with that as the center of the world. But if you really just look at a map and you ask, what looks like the center of the world here? Not what we sometimes just naturally think of as the center of the world.

What actually looks like the middle of the world? It looks like the coming together of the three major continents in which you have human civilization early on. Africa and Asia and Europe. And what's the middle? The promised land.

It's the very middle of it all to where God sends Abram. Go to this land. This will belong to you, Abram. Of course, it takes some time, generation after generation, before the people of Israel ever possess that land.

[31 : 56] But if we think that the promise given to Abram and the command given to him to go to that land is merely about that piece of land in the middle of the world, we are mistaken. Turn over to Romans chapter 4.

You knew I'd somehow get us in Romans this morning, right? Turn over to Romans chapter 4 where Paul comments upon Abraham. Romans chapter 4 verse 13.

For the promise to Abraham and his offspring that he would be heir of the world. Now we can just stop right there. We don't have to read the rest of the sentence.

What was the promise to Abraham? That he would be heir of the world. Not just a piece of land in the middle of the world. The piece of land was representative of the whole world.

So the promise to Abraham is not just about a little piece of land. It goes all the way back to Genesis chapters 1 and 2 where man is put there to rule over all of the world. The promise to Abraham was a calling back to Genesis chapters 1 and 2.

[33 : 01] The promised land is only representative of man's original creation mandate. Rule over the world. All of the land. Rule over all of it.

When does that happen? Turn a few more pages in Romans to Romans chapter 8. Romans chapter 8 verse 16. The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God and if children then heirs.

Heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ. So there will come a time when we inherit something. What is it that we inherit? Verse 19. For the creation waits with eager longing for the revealing of the sons of God.

There's your tie to the inheritance. The creation, the world, everything is waiting for what? The revealing of those who are the rightful inheritors of the promise.

For the creation was subjected to futility. What's the reference to? The reference is to the curse in Genesis chapter 3. The creation was subjected to futility.

[34 : 07] Not willingly but because of him who subjected it in hope that the creation itself will be set free from its bondage to corruption and obtain the freedom of the glory of the children of God.

So what's the hope here in Romans chapter 8? The hope is that when the offspring, when the sons of God finally inherit, when they finally come into their inheritance, the whole of creation will be set free to enjoy the freedom of the sons of God.

In other words, man's redemption is bound up with the redemption of the earth and the world as a whole. That comes to fruition. If you turn all the way to the end of your Bible in Revelation chapter 21 where the words of Genesis 1 are echoed.

21 verse 1, Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth. For the first heaven and the first earth had passed away. And note this, the sea was no more.

What does that mean? Does it mean that there's no water in the new heavens and new earth? I don't think that's the point. I think the point is that the waters of judgment as they stood in Genesis chapter 7 and 8 and 9, the waters of judgment are no more.

[35 : 21] It is all past. It is all land and blessing. So that we move from a command to subdue the land and rule over the land for the glory of God in chapter 1 to the land in rebellion against man beginning in Genesis chapter 3 to the land under judgment along with man in chapter 6 to the promise of a land in Genesis chapter 12 which we are told in the New Testament represents the whole of the world that will receive its redemption when we are finally and fully redeemed till there comes a day when there is no more threat of judgment, no more threat of floodwaters covering the land anymore because things are finally, finally set right.

It is significant that we see this theme and that as we think about the role of Abraham and Isaac and Jacob that we understand why over and over and over God keeps bringing up the land because the land is tied with the original purpose of mankind.

What about the issue of relationships? We see as I said earlier the breakdown of relationships in Genesis chapter 4 with the murder of Abel.

We see the breakdown of relationships continue on throughout the book of Genesis. We see great struggles between Abram and his own wife Sarah, Abraham and Sarah later on.

We see these struggles between their children all the way through the book of Genesis. Even until we arrive at the story of Joseph where there is a breakdown between his relationship and that of his brothers.

[37 : 09] We see over and over the fundamental breakdown of human relationships both in marriage and in other family relationships and in society at large.

But what is the great promise of the new covenant? What great hope is held out for us who are still struggling with and dealing with the reality that we are sinners having to relate to other sinners?

That we wrong one another? What is the great promise and hope held out of the new covenant?

That there will come a day when God will put his law within our hearts and he will cause us to walk in his statutes.

And what does the New Testament tell us over and over the sum of the law is? Love for your neighbor. Everything is moving toward the reversal of all the things that went wrong in the fall.

It's all moving in that direction. The fixing of the breakdown of man's call to rule over the world. The fixing of the breakdown in human relationships. All of this is in process of being repaired and fixed until we arrive at that great day where we stand upon the new earth where there is no sea and we are told that there are no more tears and there is no more pain and all of those things have been erased and taken away.

[38 : 32] Everything is moving inexorably in that direction. It's headed that way. But now the question becomes for us as we consider the book of Genesis how is God accomplishing that?

Granted you have creation and all of the themes and all of the mandates given to man in creation and then you have their undoing in the fall and the ongoing fallout no pun intended but the ongoing fallout from that event throughout human history moving towards the day when those things are fixed and made right but how is God accomplishing that?

How is He doing that? How is He going about reversing all of that? How is God going about the business of restoring us to the task of imaging forth His glory to all of creation?

What is He going to do? Well He's going to redeem us. Creation! Fall! Redemption! But I think we need to expand upon this term redemption especially as we see it laid out for us here in the book of Genesis.

In fact I want to introduce you this morning to a term it's not one that I've invented but it's one that I've borrowed but I want to introduce you to a term that I think will help us to understand not only is God at work redeeming but we'll see better in Genesis and really throughout the rest of the Bible how God accomplishes redemption and that phrase that I want to introduce you to this morning is salvation through judgment alright?

[40 : 00] Salvation through judgment how is God going about redeeming people? How is He bringing redemption to the world? How is God going to save people? Well salvation comes consistently through judgment in Scripture all the way back in Genesis chapter 3 a promise that we have considered many times we see it again in Genesis 3.15 as God pronounces a curse upon Satan I will put enmity between you and the woman and between your offspring and her offspring he shall bruise your head and you shall bruise his heel in other words the promise of a redeemer the promise of one who will reverse the effects of the curse that promise will be fulfilled but only as the seed only as the redeemer himself is bruised there will come upon him pain there will come upon him a judgment of sorts as he goes about the task of winning redemption and that's the pattern that we have set out for us so if you turn to Genesis chapter 6 again and you see the flood taking place what do you also see?

as judgment descends upon the world what else do we see? verse 11 now the earth was corrupt in God's sight the earth was filled with violence and God saw the earth and behold it was corrupt for all flesh had corrupted their way on the earth and God said to Noah in other words God singles out a man he's ready to bring judgment into the world but in the midst of that judgment in fact through that judgment he will rescue a man and his family he will save Noah through judgment build an ark build a boat Noah so that when my judgment comes that boat will be the means of your salvation do this work and I will redeem you God has a plan he's bringing salvation into the world but just as it will come ultimately with the seed through judgment it also comes to Noah through judgment we see that not only though in the story of the flood we also see it in the very chapter that we read at the beginning this morning it may not seem obvious to you at first but I want you to look at the pattern of this particular genealogy there's a clear pattern that I mentioned earlier so and so fathered so and so at certain age and then he lived after he fathered them for so many years and had other sons and daughters let's look at it real quickly verse 12 when Arpachad had lived 35 years he fathered Shalah and Arpachad lived after he fathered Shalah four into three years and had other sons and daughters okay there's the pattern it's repeated over and over what's significant about that I said earlier that there is a sense in which this genealogy is a continuation of the genealogy of Genesis chapter 5 and the language of this genealogy clearly reflects and imitates the language of the genealogy of chapter 5 in every way but one look at the genealogy of chapter 5 we'll read one example verse 6 when Seth had lived 105 years he fathered Enosh Seth lived after he had fathered Enosh 807 years and had other sons and daughters thus all the days of Seth were 912 years and he died over and over in Genesis chapter 5 and he died and he died and he died because Genesis chapter 5 is moving us from the fall to the judgment of the world at the flood but Genesis chapter 11 is moving us from the flood and the tower of Babel to the calling of Abram so we are meant to see in chapter 11 a glimmer of hope a glimmer of hope in other words salvation is on its way it's not that these people didn't die of course they died but Moses does not want to highlight that because he wants us to sense and feel hope that he didn't want us to sense and feel in chapter 5 there is great hope here the sentence of death will eventually be reversed but that comes about even that glimmer of hope as we move towards Abram that comes about in the context of overall judgment upon humanity where do we see that well look again at the details here verse 16 chapter 11 when Heber had lived 34 years he fathered Peleg and Heber lived after he had fathered Peleg 430 years and had other sons and daughters when Peleg had lived 30 years he fathered Rue and Peleg lived after he fathered Rue 209 years and had other sons and daughters and you trace that line all the way down to Terah

Abram's father why is that significant? because this isn't the first time in Genesis that we have been given a genealogy for Shem there is a genealogy for Shem in Genesis chapter 10 just before the incident of the Tower of Babel is recorded for us at the beginning of chapter 11 look up in chapter 10 verse 25 you should see a familiar name to Heber there he is see him he's in chapter 11 but he's in chapter 10 to Heber were born two sons the name of the one was Peleg for in his days the earth was divided and his brother's name was Joktan and then we get the genealogy continuing with Joktan why the difference?

what's significant here? most likely the reference to the earth being divided is a reference to the Tower of Babel event in chapter 11 so here at the time of Peleg in his lifetime that's when people are scattered over the face of the earth they're no longer huddled up together they're no longer all grouped together God scatters them over the face of the earth and what does He do next?

[46 : 09] does He bless all of them as they go? no He doesn't He does what we will find Him doing over and over throughout the book of Genesis He chooses a man and in choosing that man excludes the rest you see what's happening here?

there are other sons and daughters we know that in a more general way but there's an entire family line recorded for us in Genesis chapter 10 what happens to that family line? who knows from the perspective of the writer of Genesis who cares?

they're not the recipients of the blessing Peleg is the recipient Peleg is the one through whom the promise of the seed continues and endures all the way down to Abram and so even with the way that this genealogy is constructed and worded we are seeing hope as we move to salvation but that hope comes in the context of the judgment of the rest of the world salvation always consistently comes through judgment until finally we end up at the cross where the seed of the woman is bruised where he lays down his life and the judgment of his father falls upon him the wrath of God himself born by the Son of God so that he might win our redemption so that we might be saved and then the promise made to Abraham that through your seed all the families of the earth would be blessed then that promise begins to come true at that point in time and we begin to see a reversal of all the things that went wrong in chapter 3 no longer is the promise narrowing down to one family it's spreading out now to all families no longer are we faced with the prospect of an ever darkening world in which there is no hope for anyone but just this one man and his children no it's not what we see in fact the command to multiply the command to spread out upon the earth it continues under the new covenant go and make disciples of all the nations go out and do that and do that great work so that now this salvation that has been won through the judgment of God's son can be spread to the far ends of the earth to every people to every tribe to every tongue to every nation that's where everything is moving that's where everything is heading but here in Genesis we are early in the process we are very early in the process and if we want to understand if we want to understand more fully the work of Jesus on our behalf and if we want to rejoice with greater joy in all that Christ has accomplished for us we need to understand the path that brings us to Jesus and it's a road that runs right through the patriarchs and so as we spend our time walking through these chapters as we spend our time looking at the lives of Abraham looking at the life of Isaac and of Jacob looking at the lives of brothers torn apart husbands and wives who are dealing with the effects of the fall and frustrated with one when we see all of these very real very human stories what we remember is that in the midst of that

God is at work to bring salvation into the world he is sovereignly executing his plan he is bringing all of history to a point in which he will save his people from their sins and that will give us hope in the middle of our lives because we have broken relationships because we are still dealing with the effects of the fall because marriage is not always easy sometimes it's hard because raising children is not always easy sometimes it's hard because having family and friends is not always easy it's hard because being in a church family can be frustrating at times and you can get irritated with one another and there is the temptation to just take off and leave life is difficult pain and toil are still a part of our lives but if we can see in the lives of the patriarchs the sovereign hand of God as he works to bring about redemption we can also see in the masses of our own lives the sovereign hand of God at work to bring about our ultimate redemption what does it look like?

I want you to turn this is the last place I want us to look this morning to 1 Corinthians chapter 15 the reversal of the curse and the hope that awaits us Genesis 15 21 for as by a man came death that's Adam by a man has come also the resurrection of the dead and then looking forward into the future verse 24 then comes the end the end right?

[51 : 30] when he delivers the kingdom to God the Father after destroying every rule and every authority and power for he must reign until what?

until he has put all his enemies under his feet and the last enemy to be destroyed is death what is the ultimate effect of the curse in the garden? it's death all of those other things issue in death and now we are told where is it all heading?

just as far as an Adam death and pain and toil came into the world in Christ it's all being reversed in Christ life is coming back into the world and there will be a day when death is no more there will be a day when every rule and authority bends and bows to Jesus there will be a day when all of his enemies death and the serpent included are under his feet and defeated forever and the lives of the patriarchs are a reminder that just as they look forward to the coming of the seed we also ought in all the messiness of life to look forward and to look ahead toward our ultimate and final redemption

let's pray do you