



Part Three

By

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Chapter 13

In our last study we looked at the first test God gave humans.

“... but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die.” Genesis 2:17

“So when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree desirable to make one wise, she took of its fruit and ate. She also gave to her husband with her, and he ate. Then the eyes of both of them were opened, and they knew that they were naked; and they sewed fig leaves together and made themselves coverings.” Genesis 3:6-7

It looks like a “fail” to me, but let’s see what God thought about the test.

God – “Where are you?” (Asking Adam)

Adam – “I heard Your voice in the garden, and I was afraid because I was naked; and I hid myself.”

God – “Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten from the tree of which I commanded you that you should not eat?”

Adam – “The woman whom You gave to be with me, she gave me of the tree, and I ate.”

God – “What is this you have done?” (Asking Eve)

Eve – “The serpent deceived me, and I ate.”

What **doesn't** happen next is important – God does not ask the serpent (Satan) a question. Why not?

This is not Satan's test. In fact, Satan is part of the test. Satan is the liar and deceiver. God told the truth. Satan told the lie.

There was no reason for God to ask Satan anything. Satan had played his role in the test.

Now it was time for God to reveal the heart of His eternal plan. The next words God spoke would tell Satan, Adam and Eve what life for them would be like from that moment on.

God spoke to Satan first. Remember, God did not ask Satan anything. God simply told Satan what was going to happen to him.

“So the Lord God said to the serpent: ‘Because you have done this, You are cursed more than all cattle, And more than every beast of the field; On your belly you shall go, And you shall eat dust All the days of your life. And I will put enmity Between you and the woman, And between your seed and her Seed; He shall bruise your head, And you shall bruise His heel.’” Genesis 3:14-15

Snakes we see today are a reminder of the curse God placed on Satan.

Snakes are feared, hated, hunted and killed around the world.

I recently saw a rattlesnake sunning itself along a sidewalk where my wife and I walk near our house. My reaction? Quickly move my wife away from the snake and keep the stick I carry ready in my hand if it became necessary to protect us from the snake's attack. I remembered the lessons of my father when I was a young child about how to recognize poisonous snakes and knew that a rattlesnake was not one I wanted to be near.

Satan is a snake – poisonous, treacherous, dangerous. As God said – “You *are* cursed more than all cattle, And more than every beast of the field; On your belly you shall go, And you shall eat dust All the days of your life.”

If that's all God said to Satan, it wouldn't be a big deal. Okay, so snakes crawl on their bellies. However, God didn't stop there. He also told Satan – “And I will put enmity Between you and the woman, And between your seed and her Seed; He shall bruise your head, And you shall bruise His heel.”

We have now entered into new territory. Satan had deceived the woman, so they knew each other; but who is this “Seed” of the woman who would bruise the “seed” of Satan's head one day?

Let's remember what started [this series months ago](#) –

“Therefore do not be ashamed of the testimony of our Lord, nor of me His prisoner, but share with me in the sufferings for the gospel according to the power of God, who has saved us and called us with a holy calling, not according to our works, but according to His own purpose and grace which was given to us in Christ Jesus before time

began, but has now been revealed by the appearing of our Savior Jesus Christ, who has abolished death and brought life and immortality to light through the gospel.” 2 Timothy 1:8-10

“Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ, just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love, having predestined us to adoption as sons by Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will, to the praise of the glory of His grace, by which He made us accepted in the Beloved. In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace.” Ephesians 1:3-7

God – Father, Son and Holy Spirit – decided in eternity – before time and space began – that God the Father would send God the Son to abolish death and bring life and immortality to light.”

How would the Son do that? “through His blood.”

God revealed how that would happen when He said to Satan – “you shall bruise His heel.”

“Then Satan entered Judas, surnamed Iscariot, who was numbered among the twelve. So he went his way and conferred with the chief priests and captains, how he might betray Him to them.” Luke 2:3-4

God revealed that the Son would abolish death and bring life and immortality to light when He said to Satan – “He shall bruise your head.”

“And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life. For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life. For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved.” John 3:14-17

“Then He said to them, ‘Thus it is written, and thus it was necessary for the Christ to suffer and to rise from the dead the third day, and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. And you are witnesses of these things.’” Luke 24:46-48

“For since by man came death, by Man also came the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ all shall be made alive. But each one in his own order: Christ the firstfruits, afterward those who are Christ’s at His coming.” 1 Corinthians 15:21-23

“... the eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that you may know what is the hope of His calling, what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints, and what is the exceeding greatness of His power toward us who believe, according to the working of His mighty power which He worked in Christ when He raised Him from

the dead and seated Him at His right hand in the heavenly places, far above all principality and power and might and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this age but also in that which is to come.” Ephesians 1:18-21

“The devil, who deceived them, was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone where the beast and the false prophet are. And they will be tormented day and night forever and ever.” Revelation 20:10

That’s what Satan is dealing with now and what he faces in the future. God determined all of that in eternity – before the foundation of the world, before time began.

God spoke next to Eve –

“I will greatly multiply your sorrow and your conception; In pain you shall bring forth children; Your desire shall be for your husband, And he shall rule over you.” Genesis 3:16

Then, God spoke to Adam –

“Because you have heeded the voice of your wife, and have eaten from the tree of which I commanded you, saying, ‘You shall not eat of it’: ‘Cursed is the ground for your sake; In toil you shall eat of it All the days of your life. Both thorns and thistles it shall bring forth for you, And you shall eat the herb of the field. In the sweat of your face you shall eat bread Till you return to the ground, For out of it you were

taken; For dust you are, And to dust you shall return.” Genesis 3:17-19

Keep in mind that God had chosen His words to Adam and Eve “before time began.” God was not making stuff up on the spot. He wasn’t speaking before thinking. He didn’t lose His temper and say things that he wished later He could take back. Not at all. Everything God did and said was decided “before the foundation of the world.”

That means that everything God said to Satan, Eve and Adam was part of God’s Great Reveal.

Chapter 14

In the last part of our study we saw how God reacted to Satan, Eve and Adam in the Garden of Eden. God tested Adam and Eve and they failed – especially Adam –

“For Adam was formed first, then Eve. And Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived, fell into transgression.”

Adam was formed first. God gave him the commandment not to eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. Adam knew better, but when tested “fell into transgression.”

Maybe he didn’t want to live without having Eve with him (knowing she would die), but whatever his reason he made a bad choice. It led to grave circumstances.

It’s important to remember that God was not caught off guard by what Adam and Eve did in the Garden of Eden. Satan didn’t secretly slip into the garden without God knowing he was there. God didn’t have to make up stuff when He spoke to Satan, Eve and Adam. Everything God said to them was something He determined to say to them “before time began, before the foundation of the world.” Everything God revealed to them in the garden was tied to His Great Reveal.

“And they heard the sound of the Lord God walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and Adam and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the Lord God among the trees of the garden. Then the Lord God called to Adam and said to him, ‘Where are you?’ So he said, ‘I heard Your voice in the garden, and I was afraid because I was naked; and I hid myself.’ And He said, ‘Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten from the tree of which I commanded you that you should not eat?’ Then the man said, ‘The woman whom You gave to be with me, she gave me of the tree, and I ate.’ And the Lord God said to the woman, ‘What is this you have done?’ The woman said, ‘The serpent deceived me, and I ate.’ So the Lord God said to the serpent: ‘Because you have done this, You are cursed more than all cattle, And more than every beast of the field; On your belly you shall go, And you shall eat dust All the days of your life. And I will put enmity Between you and the woman, And between your seed and her Seed; He shall bruise your head, And you shall bruise His heel.’ To the woman He said: ‘I will greatly multiply your sorrow and your conception; In pain you shall bring forth children; Your desire shall be for your husband, And he shall rule over you.’ Then to Adam He said, ‘Because you have heeded the voice of your wife, and have eaten from the tree of which I commanded you, saying, ‘You shall not eat of it’: ‘Cursed is the ground for your sake; In toil you shall eat of it All the days of your life. Both thorns and thistles it shall bring forth for you, And you shall eat the herb of the field. In the sweat of your face you shall eat bread Till you return to the ground, For out of it you were taken; For dust you are, And to dust you shall return.”

Genesis 3:8-19

Based on what we read in the brief exchange between God and the first humans, life changed in massive ways from what they had known before their test with Satan.

They would experience –

1. fear
2. anxiety
3. worry
4. guilt
5. shame
6. self-consciousness
7. blame others
8. sorrow
9. pain
10. subservience
11. toil
12. injury
13. death

Does that sound familiar?

The important thing to remember is that God pronounced at a particular place and time what He had already decided to do in eternity – before time and space.

Let me say that again –

God pronounced at a particular place and time what He had already decided to do in eternity – before time and space.

We MUST understand that the kind of life we live is not a mistake. It is not an oversight. It is not something outside of God's will. What we experience in this life is central to God's eternal purpose –

“And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life. For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life. For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved.” John 3:14-17

“... knowing that you were not redeemed with corruptible things, like silver or gold, from your aimless conduct received by tradition from your fathers, but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot.” 1 Peter 1:18-19

“Therefore do not be ashamed of the testimony of our Lord, nor of me His prisoner, but share with me in the sufferings for the gospel according to the power of God, who has saved us and called us with a holy calling, not according to our works, but according to His own purpose and grace which was given to us in Christ Jesus before time

began, but has now been revealed by the appearing of our Savior Jesus Christ, who has abolished death and brought life and immortality to light through the gospel.” 2 Timothy 1:8-10

The End From The Beginning

“Remember the former things of old, For I am God, and there is no other; I am God, and there is none like Me, Declaring the end from the beginning, And from ancient times things that are not yet done, Saying, ‘My counsel shall stand, And I will do all My pleasure,’ Calling a bird of prey from the east, The man who executes My counsel, from a far country. Indeed I have spoken it; I will also bring it to pass. I have purposed it; I will also do it.” Isaiah 46:9-11

How can God know the end from the beginning? Because He is eternal. His counsel, which is eternal, will stand in time and space. He will do ALL His pleasure, which is also eternal.

With that in mind, let’s look at the beginning and compare with the middle and the end –

Beginning – “The Lord God planted a garden eastward in Eden, and there He put the man whom He had formed. And out of the ground the Lord God made every tree grow that is pleasant to the sight and good for food ... And Adam said: ‘This *is* now bone of my bones And flesh of my flesh; She shall be called Woman, Because she was taken out of Man.’ Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and they shall

become one flesh. And they were both naked, the man and his wife, and were not ashamed.” Genesis 2:8-9, 23-25

Middle – “I will greatly multiply your sorrow and your conception; In pain you shall bring forth children; Your desire *shall be* for your husband, And he shall rule over you ... Cursed *is* the ground for your sake; In toil you shall eat *of* it All the days of your life. Both thorns and thistles it shall bring forth for you, And you shall eat the herb of the field. In the sweat of your face you shall eat bread Till you return to the ground, For out of it you were taken; For dust you *are*, And to dust you shall return.” Genesis 3:16-19

End – “And I heard a loud voice from heaven saying, ‘Behold, the tabernacle of God *is* with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people. God Himself will be with them *and be* their God. And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes; there shall be no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying. There shall be no more pain, for the former things have passed away.” Revelation 21:3-4

God knew the end from the beginning. God knew in eternity what the beginning would be, what the middle would be and what the end would be.

“And he showed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding from the throne of God and of the Lamb. In the middle of its street, and on either side of the river, was the tree of life, which bore twelve fruits, each tree yielding its fruit every month. The leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations. And there shall be no more curse, but the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it, and

His servants shall serve Him. They shall see His face, and His name shall be on their foreheads. There shall be no night there: They need no lamp nor light of the sun, for the Lord God gives them light. And they shall reign forever and ever.” Revelation 22:1-5

Human beings were made in the image and likeness of God. They started life in a beautiful place surrounded with good things, but God had determined in eternity to do something special with them in time and space. God made a decision in eternity so we could make a decision in time and space.

Adam and Eve made their decisions in the beginning that would plunge the human race into a middle time that would surround all people with death, sorrow and pain. That will eventually end and lead to a time of life and joy without pain or fear.

So, since God knows the end from the beginning, why would He want the middle time? Why not go straight from the beginning to the end?

You may not like the answer, but it is apparent from everything we read in the revealed Word of God – the middle is central to God’s epic journey and our epic journey.

The Epic Journey

I find it helpful to deal with what's "really real." What's really real is that God determined in eternity to start an epic journey that would include **creation**, **corruption**, and **redemption** in time and space. We are on that journey with God.

Christians do not believe, as deists do, that God created the universe but doesn't intervene in any way – letting the universe run itself. Christians believe that God created the universe with a masterful purpose and is intimately involved with how everything in time and space works with His plan.

The Apostle Paul understood what God was doing and why. That's why Paul was able to write this –

“For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us. For the earnest expectation of the creation eagerly waits for the revealing of the sons of God. For the creation was subjected to futility, not willingly, but because of Him who subjected it in hope; because the creation itself also will be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God. For we know that the whole creation groans and labors with birth pangs together until now. Not only that, but we also who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, eagerly waiting for the adoption, the redemption of our body. For we were saved in this hope, but hope

that is seen is not hope; for why does one still hope for what he sees? But if we hope for what we do not see, we eagerly wait for it with perseverance.” Romans 8:18-25

Wow! Now that’s an epic journey. From **creation** to **corruption** to **redemption**. That is the journey we are on with God.

Chapter 15

In the last part of our study we saw how God responded to Adam and Eve after they failed God's simple test –

“... but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die.” Genesis 2:17

“So when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree desirable to make one wise, she took of its fruit and ate. She also gave to her husband with her, and he ate. Then the eyes of both of them were opened, and they knew that they were naked; and they sewed fig leaves together and made themselves coverings.” Genesis 3:6-7

God met with Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden and told them how their lives were going to change. They would experience pain, sorrow and death because of their disobedience to God.

What happened next is deeply important to the eternal plan of God that is playing out in time and space.

Results of Corruption

The first reveal was **creation**. That's when time and space began.

The second reveal was **corruption**. That's when sorrow, pain and death began.

Just as creation was part of God's plan, so was corruption. If it wasn't, then there would have been no need for Jesus to die on the Cross. Christ's suffering and sacrifice were determined "before time began, before the foundation of the world." (2 Timothy 1:8-10; Ephesians 1:3-10) No corruption – no need for Jesus to suffer and sacrifice.

The Apostle Paul wrote in Romans 8 that creation is in "the bondage of corruption." He wrote in 1 Corinthians 15 that the human body "is sown in corruption." That's what happened when Adam sinned against God. Every child born on earth (every human body) "is sown in corruption." Adam's sin is passed along to every human.

We read these words about God's thoughts about His creation when He finished it –

"Then God saw everything that He had made, and indeed it was very good. So the evening and the morning were the sixth day." Genesis 1:31

Here's what God did upon completing creation –

“Thus the heavens and the earth, and all the host of them, were finished. And on the seventh day God ended His work which He had done, and He rested on the seventh day from all His work which He had done. Then God blessed the seventh day and sanctified it, because in it He rested from all His work which God had created and made.” Genesis 2:1-3

Look at these key words:

- very good
- rested
- blessed
- sanctified

Those words clearly present an excellent result from God's creative act.

Next, look at what happened after Adam sinned –

“To the woman He said: ‘I will greatly multiply your sorrow and your conception; in pain you shall bring forth children; Your desire shall be for your husband, And he shall rule over you. Then to Adam He said, ‘Because you have heeded the voice of your wife, and have eaten from the tree of which I commanded you, saying, ‘You shall not eat of it’: ‘Cursed is the ground for your sake; In toil you shall eat of it All the days of your life. Both thorns and thistles it shall bring forth for you, And you shall eat the herb of the field. In the sweat of your face you

shall eat bread Till you return to the ground, For out of it you were taken; For dust you are, And to dust you shall return.” Genesis 3:16-19

Look at these key words:

- sorrow
- pain
- rule over
- cursed
- toil
- thorns
- thistles
- sweat
- death (dust you shall return)

Those words clearly present a terrible result (corruption) from Adam and Eve’s sinful acts.

The Hebrew word for “corruption” is מִשְׁחָת (mishchath) and means “marred, disfigurement, corruption.” A familiar verse that uses the word is Psalm 16:10 – “For You will not leave my soul in Sheol, Nor will You allow Your Holy One to see corruption.”

The Greek word for “corruption” is φθορά (phthora) and means “destruction, decay, rottenness, decomposition, corruption.”

The Apostle Paul wrote that “the whole creation groans” because of the corruption that Adam’s sin brought into the world –

“For the creation was subjected to futility, not willingly, but because of Him who subjected it in hope; because the creation itself also will be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God. For we know that the whole creation groans and labors with birth pangs together until now.” Romans 8:20-22

Guarding the Plan

Can you imagine what those moments must have looked like from Adam and Eve’s perspective? They messed up big time and were caught. They tried the blame game, but that didn’t work. They heard what God said their life would be like and it didn’t sound good. God’s creation had gone from “good” to “bad” in the human act of disobedience to the Creator.

So, did that bring God’s great purpose and plan to a halt? Was He finished with it? Had God failed in protecting the perfect utopia He created? Not at all. Remember, what we are reading in in the early chapters of Genesis is the first part of God’s **great reveal**. He put His epic journey into motion and things are moving along as planned.

What happened next was part of God's plan.

“And Adam called his wife's name Eve, because she was the mother of all living. Also for Adam and his wife the Lord God made tunics of skin, and clothed them. Then the Lord God said, ‘Behold, the man has become like one of Us, to know good and evil. And now, lest he put out his hand and take also of the tree of life, and eat, and live forever’— therefore the Lord God sent him out of the garden of Eden to till the ground from which he was taken. So He drove out the man; and He placed cherubim at the east of the garden of Eden, and a flaming sword which turned every way, to guard the way to the tree of life.” Genesis 3:20-24

God made tunics of skin to clothe Adam and Eve. They clothed themselves with fig leaves which they chose and sewed together. However, God wanted to clothe Adam and Eve in something else – tunics of skin.

The Hebrew word for “skin” is *‘ōwr* and was used in the Old Testament for the skin of people or animals. Adam and Eve already had their covering of human skin, so it would seem that what God did was make them tunics (*kāṭēnōwṭ* – coats, garments) of animal skin. How did God do that? Did He kill one or more animals to get their skin to make the tunics? That would seem to be the meaning, but we'll look into that in more detail in the next part of our study.

Leaving Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden where they could eat from the tree of life and live forever was not part of God's plan. What was part of His plan was removing Adam and Eve from the garden and placing cherubim (angels) at the east side of the garden. The cherubim held a flaming sword and moved it continually in "every way" for the purpose of guarding "the way to the tree of life."

Adam and Eve left their very special home in shame and sorrow and headed out into a world that was cursed because of them.

How far did they travel before setting up camp that first day? Did they stay close to the Garden of Eden so they could see it and remember the close relationship they had with God in it or did they go away as far as they could because of their shame?

We don't know how far they moved, but we know it was "east" of Eden.

Punishment?

Was all of this about punishment? Is that God's plan? Test people, watch them fail, punish them, end of story?

If that's what we think, we have MISSED the point of God's eternal plan. Is there punishment for sin? Absolutely! But is **punishment for sin** the epic journey God designed in eternity? Not at all.

“For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life. For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved.” John 3:16-17

“But God, who is rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, even when we were dead in trespasses, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved), and raised us up together, and made us sit together in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, that in the ages to come He might show the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness toward us in Christ Jesus. For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast. For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them.” Ephesians 2:4-10

“For when we were still without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly. For scarcely for a righteous man will one die; yet perhaps for a good man someone would even dare to die. But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us. Much more then, having now been justified by His blood, we shall be saved from wrath through Him. For if when we were enemies we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son, much more, having been reconciled, we shall be saved by His life. And not only that, but we also rejoice in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received the reconciliation.” Romans 5:6-11

“He has delivered us from the power of darkness and conveyed us into the kingdom of the Son of His love, in whom we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins.” Colossians 1:13-14

What do you read here? Does it sound like God’s eternal plan is about tricking, testing and punishing Adam and Eve so God can punish all of their descendants?

Or ...

Do you read that God offers love, grace, mercy, forgiveness, salvation and reconciliation to all who come to Him through Jesus Christ?

Yes, that’s what I read, too!

Let’s remind ourselves about what God chose in eternity to do in time and space –

“Therefore do not be ashamed of the testimony of our Lord, nor of me His prisoner, but share with me in the sufferings for the gospel according to the power of God, who has saved us and called us with a holy calling, not according to our works, but according to His own purpose and grace which was given to us in Christ Jesus before time began, but has now been revealed by the appearing of our Savior Jesus Christ, who has abolished death and brought life and immortality to light through the gospel.” 2 Timothy 1:8-10

“Paul, a bondservant of God and an apostle of Jesus Christ, according to the faith of God’s elect and the acknowledgment of the truth which accords with godliness, in hope of eternal life which God, who cannot lie, promised before time began, but has in due time manifested His word through preaching, which was committed to me according to the commandment of God our Savior.” Titus 1:1-3

“Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ, just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love, having predestined us to adoption as sons by Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will, to the praise of the glory of His grace, by which He made us accepted in the Beloved. In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace which He made to abound toward us in all wisdom and prudence, having made known to us the mystery of His will, according to His good pleasure which He purposed in Himself.” Ephesians 1:3-9

“And if you call on the Father, who without partiality judges according to each one’s work, conduct yourselves throughout the time of your stay here in fear; knowing that you were not redeemed with corruptible things, like silver or gold, from your aimless conduct received by tradition from your fathers, but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot. He indeed was foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in

these last times for you who through Him believe in God, who raised Him from the dead and gave Him glory, so that your faith and hope are in God.” 1 Peter 1:17-21

God’s eternal plan for time and space includes punishment, but it is God the Father who sent God the Son to take our punishment **upon Himself** on the Cross –

“But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us. Much more then, having now been justified by His blood, we shall be saved from wrath through Him. For if when we were enemies we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son, much more, having been reconciled, we shall be saved by His life. And not only that, but we also rejoice in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received the reconciliation.”

Chapter 16

God's eternal plan for time and space is underway. First, we saw **creation**. Next, we saw **corruption**. The third and final part of God's plan is **redemption**.

How would God introduce the idea of redemption into His plan? He already did –

“So the Lord God said to the serpent: ‘Because you have done this, You are cursed more than all cattle, And more than every beast of the field; On your belly you shall go, And you shall eat dust All the days of your life. And I will put enmity Between you and the woman, And between your seed and her Seed; He shall bruise your head, And you shall bruise His heel.’” Genesis 3:14-15

Adam and Eve sinned against God and plunged creation into corruption. God immediately introduced redemption. It was an eternal plan based on the Son of God's death and resurrection that would be carried out in time and space –

“... who has saved us and called us with a holy calling, not according to our works, but according to His own purpose and grace which was given to us in Christ Jesus before time began, but has now been revealed by the appearing of our Savior Jesus Christ, who has abolished death and brought life and immortality to light through the gospel.’ 2 Timothy 1:9-10

The Birth of Sin

God sent Adam away from the Garden of Eden “to till the ground from which he was taken.” Adam was a farmer and Eve was a farmer’s wife. It wasn’t long before they started a family – the first human family –

“Now Adam knew Eve his wife, and she conceived and bore Cain, and said, ‘I have acquired a man from the Lord.’” Genesis 4:1

Eve didn’t forget how Satan had deceived her and what God had said to Satan –

“And I will put enmity Between you and the woman, And between your seed and her Seed; He shall bruise your head, And you shall bruise His heel.” Genesis 3:15

Eve was looking for the “seed,” the male child who would “bruise” the head of Satan’s seed. She thought her firstborn son, Cain, was that man.

Eve became pregnant again and had another son. She would later have other children, but Cain was the one she thought at first would be the “Seed” who would defeat Satan.

The first human pregnancy on earth is a fascinating study – and not just because of what the baby would do as an adult. Something Paul wrote in 1 Corinthians gives us tremendous insight into what was going on in that first pregnancy –

“The body is sown in corruption, it is raised in incorruption. It is sown in dishonor, it is raised in glory. It is sown in weakness, it is raised in power. It is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body. There is a natural body, and there is a spiritual body.” 1 Corinthians 15:42-44

The Greek word for “sown” is σπείρω (*speiró*). The idea is of sowing or scattering seed. The Hebrew word translated “seed” in Genesis 3:15 is זָרַע (*zar‘ă*) and means “seed, descendants.”

Adam “knew” (had sexual relations) with Eve and she became pregnant. From what Paul wrote in 1 Corinthians 15 we see that the body that would become Cain was –

- sown in corruption
- sown in dishonor
- sown in weakness
- sown a natural body

That is the direct result of the “sin” that entered into the world when Adam and Eve disobeyed God.

Cain's personal story is sad in many ways, but not surprising given what God told Eve in the garden –

“I will greatly multiply your sorrow and your conception; In pain you shall bring forth children.” Genesis 3:16a

Eve and all women who would become mothers after her would experience sorrow and pain during pregnancy and childbirth. Since God pronounced that He would “greatly multiply your sorrow and your conception,” it would appear to be part of God's eternal plan.

Pain and sorrow play an integral part in God's plan for humanity. It appears to be an important part of the epic journey we are on with God. Pregnancy and childbirth are hard to go through, but it's amazing how quickly women are ready to go through it again to bear more children. They have a very special connection with their children that men don't have. It's the way God intended. Babies are nurtured inside their mother's womb until time for birth. Birth for both mother and child is painful, but their external reunion is amazing to see. As a father and grandfather I have marveled at the phenomenal closeness mother and child experience with each other.

Overcoming

I'll share more about this in future articles, but I'd like to point out something that is an important part of God's eternal plan. That is the importance of "overcoming."

The pain mothers experience during pregnancy and childbirth is an example of the journey we are on with God.

Jesus addressed this when He spoke with His disciples prior to going to the Cross –

"These things I have spoken to you, that in Me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation; but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world." John 16:33

We can all "amen" that! We do experience *tribulation* in this world and we can be of good cheer because Jesus has **overcome** the world.

In the Book of Revelation, Jesus addressed seven churches in Asia Minor and told each of them to **overcome**. Notice how Jesus promises a reward for *overcoming*.

"He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To him who overcomes I will give to eat from the tree of life, which is in the midst of the Paradise of God." Revelation 2:7

“He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. He who overcomes shall not be hurt by the second death.” Revelation 2:11

“He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To him who overcomes I will give some of the hidden manna to eat. And I will give him a white stone, and on the stone a new name written which no one knows except him who receives it.”

“And he who overcomes, and keeps My works until the end, to him I will give power over the nations—” Revelation 2:26

“He who overcomes shall be clothed in white garments, and I will not blot out his name from the Book of Life; but I will confess his name before My Father and before His angels.” Revelation 3:5

“He who overcomes, I will make him a pillar in the temple of My God, and he shall go out no more. I will write on him the name of My God and the name of the city of My God, the New Jerusalem, which comes down out of heaven from My God. And I will write on him My new name.” Revelation 3:12

“To him who overcomes I will grant to sit with Me on My throne, as I also overcame and sat down with My Father on His throne.” Revelation 3:21

It's clear from what Jesus told His disciples and the churches that overcoming was an important part of His eternal plan for humans. In this life we will have tribulation (θλίψις, *thlipsis* – trouble, persecution, affliction, distress, tribulation), but we can be of good cheer (θαρσέω, *tharseó* – of good courage, good cheer, bold) because Jesus has overcome (νικάω, *nikaó* – conquer, victorious, overcome, prevail, subdue) the world.

The eternal plan of God was for God the Son to overcome the world with all of its tribulations, trouble, afflictions, distress and persecution and for us to overcome through His victory –

“So when this corruptible has put on incorruption, and this mortal has put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written: ‘Death is swallowed up in victory.’ O Death, where is your sting? O Hades, where is your victory?’ The sting of death is sin, and the strength of sin is the law. But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.” 1 Corinthians 15:54-57

Living this life is hard. God never lied to us. He told our first parents, Adam and Eve, that life would be hard and would end in death. Jesus said we would experience tribulation in this world, but we could take courage in the fact that He had overcome the world. Jesus also reminded His followers that there are amazing rewards waiting for those who overcome.

One of my favorite sections of Scripture that addresses this issue is in Romans 8. It is most encouraging –

“What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us? He who did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things? Who shall bring a charge against God’s elect? It is God who justifies. Who is he who condemns? It is Christ who died, and furthermore is also risen, who is even at the right hand of God, who also makes intercession for us. Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? As it is written: ‘For Your sake we are killed all day long; We are accounted as sheep for the slaughter.’ Yet in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us. For I am persuaded that neither death nor life, nor angels nor principalities nor powers, nor things present nor things to come, nor height nor depth, nor any other created thing, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.” Romans 8:31-39

The Apostle Paul also addressed the issue of *overcoming* in the context of serving God through obedience and sacrifice –

“Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.” Romans 12:21

The Apostle John wrote about Christians overcoming Satan and the world –

“I write to you, fathers, Because you have known Him who is from the beginning. I write to you, young men, Because you have overcome the wicked one. I write to you, little children, Because you have known the Father. I have written to you, fathers, Because you have known Him who is from the beginning. I have written to you, young men, Because you are strong, and the word of God abides in you, And you have overcome the wicked one.” 1 John 2:13-14

“For this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments. And His commandments are not burdensome. For whatever is born of God overcomes the world. And this is the victory that has overcome the world—our faith. Who is he who overcomes the world, but he who believes that Jesus is the Son of God?” 1 John 5:3-5

And there we have the secret to overcoming the world – believe that Jesus is the Son of God. That’s the eternal plan. God the Father wants the world to believe that Jesus is His Son.

What is Satan’s plan to oppose the eternal plan of God? Deceive people so they won’t believe that Jesus is the Son of God.

Chapter 17

In the last part of our study we looked at the **beginning** of sin. It began in the Garden of Eden when Adam and Eve sinned against God by disobeying His direct command not to eat from the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.

God told Eve that He would “greatly multiply” her sorrow and conception and that she would bring forth her children “in pain.”

God told Adam that the ground that he would work to bring forth food for himself and his family would be “cursed” because of his sin. God also told Adam that he would die and “return to the ground.”

Both of these promises were evidenced in Adam and Eve’s first children. Cain, the firstborn, murdered his brother, Abel. Adam and Eve experienced pain and death because of sin.

We now turn to the **growth** of sin.

Adam and Eve lived long enough to see how their disobedience would impact their family – the human family. Cain moved away and built his own city (Genesis 4:17) where his descendants displayed arrogance and defiance toward God (Genesis 4:23-24). Adam and Eve had another son, Seth, and people soon began to “call on the name of the Lord” (Genesis 4:26).

Even as the generations of Adam and Eve grew in size, so did sin grow in them. It wasn't long before God spoke these words –

“Then the Lord saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every intent of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. And the Lord was sorry that He had made man on the earth, and He was grieved in His heart. So the Lord said, ‘I will destroy man whom I have created from the face of the earth, both man and beast, creeping thing and birds of the air, for I am sorry that I have made them.’” Genesis 6:5-7

What did God mean by those words? Was He admitting to a ‘flaw’ in His eternal plan? Did things go terribly wrong so that He would have to scrap it and either start over or abandon what He wanted to accomplish? Not at all. God’s pain and suffering, His grief and sorrow, are an important part of His eternal plan. As hard as that might be for us to understand, the message is clear. God created a world where He would share in the pain and suffering of His creatures. That’s why the very next words Moses wrote were –

“But Noah found grace in the eyes of the Lord.” Genesis 6:8

Did God know how wicked humanity would become “before time and space”? Yes, He did.

Did God know that every intent of the thoughts of people’s hearts would be evil continually? Yes, He did.

Did God know that the wickedness of humanity and their evil intent would grieve His heart? Yes, He did.

So then, why did God let things get so bad before doing something about it?

We have now entered into the BIG PURPOSE of God's eternal plan –

“Therefore do not be ashamed of the testimony of our Lord, nor of me His prisoner, but share with me in the sufferings for the gospel according to the power of God, who has saved us and called us with a holy calling, not according to our works, but according to His own purpose and grace which was given to us in Christ Jesus before time began, but has now been revealed by the appearing of our Savior Jesus Christ, who has abolished death and brought life and immortality to light through the gospel.” 2 Timothy 1:8-10

Notice the important points of what the Apostle Paul wrote to Timothy –

1. Do not be ashamed of the testimony of our Lord
2. Share in the sufferings for the Gospel
3. Save and called
4. Not according to our works
5. According to His own purpose and grace
6. Given to us in Christ Jesus
7. **Before time began**
8. Revealed by the appearing of our Savior Jesus Christ

9. Who abolished death
10. Who brought life and immortality to light through the Gospel

This is one of the key verses that kicked off our series months ago and deserves repeating –

“... according to His own purpose and grace which was given to us in Christ Jesus before time began.”

That is the power of what we read in Genesis 6. The wickedness of humanity grieved God’s heart. The sin that God addressed powerfully in the Garden of Eden caused Him so much pain and sorrow that almost any reasonable person could understand why He would have said He was sorry that He made man on the earth and why He was ready to destroy man on the earth. But that’s not what God did. Why not? Because His purpose was to demonstrate **extreme grace** in view of **extreme sin** – grace that would be brought to light through the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ!

“But Noah found grace in the eyes of the Lord.”

What beautiful words those were and still are. God did not forget the promise He made in the Garden of Eden. Jesus Christ, the Seed of the woman, would triumph over Satan. That’s what God saw – “But Noah found grace in the eyes of the Lord.” God saw the eternal plan that would see the perfect Son of God die for the sins of wicked humanity. Nothing, not even the worst that sin could cause in human beings, would derail God’s eternal plan.

Noah and the Plan

Noah and the Ark was not an afterthought in God's plan. God didn't see the wickedness of the human race and wonder how in the world He was going to save His eternal plan from failure. God chose Noah.

"This is the genealogy of Noah. Noah was a just man, perfect in his generations. Noah walked with God. And Noah begot three sons: Shem, Ham, and Japheth. The earth also was corrupt before God, and the earth was filled with violence. So God looked upon the earth, and indeed it was corrupt; for all flesh had corrupted their way on the earth. And God said to Noah, 'The end of all flesh has come before Me, for the earth is filled with violence through them; and behold, I will destroy them with the earth.'" Genesis 6:9-13

It's interesting that Moses included a sentence about Noah's lineage (his sons) before continuing with God's plan to destroy the human race with the earth. It demonstrates God's intention. Noah and his family would live. The rest of the human race would die. God was going to begin again.

"Make yourself an ark of gopherwood; make rooms in the ark, and cover it inside and outside with pitch. And this is how you shall make it: The length of the ark shall be three hundred cubits, its width fifty cubits, and its height thirty cubits. You shall make a window for the ark, and you shall finish it to a cubit from above; and set the door of the ark in its side. You shall make it with lower, second, and third decks. And behold, I Myself am bringing floodwaters on the earth, to

destroy from under heaven all flesh in which is the breath of life; everything that is on the earth shall die. But I will establish My covenant with you; and you shall go into the ark—you, your sons, your wife, and your sons' wives with you. And of every living thing of all flesh you shall bring two of every sort into the ark, to keep them alive with you; they shall be male and female. Of the birds after their kind, of animals after their kind, and of every creeping thing of the earth after its kind, two of every kind will come to you to keep them alive. And you shall take for yourself of all food that is eaten, and you shall gather it to yourself; and it shall be food for you and for them.' Thus Noah did; according to all that God commanded him, so he did." Genesis 6:14-22

Notice the important “reveals” from what Moses wrote in the last half of Genesis 6:

- God directed Noah in detail about how to build the Ark
- God would “establish” His covenant with Noah by protecting Noah, his family and all the birds, animals and creeping things as He brought a devastating flood on the earth

When did God determine He would “bring floodwaters on the earth, to destroy from under heaven all flesh in which is the breath of life”?

When did He decide that “everything on the earth shall die”?

When did God come up with the idea for building an ark to save one family of eight people and a number of birds, animals and creeping things from the floodwaters?

When did He choose Noah to be the man who would lead the building of the ark?

Before the beginning of time. Before the foundation of the earth.

The Flood, the Ark, saving Noah and his family, saving birds, animals and creeping things, all of it – God decided before the beginning of time.

Nothing we see God do is an afterthought or an emergency response to things that go wrong for Him. God planned everything before the beginning of time and space. Everything.

Chapter 18

“Then the Lord saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every intent of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. And the Lord was sorry that He had made man on the earth, and He was grieved in His heart. So the Lord said, ‘I will destroy man whom I have created from the face of the earth, both man and beast, creeping thing and birds of the air, for I am sorry that I have made them ... The earth also was corrupt before God, and the earth was filled with violence. So God looked upon the earth, and indeed it was corrupt; for all flesh had corrupted their way on the earth.” Genesis 6:5-7, 11-12

We’ve seen in previous parts of this special series that God planned everything in eternity that is now playing out in time and space. So, what could possibly be God’s purpose for the complete wickedness and corruption of the human race within ten generations of creating the first human beings?

If our theology (God study) is that things went terribly wrong and people turned out a lot worse than God had ever expected, then we will interpret Genesis 6 one way. If our theology is that things went exactly as planned (eternal plan) when people turned out the way God knew they would, then we will interpret Genesis 6 another way.

It is our contention that things went **exactly** as planned and people turned out the way God knew they would. So, what are we to learn from the early chapters of Genesis?

We have seen that God created the heavens and the earth and saw that it was “good.” God created humans in His image and likeness and saw that it was “very good.”

We’ve also seen that God gave the first human one commandment that he had to obey – not to eat the fruit from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.

What did the first humans do? They “disobeyed” God and ate from the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.

What did God say to the first human born on earth (Cain) when he became angry with his younger brother?

“If you do well, will you not be accepted? And if you do not do well, sin lies at the door. And its desire is for you, but you should rule over it.” Genesis 4:7

What did the first human born on earth do in light of the warning God gave him? Cain rose up and killed his brother.

What did God say to Cain about what he had done to his brother?

“The voice of your brother’s blood cries out to Me from the ground. So now you are cursed from the earth, which has opened its mouth to receive your brother’s blood from your hand. When you till the ground, it shall no longer yield its strength to you. A fugitive and a vagabond you shall be on the earth.” Genesis 4:10-12

How did Cain respond to God?

“My punishment is greater than I can bear!” Genesis 4:13

What happened when Adam and Eve had another son (Seth) and Seth had a son and named him Enosh?

“Then men began to call on the name of the Lord.” Genesis 4:26b

What do we see and not see in these early chapters of Genesis?

What We See

What we see is an emphasis on **obedience to God** and the **suffering** that resulted when people **disobeyed God**.

“Then the Lord God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to tend and keep it. And the Lord God commanded the man, saying, ‘Of every tree of the garden you may freely eat; but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die.’” Genesis 2:15-17

“So the Lord God said to the serpent: ‘Because you have done this, You are cursed more than all cattle, And more than every beast of the field; On your belly you shall go, And you shall eat dust All the days of your life. And I will put enmity Between you and the woman, And between your seed and her Seed; He shall bruise your head, And you shall bruise His heel.’ To the woman He said: ‘I will greatly multiply your sorrow and your conception; In pain you shall bring forth children; Your desire shall be for your husband, And he shall rule over you.’ Then to Adam He said, ‘Because you have heeded the voice of your wife, and have eaten from the tree of which I commanded you, saying, ‘You shall not eat of it’: ‘Cursed is the ground for your sake; In toil you shall eat of it All the days of your life. ‘Both thorns and thistles it shall bring forth for you, And you shall eat the herb of the field. In the sweat of your face you shall eat bread Till you return to the ground, For out of it you were taken; For dust you are, And to dust you shall return.’” Genesis 3:14-19

“Now Cain talked with Abel his brother; and it came to pass, when they were in the field, that Cain rose up against Abel his brother and killed him. Then the Lord said to Cain, ‘Where is Abel your brother?’ He said, ‘I do not know. Am I my brother’s keeper?’ And He said, ‘What have you done? The voice of your brother’s blood cries out to Me from the ground. So now you are cursed from the earth, which has opened its mouth to receive your brother’s blood from your hand. When you till the ground, it shall no longer yield its strength to you. A fugitive and a vagabond you shall be on the earth.’ And Cain said to the Lord, ‘My punishment is greater than I can bear! Surely

You have driven me out this day from the face of the ground; I shall be hidden from Your face; I shall be a fugitive and a vagabond on the earth, and it will happen that anyone who finds me will kill me.”

Genesis 4: 8-14

“Lamech lived one hundred and eighty-two years, and had a son. And he called his name Noah, saying, ‘This one will comfort us concerning our work and the toil of our hands, because of the ground which the Lord has cursed.’” Genesis 5:28-29

“Now it came to pass, when men began to multiply on the face of the earth, and daughters were born to them, that the sons of God saw the daughters of men, that they were beautiful; and they took wives for themselves of all whom they chose. And the Lord said, ‘My Spirit shall not strive with man forever, for he is indeed flesh; yet his days shall be one hundred and twenty years.’ There were giants on the earth in those days, and also afterward, when the sons of God came in to the daughters of men and they bore children to them. Those were the mighty men who were of old, men of renown. Then the Lord saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every intent of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. And the Lord was sorry that He had made man on the earth, and He was grieved in His heart. So the Lord said, ‘I will destroy man whom I have created from the face of the earth, both man and beast, creeping thing and birds of the air, for I am sorry that I have made them.’” Genesis 6:1-7

What We Don't See

What we don't see is an emphasis on **loving God**.

The word "love" doesn't appear in Genesis until the 22nd chapter when God tested Abraham –

"Now it came to pass after these things that God tested Abraham, and said to him, 'Abraham!' And he said, 'Here I am.' Then He said, 'Take now your son, your only son Isaac, whom you love, and go to the land of Moriah, and offer him there as a burnt offering on one of the mountains of which I shall tell you.'" Genesis 22:1-2

The first time we see **love** mentioned in the Bible is Abraham's love for his son. The other times love is mentioned in Genesis is Isaac's love for Rebekah, Isaac's love for Esau, Rebekeh's love for Jacob, Isaac's love for food, Jacob's love for Rachael, Shechem's love for Dinah and Jacob's love for Joseph. Love for God is not mentioned once in Genesis.

You and I are quite familiar with the importance of loving God and others because of the emphasis of the Law in Exodus as well as the rest of Scripture. However, what would happen if obedience to God is emphasized without mention or focus on love?

We see the results of that in the first six chapters of Genesis. The results are suffering, murder, wickedness and corruption. That's what happens when people are allowed to do what they want to do. It's what the Apostle Paul referred to when he wrote the Epistle to the Romans –

“For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who suppress the truth in unrighteousness, because what may be known of God is manifest in them, for God has shown it to them. For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead, so that they are without excuse, because, although they knew God, they did not glorify Him as God, nor were thankful, but became futile in their thoughts, and their foolish hearts were darkened. Professing to be wise, they became fools, and changed the glory of the incorruptible God into an image made like corruptible man—and birds and four-footed animals and creeping things. Therefore God also gave them up to uncleanness, in the lusts of their hearts, to dishonor their bodies among themselves, who exchanged the truth of God for the lie, and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever. Amen.” Romans 1:18-25

Grace

What we **do see** throughout the early part of Genesis is **God's grace**. Even though the human race continually disobeyed God and suffered greatly, God continually displayed His grace to them. What do I mean by that? He gave them every opportunity for many generations to repent of their sins and return to obeying God.

God is gracious and merciful, as Moses learned many years later –

“Now the Lord descended in the cloud and stood with him there, and proclaimed the name of the Lord. And the Lord passed before him and proclaimed, ‘The Lord, the Lord God, merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and abounding in goodness and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, by no means clearing the guilty, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children and the children’s children to the third and the fourth generation.’ Exodus 34:5-7

Notice the word “longsuffering.” It comes from the Hebrew words *’erek* *’appayim*, “slow to anger.” When the Bible describes God as being “longsuffering,” it doesn’t mean that He won’t be angry and respond accordingly. It simply means that He is slow to anger.

That’s what we see in Genesis 6. God was “merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and abounding in goodness and truth” for many generations .. BUT .. He became angry and was “was grieved in His heart.

So the Lord said, 'I will destroy man whom I have created from the face of the earth, both man and beast, creeping thing and birds of the air, for I am sorry that I have made them.'

God said in Genesis 6:3 that His Spirit would not "strive" with man forever and that God gave the human race 120 more years to live and repent before God's judgment. What did the human race do with that time? Here's what Jesus said about that –

"They ate, they drank, they married wives, they were given in marriage, until the day that Noah entered the ark, and the flood came and destroyed them all." Luke 17:27

The next verse – Genesis 6:8 – is vital to our understanding **God's Great Reveal** –

"But Noah found grace in the eyes of the Lord."

God's eternal plan was NOT to destroy every human being and give up on Adam's race. His plan was to demonstrate great Grace in the face of seemingly impossible odds. God overcame humanity's wickedness by His *grace*.

God's eternal plan had always included Noah. God chose Noah from before the foundation of the world, *before time began*, to be the man through whom God would bring forth His eternal solution to man's great problem. The seed God promised to Eve would live on through the lineage of Seth to Enosh to Noah to Shem.

Noah

"This is the genealogy of Noah. Noah was a just man, perfect in his generations. Noah walked with God. And Noah begot three sons: Shem, Ham, and Japheth. The earth also was corrupt before God, and the earth was filled with violence. So God looked upon the earth, and indeed it was corrupt; for all flesh had corrupted their way on the earth." Genesis 6:9-12

While most men became fathers at some point during their first century of life, Noah did not become a father until he was 500 years old (Genesis 5:32). That may indicate Noah's resistance to marry "daughters of men" (Genesis 6:1-2) until after God called him to build the Ark. We learn in Genesis 7 that Noah was 600 years old when the floodwaters were on the earth (vs. 5).

Noah is described as a "just man, perfect in his generations." The Hebrew reads *ṣaddîq tāmîm hāyāh bəḏōrōtāw*. We might think of Noah as a man God uniquely preserved for His purpose. However, even though Noah spent many years building the Ark and was a "preacher of righteousness" (2 Peter 2:5), people lived their lives as if nothing was going

to happen to them. They did not heed the warnings and did not repent of their sins.

The Ark

God was specific in his instructions to Noah about building an Ark that would save Noah and his family and a limited number of “living things” (e.g. animals, creeping things, birds). Genesis 6:13-21 explains why God did what He did, how Noah was to build the Ark and who and what would be saved from the floodwaters in the Ark.

“Thus Noah did; according to all that God commanded him, so he did.” Genesis 6:22

Genesis 7 contains the details of both God’s wrath and His Grace –

“And all flesh died that moved on the earth: birds and cattle and beasts and every creeping thing that creeps on the earth, and every man. All in whose nostrils was the breath of the spirit of life, all that was on the dry land, died. So He destroyed all living things which were on the face of the ground: both man and cattle, creeping thing and bird of the air. They were destroyed from the earth. Only Noah and those who were with him in the ark remained alive.” Genesis 7:21-23

Genesis 8 contains details of how God restored humanity to life on earth along with a special covenant –

“Then Noah built an altar to the Lord, and took of every clean animal and of every clean bird, and offered burnt offerings on the altar. And the Lord smelled a soothing aroma. Then the Lord said in His heart, ‘I will never again curse the ground for man’s sake, although the imagination of man’s heart is evil from his youth; nor will I again destroy every living thing as I have done. ‘While the earth remains, Seedtime and harvest, Cold and heat, Winter and summer, And day and night Shall not cease.” Genesis 8:20-22

Genesis 9 contains details of the new phase of God’s relationship with humanity – a phase planned out in eternity, before time began –

“So God blessed Noah and his sons, and said to them: ‘Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth. And the fear of you and the dread of you shall be on every beast of the earth, on every bird of the air, on all that move on the earth, and on all the fish of the sea. They are given into your hand. Every moving thing that lives shall be food for you. I have given you all things, even as the green herbs. But you shall not eat flesh with its life, that is, its blood. Surely for your lifeblood I will demand a reckoning; from the hand of every beast I will require it, and from the hand of man. From the hand of every man’s brother I will require the life of man. ‘Whoever sheds man’s blood, By man his blood shall be shed; For in the image of God He made man. And as for you, be fruitful and multiply; Bring forth abundantly in the

earth And multiply in it. Then God spoke to Noah and to his sons with him, saying: ‘And as for Me, behold, I establish My covenant with you and with your descendants after you, and with every living creature that is with you: the birds, the cattle, and every beast of the earth with you, of all that go out of the ark, every beast of the earth. 11 Thus I establish My covenant with you: Never again shall all flesh be cut off by the waters of the flood; never again shall there be a flood to destroy the earth. And God said: ‘This is the sign of the covenant which I make between Me and you, and every living creature that is with you, for perpetual generations: I set My rainbow in the cloud, and it shall be for the sign of the covenant between Me and the earth. It shall be, when I bring a cloud over the earth, that the rainbow shall be seen in the cloud; and I will remember My covenant which is between Me and you and every living creature of all flesh; the waters shall never again become a flood to destroy all flesh. The rainbow shall be in the cloud, and I will look on it to remember the everlasting covenant between God and every living creature of all flesh that is on the earth.’ And God said to Noah, ‘This is the sign of the covenant which I have established between Me and all flesh that is on the earth.’” Genesis 9:1-17

This was God’s *eternal plan revealed* in the life of Noah and his family –

“By faith Noah, being divinely warned of things not yet seen, moved with godly fear, prepared an ark for the saving of his household, by which he condemned the world and became heir of the righteousness which is according to faith.” Hebrews 11:7

We will see the Ark mentioned many times in Scripture –

- the Ark that saved Noah and his family and many animals, birds and creeping things
- the ark that kept Moses safe in the bullrushes
- the Ark of the Covenant Moses made for Israel

The Ark (הָאֲרוֹן – chest, box, basket) was used for the salvation of people and, in Noah’s case, animals. Noah and Moses’ mother used pitch (בִּכְפֹרֶת and וּבִצְפֹת). It was a “covering” that protected what was inside the ark from the water around it. It was a safe place.

The Hebrew word for pitch is *kopher* (also *kaphar*, *kephir*) and translates as “ransom, the price of life, to cover over, pacify, make propitiation.” The word is translated “atonement” in several places in Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy and many other OT Books –

“For the life of the flesh is in the blood, and I have given it to you upon the altar to make atonement for your souls; for it is the blood that makes atonement for the soul.” Leviticus 17:11

It is translated “ransom, redeem” in other OT Scriptures –

“None of them can by any means redeem his brother, Nor give to God a ransom for him —” Psalm 49:7

The last place we see the word used in the Old Testament is in Daniel in the context of the End Times anointing of the Messiah –

“Seventy weeks are determined For your people and for your holy city, To finish the transgression, To make an end of sins, To make reconciliation for iniquity, To bring in everlasting righteousness, To seal up vision and prophecy, And to anoint the Most Holy.” Daniel 9:24

Kopher is translated there as “reconciliation.”

The Hebrew word for “mercy seat” (*kapporeth*) comes from *kopher*.

“You shall make a mercy seat of pure gold; two and a half cubits shall be its length and a cubit and a half its width.” Exodus 25:17

The Greek word translated “mercy seat” in Hebrews 9:5 is *hilastérion* (ἱλαστήριον). That word comes from *hilaskomai*, which means “to be propitious, make propitiation for.” It is used for having mercy on, showing favor to, forgiving, pardoning. Greek usage of *hilastérion* included a sin offering that would appease a deity.

It is used only twice in the New Testament: Hebrews 9:5 and Romans 3:25 (propitiation).

“But now the righteousness of God apart from the law is revealed, being witnessed by the Law and the Prophets, even the righteousness of God, through faith in Jesus Christ, to all and on all who believe. For there is no difference; for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, being justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, whom God set forth as a propitiation by His blood, through faith, to demonstrate His righteousness, because in His forbearance God had passed over the sins that were previously committed, to demonstrate at the present time His righteousness, that He might be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus.” Romans 3:21-26

Here are some thoughts on the word from Greek language expert Dr. Spiros Zodhiates –

“The hilastérion means the propitiating thing or the propitiatory gift, that which causes God to deal with us mercifully. This is the connotation given by Paul to the word in Rom. 3:25. Here Paul depicts Christ as the lamb slain whose blood cleanses us from sin (1 John 1:7). In heathen religions the people who sacrificed or did anything to appease their god appeared to be or believed that they were manipulating him. In Christianity, however, it is never people who take the initiative or make the sacrifice, but God Himself who, out of His great love for sinners, provided the way by which His wrath against sin might be averted. Jesus

shed His blood and became the way to the Father for sinners.” The Complete Word Study Dictionary: New Testament, World Bible Publishers, 1992

Jesus Christ is our *kopher*, our *hilastérion*, our covering, our sacrifice, our protection, our ransom, our reconciliation, our propitiation. Jesus is our **everything!**

Chapter 19

In the **last two parts** of our study we looked at the **beginning** and **growth** of sin. It began in the Garden of Eden when Adam and Eve sinned against God by disobeying His direct command not to eat from the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. It grew for centuries through the lineages of Cain and Seth to the point that the world was filled with the wickedness of humanity.

“Then the Lord saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every intent of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. And the Lord was sorry that He had made man on the earth, and He was grieved in His heart. So the Lord said, ‘I will destroy man whom I have created from the face of the earth, both man and beast, creeping thing and birds of the air, for I am sorry that I have made them.’ But Noah found grace in the eyes of the Lord.”

Genesis 6:5-8

God’s eternal plan was to bring about a new beginning through the man Noah. Why did God do that? We’ll see as we continue our special series, **The Great Reveal**.

Imagine that you are a member of Noah's family. After surviving a global Flood the time has come for your family and the animals to leave the Ark and step foot on dry ground for the first time in a year.

“Then God spoke to Noah, saying, ‘Go out of the ark, you and your wife, and your sons and your sons’ wives with you. Bring out with you every living thing of all flesh that is with you: birds and cattle and every creeping thing that creeps on the earth, so that they may abound on the earth, and be fruitful and multiply on the earth.’ So Noah went out, and his sons and his wife and his sons’ wives with him. Every animal, every creeping thing, every bird, and whatever creeps on the earth, according to their families, went out of the ark.”

Genesis 8:15-19

You believe what Noah tells you because you've witnessed how everything Noah said God told him would happen, did happen. The next thing Noah said God told him to do was to build an altar to the Lord and offer burnt offerings of every clean animal and bird. God then promised that he would never again curse the ground for man's sake, “although the imagination of man's heart is evil from his youth.” God also promised that He would not destroy every destroy every living thing as He had done in the Flood.

Wow!

If you were part of Noah's family, you would have witnessed something that God had planned from before the beginning of time, before the creation of the world. What would God's plan be for this amazing 'restart'? Would God remove sin from the world and make Noah and his family perfect? Would 'heaven on earth' begin with Noah's family?

Here's what God told Noah next –

“So God blessed Noah and his sons, and said to them: ‘Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth. And the fear of you and the dread of you shall be on every beast of the earth, on every bird of the air, on all that move on the earth, and on all the fish of the sea. They are given into your hand. Every moving thing that lives shall be food for you. I have given you all things, even as the green herbs. But you shall not eat flesh with its life, that is, its blood. Surely for your lifeblood I will demand a reckoning; from the hand of every beast I will require it, and from the hand of man. From the hand of every man's brother I will require the life of man. ‘Whoever sheds man's blood, By man his blood shall be shed; For in the image of God He made man. And as for you, be fruitful and multiply; Bring forth abundantly in the earth And multiply in it.’” Genesis 9:1-7

Even though some of God's language is similar to what He said when He created the heavens and the earth –

- Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth
- For in the image of God He made man

God's Words demonstrate that He did not remove sin from the world and make Noah and his family perfect. God did not bring 'heaven to earth' with Noah and his family. Notice the clues –

- And the fear of you and the dread of you shall be on every beast of the earth, on every bird of the air, on all that move on the earth, and on all the fish of the sea
- Every moving thing that lives shall be food for you
- But you shall not eat flesh with its life, that is, its blood. Surely for your lifeblood I will demand a reckoning; from the hand of every beast I will require it, and from the hand of man. From the hand of every man's brother I will require the life of man. 'Whoever sheds man's blood, By man his blood shall be shed'

Sin would continue on earth and impact human families in some ways that were similar to before the Flood (e.g. murder). However, God did introduce some new aspects to His relationship with humans and animals –

- God established a covenant with Noah and his sons and with their descendants after them
- God’s covenant would also relate to every living creature with Noah and his family (e.g. birds, cattle, every beast of the earth)
- God promised to never again cut off all flesh by the waters of a flood – He would never again destroy the earth with a flood
- God established a sign of the covenant with man and every living creature –

“And God said: ‘This is the sign of the covenant which I make between Me and you, and every living creature that is with you, for perpetual generations: I set My rainbow in the cloud, and it shall be for the sign of the covenant between Me and the earth. It shall be, when I bring a cloud over the earth, that the rainbow shall be seen in the cloud; and I will remember My covenant which is between Me and you and every living creature of all flesh; the waters shall never again become a flood to destroy all flesh. The rainbow shall be in the cloud, and I will look on it to remember the everlasting covenant between God and every living creature of all flesh that is on the earth.’ And God said to Noah, ‘This is the sign of the covenant which I have established between Me and all flesh that is on the earth.” Genesis 9:12-17

The Noahic Covenant

The covenant God made with Noah and his sons and their descendants and with all living creatures in Genesis 9:8-17 is known as the Noahic Covenant. It is an **unconditional** covenant because God did not add any conditions to His promise. There was nothing that Noah, his sons or their descendants had to do to fulfill the covenant. God wanted them to do certain things (e.g. be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth, not eat flesh with its lifeblood still in it), but those things had nothing to do with the covenant God made with humans and animals that He would not destroy the earth with a flood again. God placed a rainbow in the cloud as a sign of that unconditional covenant. It's one of the reasons I love to see a rainbow after rain. What a beautiful reminder of God's promise.

The covenant God made with Noah and his sons and descendants was always part of God's great eternal plan. It was not a promise He made because He felt bad about what He had done and wanted to make up for an error in judgment. The destruction of all living beings except for those protected in the Ark was part of God's eternal plan. The covenant God made with all living beings in the Ark and their descendants not to destroy the earth with a flood again was part of God's eternal plan. God determined the plan before time began and carried it out one step at a time during time.

Why?

Why would God do that? Why would He create humans and other living creatures, then destroy them? Why would that be part of God's eternal plan?

Excellent question!

Keep in mind that God is not making stuff up as He goes. He's not trying out some ideas to see how they work then moving in a different direction when things don't work out the way He thought they would. It's important that we realize God is not like us. **He is God.** His ways are not our ways. His thought process is far above our way of thinking. Everything God does is part of His eternal plan. He is Eternal, All Powerful, All Knowing, and Everywhere Present at the same time.

So, we return to His eternal plan. Remember what it is?

"Therefore do not be ashamed of the testimony of our Lord, nor of me His prisoner, but share with me in the sufferings for the gospel according to the power of God, who has saved us and called us with a holy calling, not according to our works, but according to His own purpose and grace which was given to us in Christ Jesus before time began." 2 Timothy 1:8-9

“Paul, a bondservant of God and an apostle of Jesus Christ, according to the faith of God’s elect and the acknowledgment of the truth which accords with godliness, in hope of eternal life which God, who cannot lie, promised before time began, but has in due time manifested His word through preaching, which was committed to me according to the commandment of God our Savior.” Titus 1:1-3

“... knowing that you were not redeemed with corruptible things, like silver or gold, from your aimless conduct received by tradition from your fathers, but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot. He indeed was foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you who through Him believe in God, who raised Him from the dead and gave Him glory, so that your faith and hope are in God.” 1 Peter 1:18-21

“Father, I desire that they also whom You gave Me may be with Me where I am, that they may behold My glory which You have given Me; for You loved Me before the foundation of the world.” John 17:24

“Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ, just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love.” Ephesians 1:3-4

Here's what God revealed to us about what He did before time began, before the foundation of the world –

- God the Father loved God the Son and the Son loved the Father
- God chose us in Christ
- God saved us and called us with a holy calling according to His own purpose and grace toward us in Christ
- God foreordained Christ's death and resurrection
- God promised eternal life to us

I don't want us to miss this point because it is central, *foundational*, to everything that happened 'after' time began, 'after' the foundation of the world.

**** God determined in unlimited, unbounded eternity that **Jesus Christ would die on the Cross, be buried, and rise from the dead.** ****

Nothing would deter God from completing His eternal purpose and plan. Nothing.

Jesus Christ and His death, resurrection and glorification is the FOCUS of everything we see in the Bible. That includes calling Noah to build the Ark, sending the global Flood to destroy every living creature not in the Ark, and making a covenant with Noah, his sons and their descendants. It's all about God the Father sending God the Son to earth to be crucified and raised from the dead. It's all about God giving us eternal life through His Son.

“And this is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent.” John 17:3

God is on His Mission to give the gift of eternal life to many sons and daughters He has chosen. That’s what He is doing today and will be doing tomorrow and the next day and the next day.

Chapter 20

In the [last part of our study](#) we looked at the global Flood that destroyed every human being on earth except for Noah, his wife, their three sons and their wives. Eight people were saved by an Ark that God designed and Noah and his sons built. After they left the Ark and stepped on dry ground, Noah and his family worshiped God.

God promised to never curse the ground for man's sake again, "although the imagination of man's heart is evil from his youth." That raises the question of WHY would God continue to work with humans when He knew that their heart would lead them to evil just like their ancestors who died in the Flood.

Why bother? If people are evil, why would God continue with them? Why? Because He had an **eternal purpose and plan**.

As we wrote in the [last part of our study](#) –

***** God determined in unlimited, unbounded eternity that Jesus Christ would die on the Cross, be buried, and rise from the dead. *****

Jesus Christ and His death, resurrection and glorification is THE FOCUS of everything we see in the Bible. That includes calling Noah to build the Ark, sending the global Flood to destroy every living creature not in the Ark, and making a covenant with Noah, his sons and their descendants. It's all about

God the Father sending God the Son to earth to be crucified and raised from the dead. It's all about God giving us eternal life through His Son.

Jesus Christ is the Key

We've seen in past studies that **Jesus Christ is the Key** to understanding God's eternal plan –

“Therefore do not be ashamed of the testimony of our Lord, nor of me His prisoner, but share with me in the sufferings for the gospel according to the power of God, who has saved us and called us with a holy calling, not according to our works, but according to His own purpose and grace which was given to us in Christ Jesus before time began.” 2 Timothy 1:8-9

“Paul, a bondservant of God and an apostle of Jesus Christ, according to the faith of God's elect and the acknowledgment of the truth which accords with godliness, in hope of eternal life which God, who cannot lie, promised before time began, but has in due time manifested His word through preaching, which was committed to me according to the commandment of God our Savior.” Titus 1:1-3

“... knowing that you were not redeemed with corruptible things, like silver or gold, from your aimless conduct received by tradition from your fathers, but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot. He indeed was foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for

you who through Him believe in God, who raised Him from the dead and gave Him glory, so that your faith and hope are in God.” 1 Peter 1:18-21

“He who sins is of the devil, for the devil has sinned from the beginning. For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that He might destroy the works of the devil.” 1 John 3:8

The death, burial, resurrection and glorification of Jesus Christ were determined in eternity “before time began.” Our Lord’s sacrifice was “foreordained before the foundation of the world.” His purpose is to “destroy the works of the devil.” Everything we read in Scripture points to it. **Everything.**

The Apostle Peter gave us some important insights into understanding how the global Flood was part of God’s eternal purpose and plan –

“For Christ also suffered once for sins, the just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh but made alive by the Spirit, by whom also He went and preached to the spirits in prison, who formerly were disobedient, when once the Divine longsuffering waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was being prepared, in which a few, that is, eight souls, were saved through water. There is also an antitype which now saves us—baptism (not the removal of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God), through the resurrection of Jesus Christ, who has gone into heaven and is at the right hand of God, angels and

authorities and powers having been made subject to Him.” 1 Peter 3:18-22

When did Jesus preach to “the spirits in prison” and who were they? Were they the angelic spirits who were in prison or were they the people who died in the Flood? Did He preach to both? If so, when did He do that? While His body lay in the grave? After His resurrection? Or did Jesus preach to them through Noah who was a preacher of righteousness?

“For if God did not spare the angels who sinned, but cast them down to hell and delivered them into chains of darkness, to be reserved for judgment; and did not spare the ancient world, but saved Noah, one of eight people, a preacher of righteousness, bringing in the flood on the world of the ungodly.” 2 Peter 2:4-5

Hebrews 11:7 reads –

“By faith Noah, being divinely warned of things not yet seen, moved with godly fear, prepared an ark for the saving of his household, by which he condemned the world and became heir of the righteousness which is according to faith.”

Did Jesus warn the people who died in the Flood through Noah?

Based on what Peter wrote at the beginning of his first letter, the answer might be that Jesus preached through Noah. We read in 1 Peter 3 that Jesus preached to the spirits in prison ‘by the Spirit’ – “being put to death

in the flesh but made alive by the Spirit, by whom also He went and preached to the spirits in prison.”

“Of this salvation the prophets have inquired and searched carefully, who prophesied of the grace that would come to you, searching what, or what manner of time, the Spirit of Christ who was in them was indicating when He testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ and the glories that would follow. To them it was revealed that, not to themselves, but to us they were ministering the things which now have been reported to you through those who have preached the gospel to you by the Holy Spirit sent from heaven—things which angels desire to look into.” 1 Peter 1:10-12

It’s important for us to remember that when we read that *Yahweh* (יהוה) saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth and was sorry He had made man and was grieved in His heart – the word *Yahweh* includes the Son of God.

God – Father, Son and Holy Spirit – were in agreement when they said, “I will destroy man whom I have created from the face of the earth ... But Noah found grace in the eyes of the Lord” (Genesis 6:7-8). The decision to destroy every human being except for Noah and his family was God’s decision – Father, Son and Holy Spirit. They spoke as One.

When did God make that decision to destroy every human being except for Noah and his family? “Before time began.” “Before the foundation of the world.” God made that decision in eternity as part of His great purpose –

“according to His own purpose and grace which was given to us in Christ Jesus before time began.”

God’s purpose? To glorify His Son and redeem many humans from death and destruction –

“... knowing that you were not redeemed with corruptible things, like silver or gold, from your aimless conduct received by tradition from your fathers, but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot. He indeed was foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you who through Him believe in God, who raised Him from the dead and gave Him glory, so that your faith and hope are in God.”

The story of the Bible, from beginning to end, is about God redeeming members of Adam’s family from death. That redemption, first promised by God in the Garden of Eden (Genesis 3:15), is front and center in every part of Scripture.

Destroying Satan's Works

As we move through the Book of Genesis we are looking at how God revealed His eternal plan to redeem members of Adam's family and destroy the works of the devil.

- It began with a beautiful home for Adam and Eve, but with a warning that they would die if they disobeyed God.
- Satan deceived Eve and Adam followed her in disobeying God.
- God cursed Satan and promised the Seed of the woman who would destroy the works of the devil.
- God cursed the ground and drove Adam and Eve away from their beautiful Garden home to face a new kind of challenge in the world.

What we see from that point on concerns Satan's works and how God destroys them.

Satan had a lot invested into what happened in the Garden. He wanted to destroy what God had done by creating human beings in His image, according to His likeness. Satan apparently opposed God's choice to appoint humans to have dominion over all the earth and every living thing that moves on the earth. It may be that Satan wanted dominion of the earth and was jealous of God's choice. Jealousy and pride seem to be at the heart of what Satan has done in the past and is doing today.

We've written about Satan many times in the GraceLife and FaithandSelfDefense blogs concerning what turned him from a beautiful creation of God into a terrible enemy of God. Jesus Christ said this about Satan –

“You are of your father the devil, and the desires of your father you want to do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaks a lie, he speaks from his own resources, for he is a liar and the father of it.” John 8:44

The Apostle Paul wrote this –

“... lest being puffed up with pride he fall into the same condemnation as the devil.” 1 Timothy 3:6

“... and that they may come to their senses and escape the snare of the devil, having been taken captive by him to do his will.” 2 Timothy 2:26

Battle of Wills

What we find in the Bible is a cosmic battle of **wills**: God's Will and Satan's will. In the middle of that battle lies our will. That's what we see in Genesis 2 and 3. God expressed His Will to Adam. Satan expressed his will to Eve, deceived her and snared her. Adam was not deceived and knowingly followed his wife (1 Timothy 2:14).

We see Satan use his battle of wills with Jesus in the wilderness (e.g. Matthew 4; Luke 4). Satan attempted to impose his will on Jesus, but Jesus obeyed the Will of His Father and rebuffed Satan's attack.

That is the great battle you and I face today and every day. Who will we obey? God or Satan? The Apostle Paul gave us great insight into how to fight this battle of the wills –

“Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might. Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places. Therefore take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand. Stand therefore, having girded your waist with truth, having put on the breastplate of righteousness, and having shod your feet with the preparation of the gospel of peace; above all, taking the shield of faith with which you will be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked one. And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God; praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, being watchful to this end with all perseverance and supplication for all the saints.” Ephesians 6:10-18

Satan knew Adam and Eve would die if they disobeyed God's Will and may have thought that would put an end to God's plan for mankind. However, Satan was wrong. God had other plans that included what Satan had done. Satan could only know the parts of God's eternal plan that God revealed to him. Satan, being the proud angel he is, went after humans who God created in His image and likeness to destroy them. What Satan couldn't have known until God revealed it to him was that the Son of God was going to save members of humanity and destroy his (devil's) works at the same time. All part of God's **eternal plan**.

These words – “And I will put enmity Between you and the woman, And between your seed and her Seed; He shall bruise your head, And you shall bruise His heel” – rang in Satan's ears as a constant harbinger of terrible things to come for him and he did his best to keep it from happening.

Satan began by trying to kill who he thought would be the Seed who would destroy him. Eve gave birth to two sons, one of whom Satan may have thought could be the dreaded Seed that would destroy him. Satan came up with a plan to take them both out of the picture –

- Cain killed Abel even after God warned him not to do it – works of the devil

God responded by banishing Cain for killing Abel, which may have appeared to play right into Satan's diabolical plan. However, God gave Eve another son (Seth) from whom the Seed would come. As we see in the human lineage of Jesus Christ –

“... the son of Noah, the son of Lamech, the son of Methuselah, the son of Enoch, the son of Jared, the son of Mahalalel, the son of Cainan, the son of Enosh, the son of Seth, the son of Adam, the son of God.” Luke 3:36-38

Did God have to run around trying to figure out what to do after Satan led Cain to kill Abel? No. God’s eternal plan never included Jesus Christ coming through the lineage of Cain or Abel. The plan always had the Seed coming through Seth. Satan did not know that, but there were many things Satan did not know about God’s eternal plan until God revealed it.

Satan took on Seth and his lineage to destroy the Seed who would destroy him –

- The wickedness of people on earth was so great that every intent of the thoughts of their hearts were only evil continually – works of the devil

That included the lineage of Seth. Even though we saw people begin to worship God after Seth’s first son was born (Genesis 4:26), that worship diminished to just one man (Noah) out of the entire human race prior to the global Flood. Everyone else had succumbed to the devil’s works. God responded by destroying every human being except for Noah and his family. It must have been obvious to Satan that God was still moving forward to reveal His promised Seed when Noah and his family survived the Flood.

Chapter 21

Nothing surprises God. **Nothing.**

God is All Knowing. What does that mean?

God knows everything and there's nothing He does not know.

“Remember the former things of old, For I am God, and there is no other; I am God, and there is none like Me, Declaring the end from the beginning, And from ancient times things that are not yet done, Saying, ‘My counsel shall stand, And I will do all My pleasure’.” Isaiah 46:9-10

God declared (revealed) the end from the beginning.

“And the Lord God commanded the man, ‘You are free to eat from any tree in the garden; but you must not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, for when you eat from it you will certainly die.’” Genesis 2:16-17

“And I will put enmity Between you and the woman, And between your seed and her Seed; He shall bruise your head, And you shall bruise His heel.” Genesis 3:15

We don't have to wait until the end of the Bible to find out what will happen. We know that people die, God will judge them and Jesus will defeat Satan. It's all up front for us to see – the end from the beginning.

With that reminder, let's continue our study.

Revealing the Plan

God is the **Necessary Being**. All other life forms are *contingent* upon Him. That includes humans and angels. As we saw in our last study, God had mercy on one man and his family – Noah, his wife, their three sons and wives – eight people. Out of the massive number of people alive just before the great Flood that covered the earth, only eight people lived.

After the Flood waters receded and the earth dried, Noah and his family stepped off the Ark onto dry land that was eerily quiet. Where were the sounds of all the people who had corrupted the earth with their wickedness and violence?

“So God looked upon the earth, and indeed it was corrupt; for all flesh had corrupted their way on the earth. And God said to Noah, ‘The end of all flesh has come before Me, for the earth is filled with violence through them; and behold, I will destroy them with the earth.’”

Genesis 6:12-13

They were dead. Only eight people were left alive on earth. God knew that day would come. It was part of His eternal plan.

Remember why God sent His Son to earth?

“... that He might destroy the works of the devil.” 1 John 3:8

Every time Satan “works,” God destroys what he does. Here’s what we’ve seen so far –

- God warned Adam that disobeying Him would lead to death (Genesis 2)
- Satan led Eve to disobey God, Adam followed and sinned against God, both began to die (Genesis 3)
- God told Satan that the “seed of the woman” would crush his head (Genesis 3)
- Eve gave birth to Cain and Abel (Genesis 4)
- Satan led Cain to kill Abel (Genesis 4)
- Eve gave birth to Seth, Seth begat Enosh and “Then men began to call on the name of the Lord” (Genesis 4)
- Satan leads the children of Seth to join the children of Cain in corrupting the earth (Genesis 6)
- God kills everyone on earth except Noah and his family (Genesis 7)
- God led Noah and his family to leave the Ark and begin new lives on the earth (Genesis 8)
- God made a new covenant with Noah and his family and their descendants (Genesis 9)

Satan found himself with a new enemy on earth – Noah and his family. What did Satan do? He got to work to try to destroy this new thing God was doing in the world. Satan had seen limited success in his earlier attempts, so he and his forces of evil worked to impact the direction of Noah's family. What was God's eternal plan? "destroy the works of the devil" How did He do that? By introducing the nations to His Majesty and Power.

The Nations

Genesis 10 introduces us to what many call the **Table of Nations**. It's an account of Noah's three sons – Shem, Ham and Japheth – and their sons who were born after the Flood and their descendants. At the end of the account, the Bible reads –

"These were the families of the sons of Noah, according to their generations, in their nations; and from these the nations were divided on the earth after the flood." Genesis 10:32

The word "nations" is interesting at this point in the Genesis account because it not only demonstrates diversity but also introduces two words that explain how Satan would do his work to upend God's eternal plan (as if he could).

As we will see in the early days following the Flood, Satan's work would become a direct attack on humanity's obedience to God's command – even as he done in the Garden of Eden –

“So God blessed Noah and his sons, and said to them: ‘Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth.’ ” Genesis 9:1

That seems like a simple command, but we will see how Satan used that command to lead the family of Noah away from obeying God.

The Hebrew word for “nations: is גוֹיִם (bəgōwyêhem). The root word *goy* is translated “nation, people” and carries the idea of “a people.”

The “peoples” were divided according to the names of Noah’s sons and their sons –

- The sons of Japheth: Gomer, Magog, Madai, Javan, Tubal, Meshek and Tiras.
- The sons of Gomer: Ashkenaz, Riphath and Togarmah.
- The sons of Javan: Elishah, Tarshish, the Kittites and the Rodanites.
- The sons of Ham: Cush, Egypt, Put and Canaan.
- The sons of Cush: Seba, Havilah, Sabtah, Raamah and Sabteka.
- The sons of Raamah: Sheba and Dedan.
- Cush was the father of Nimrod
- Egypt was the father of the Ludites, Anamites, Lehabites, Naphtuhites, Pathrusites, Kasluhites (from whom the Philistines came) and Caphtorites.
- Canaan was the father of Sidon his firstborn, and of the Hittites, Jebusites, Amorites, Girgashites, Hivites, Arkites, Sinites, Arvadites, Zemarites and Hamathites.
- The sons of Shem: Elam, Ashur, Arphaxad, Lud and Aram.

- The sons of Aram: Uz, Hul, Gether and Meshek. Arphaxad was the father of Shelah, and Shelah the father of Eber.
- Two sons were born to Eber: One was named Peleg, because in his time the earth was divided; his brother was named Joktan.
- Joktan was the father of Almodad, Sheleph, Hazarmaveth, Jerah, Hadoram, Uzal, Diklah, Obal, Abimael, Sheba, Ophir, Havilah and Jobab. All these were sons of Joktan.

Satan's Work

Here are a couple of interesting words in Genesis 10 –

- languages (different languages)
- divided (earth was divided during time of Peleg)

Why would people have different languages (לְשׁוֹנוֹתָם *lišōnōtām* – according to their tongues) when they were part of the same family (Noah)? How was the earth divided (נִפְּלְגָה *nīplēgāh* – split, divided, cleft) during the time of Noah's great-great-great-grandson, Peleg?

“Now the whole earth had one language and one speech. And it came to pass, as they journeyed from the east, that they found a plain in the land of Shinar, and they dwelt there. Then they said to one another, ‘Come, let us make bricks and bake them thoroughly.’ They had brick for stone, and they had asphalt for mortar. And they said, ‘Come, let us build ourselves a city, and a tower whose top is in the heavens; let us make a name for ourselves, lest we be scattered

abroad over the face of the whole earth.’ But the Lord came down to see the city and the tower which the sons of men had built. And the Lord said, ‘Indeed the people are one and they all have one language, and this is what they begin to do; now nothing that they propose to do will be withheld from them. Come, let Us go down and there confuse their language, that they may not understand one another’s speech.’ So the Lord scattered them abroad from there over the face of all the earth, and they ceased building the city. Therefore its name is called Babel, because there the Lord confused the language of all the earth; and from there the Lord scattered them abroad over the face of all the earth.” Genesis 11:1-9

Here we see clearly that everyone on earth spoke one language and one speech. The Hebrew word for “language” is שָׁפָה (śāpāh) and means “lip, speech, edge.” The Hebrew word for “speech” is וּדְבָרִים (ūdəbārīm) and means “speech, word.” It comes from the verb דָּבַר and translates “to speak.”

The combination of those two Hebrew words means that all people were literally of one lip and words one. Their pronunciation and vocabulary were identical. Noah and his sons and their sons and their sons had no variation in speech patterns, pronunciation, accent or vocabulary. They were the same. They were one.

That's not our experience today nor has it been for thousands of years. So, how and when did that change? Why did the human race go from having identical pronunciation and vocabulary to the thousands of languages and dialects we have today? Genesis 11 tells us how, when and why.

Origin of Language

What we believe about the origin of language is determined by what we believe about **origins** in general. If we believe that humans evolved from a common ancestor millions of years ago, then we will believe language evolved from the sounds of animal ancestors to the speech and vocabulary we have today. If we believe that humans were created by God, then we will believe He gave our human ancestors speech and vocabulary.

Genesis 11:1 is quite clear. "Now the whole earth had one language and one speech." There was a time when everyone on earth had identical pronunciation and vocabulary. That pronunciation and vocabulary came to them through Noah and his wife and their sons and their wives.

Here's an interesting note about that from Barnes –

"Of one lip, and one stock: of words. – In the table of nations the term "tongue" was used to signify what is here expressed by two terms. This is not undesigned. The two terms are not synonymous or parallel, as they form the parts of one compound predicate. "One stock of words," then, we conceive, naturally indicates the matter, the substance, or material of language. This was one and the same to

the whole race. The term “lip,” which is properly one of the organs of articulation, is, on the other hand, used to denote the form, that is, the manner, of speaking; the mode of using and connecting the matter of speech; the system of laws by which the inflections and derivations of a language are conducted. This also was one throughout the human family. Thus, the sacred writer has expressed the unity of language among mankind, not by a single term as before, but, with a view to his present purpose, by a combination of terms expressing the two elements which go to constitute every organic reality.” Barnes’ Notes on the Old Testament

What God saw in the human race soon after the Flood was unity of language and purpose. The purpose was contrary to God’s command. Look at the differences.

God’s purpose – “Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth.”

Humanity’s purpose – “Come, let us build ourselves a city, and a tower whose top is in the heavens; let us make a name for ourselves, lest we be scattered abroad over the face of the whole earth.”

God told Noah and his family that He wanted them to “fill the earth.” Noah’s family did not want to fill the earth. Why not? Why would the entire race of humans journey from the east, select a plain in the land of Shinar and build a city with a tower reaching toward the heavens? Why would they want to make a name for themselves, lest they be scattered over the face of the whole earth?

It's important for us to remember the human heart. Here's what God said in His heart after the global Flood –

“I will never again curse the ground for man’s sake, although the imagination of man’s heart is evil from his youth; nor will I again destroy every living thing as I have done.” Genesis 8:21

Even though Noah and his family had witnessed the awesome power of God, their hearts and the hearts of their children would not change from what they were before the Flood –

“Then the Lord saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every intent of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually ... The earth also was corrupt before God, and the earth was filled with violence. So God looked upon the earth, and indeed it was corrupt; for all flesh had corrupted their way on the earth.” Genesis 6:5, 11-12

What the human race did in building a city and a tower “whose top is in the heavens” was not out of the ‘goodness’ of their hearts. It came from the evil imagination of their hearts. The human race was headed in the same direction as before the Flood – evil, corruption and violence where everyone did what they pleased. That is a strong example of the power of the ‘sin nature’ in every human. Even a global Flood could not extinguish the evil of human heart.

As to what humans were thinking at the time of building the tower, one possibility may be that they believed they needed to stand together as the human race against any future plans by God to change how they lived. Noah and his sons would still have been alive at that time and were eyewitnesses to the great power of God to make major changes to humanity. Even though God had told Noah and his wife and their sons and their wives what He demanded of the human race going forward after the global Flood, Nimrod and other descendants of Noah apparently did not want to obey God. They had a rebellious spirit and disobeyed God's direct commandment to be fruitful, multiply and fill the earth. They may have believed that their strength as a human race against God was to stay close and work together.

Another possibility may be that they viewed themselves as 'gods' and wanted to set themselves up as such on earth. Remember what Satan told Eve in the Garden of Eden? "For God knows that in the day you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil." (Genesis 3:5) We know from Genesis 11 that they were building "a city, and a tower whose top is in the heavens." It was an ancient step-pyramid with a place for worshipping the 'gods' of heaven at the top. God saw what they were doing and didn't like it: "Indeed the people are one and they all have one language, and this is what they begin to do; now nothing that they propose to do will be withheld from them." What was it that Noah's family proposed to do? Was it self-worship through idols? We know that Nimrod and other members of Noah's family later established worship of 'idols/gods' in the cities they built in upper and lower Mesopotamia. Their view of

themselves as 'gods' and their rebellion against the true God may be another reason they wanted to stay together and not 'fill the earth.'

Whatever the reason, it was a "work" of the devil. Satan opposes God's plan at every turn. Why? Because Satan heard what God told him in the Garden of Eden.

"So the Lord God said to the serpent: 'Because you have done this, You are cursed more than all cattle, And more than every beast of the field; On your belly you shall go, And you shall eat dust All the days of your life. And I will put enmity Between you and the woman, And between your seed and her Seed; He shall bruise your head, And you shall bruise His heel.'" Genesis 3:14-15

Satan knew then and knows now that his days are numbered. The devil knows he is defeated in his battle with God, but he's not giving up. Satan has work to do and he is doing it.

Confusion

God's response is brilliant. He confused people's language so they couldn't understand each other.

"And the Lord said, 'Indeed the people are one and they all have one language, and this is what they begin to do; now nothing that they propose to do will be withheld from them. Come, let Us go down and there confuse their language, that they may not understand one

another's speech.' So the Lord scattered them abroad from there over the face of all the earth, and they ceased building the city."

The Hebrew word for “confuse” is *וַנְבַּלְהֵם* (*wəṇābəlāh*) and means “confound, mix, mingle, confuse.” God confounded the plan of humans by confusing their speech. He mixed up they way they spoke, heard and understood language. They could not understand one another’s speech, so they couldn’t work together to build a city with the tower reaching toward the heavens.

By confusing the language, God diffused the strength of their unity as “one people.” They did scatter over the face of the earth and built many cities. That was the beginning of “nations.”

Linguists estimate we have about 6,500 languages on earth today – down from more than 30,000 that existed through history. If true, that means almost 80 percent of all human languages have become extinct.

We don’t know how many “languages” were born on the day God confused the one language that Noah and his family had known, but there were enough to drive the people away from each other.

From what we read in Genesis 10, we understand why people went in so many different directions around the world. They joined up with people in their family who spoke a similar language and built a new life together as “a people, nations.”

Division

We read in Genesis 10 that the “nations were divided on the earth after the flood.” We also read that the earth was “divided” during the days of Peleg. Is that a clue to something we should know?

Peleg was one Eber’s sons. Eber was the son of Salah who was the son of Arphaxad who was the son of Shem who was the son of Noah. That makes Peleg the great-great-great-grandson of Noah (fifth generation).

After we see the confusion of languages in Genesis 11, we read the genealogy of Shem. Look at the number of years from the Flood to Peleg:

- Arphaxad was born two years after the Flood
- Arphaxad was 35 years old when Salah was born
- Salah was 30 years old when Eber was born
- Eber was 34 years old when Peleg was born
- Peleg was 30 years old when his son Reu was born
- Peleg lived 209 years after he “begot Reu”

According to Genesis 10, the earth was “divided” (split) in the days of Peleg. If that division was the “confusion” of languages, we can get some idea of how long after the Flood the “nations” began.

Adding up the years from the birth of Arphaxad to the birth of Peleg, we see that Peleg was born about a century after the Flood (101 years). Peleg lived to be about 240 years old (239), so the “confusion” of tongues could have been anywhere from one to three-and-a-half centuries after the Flood. Another clue comes from Genesis 10 where we read about the lineage of Noah’s son Ham. Ham’s son Cush had a son named Nimrod. We don’t know when Nimrod was born or how long he lived because only the lineage of Shem includes years of birth and death for Noah’s sons and their children.

So, how can we know? One way is to compare the birth and death rates of Shem’s lineage. Nimrod was Noah’s great-grandson as was Salah. Salah was born about 37 years after the Flood and lived to be about 433 years old. That means Salah died about 470 years after the Flood. If Nimrod was born about the same time as his cousin Salah and lived to be about as old, Nimrod would have also been alive for about 470 years after the flood. Compare that with the earth being divided during the time of Peleg (101-239 years after the flood) and we see that Nimrod would have been alive during and after the dividing of the earth (confusion of language).

Here’s why that’s important.

Genesis 10 tells us that Nimrod was the founder of a “kingdom,” which would go to the desire of Noah’s family to “build ourselves a city, and a tower whose top is in the heavens; let us make a name for ourselves, lest we be scattered abroad over the face of the whole earth.” They wanted to

build their own kingdom rather than operate in the Kingdom God had commanded them to build by filling the earth.

The “beginning” of Nimrod’s kingdom was Babel, Erech, Accad, and Calneh, in the land of Shinar. We know from archaeology and history that the Hebrew words “land of Shinar” describes what we know as part of Mesopotamia. As we search for history about Babel, Erech, Accad and Calneh, we find that they were most likely located in the southern region of Mesopotamia that we would know today as the southern part of Iraq.

After building the southern part of his kingdom, Nimrod went north “to Assyria and built Nineveh, Rehoboth, Ir, Calah, and Resen.” These cities were most likely located in the northern region of Mesopotamia that we would know today as northern Iraq, northeastern Syria and southeastern Turkey.

Archaeological discoveries date some of these city-states to the early to mid-3rd millennium. We’ll learn more about them as we go through our study, but it’s interesting to note that archaeological dating fits well with the information we have from Genesis.

Something else we’ll see as we continue our study is that Nimrod’s city-states were also headquarters for a variety of ancient religious worship. That also works with what we’ll see in Genesis and other biblical writings.

Next Ebook

In the next part of our study we will learn more about how God continued His **Great Reveal** after the confusion of language and rebellion of Nimrod and the people scattered over all the face of the earth.

[You can read more about the post-flood history in our book [*A History of Man's Quest for Immortality*](#).]

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