

approaching genesis | the book of promise

LUKE TATTERSALL takes us back to basics with his notes on preaching through Genesis 1 to 11.

A Problem of Familiarity

A few years ago I had the chance to visit Cape Town, South Africa. It is a stunning city with the skyline dominated by Table Mountain. Table Mountain stands 1086 metres high and it is right in the middle of the city of Cape Town. (That is the same height as the Blue Mountains to the west of Sydney). But it is not just table mountain that makes Cape Town stunning. Throughout the whole area there are these enormous mountains that leap up out of the ground. While I was there I would regularly ask the people driving us around if we could stop. They would ask “What do you want to stop for”. I would reply, “To take a photo”. “Take a photo of what?” they would say. “The mountains, of course”. They were so familiar with these mountains that they failed to see how impressive they were. They were so familiar with this stunning landscape that they took it for granted.

It is sad that we can become so familiar with passages of scripture that we lose our awe for what they are saying. I think that is true for the opening chapters of Genesis. Here are Bible passages that we know well. When we read Genesis 1 we should be in awe of the God who made the world. When we read Genesis 2 we should be stunned that the powerful God who made the world has made us to enjoy a relationship with him. When we read Genesis 3 we should feel a collective sense of shame at the way man turns his back on a loving creator. And it keeps going. The spread of sin with brother killing brother. The terrifying story of the whole world being flooded. The arrogance of man in trying to build a tower to God.

It was with my familiarity of Genesis 1-11 in mind that I took on the task of preaching to a congregation who would also be familiar. I wanted to do it in a way that would make people think again. I wanted to help people to see these passages with fresh eyes. And above all I wanted to get the point that the writer was trying to make.

If you want to understand the world we live in, if you want to understand what man is like and what his purpose is in the world, if you want to understand why the world is in a mess, if you want to understand why God sent his son into this world, then Genesis 1-11 has the answers. These chapters really are foundational to understand what the rest of the Bible has to say.

The Break-Up

There is nothing remarkable about how I have broken up this section. I have tried to pick the big events and show the flow of the narrative.

Genesis 1:1-2:3 - This was an attempt to look at the 6 days of creation as spelled out in Genesis 1. This is a passage where we can often let other agendas determine what we take away from the passage. We need to make sure that we see the strong and clear message the passage wants to give. God is the one who rules over this ordered world that he has made. He took that which was void and formless, gave it form and filling. And he did it effortlessly by his word.

Genesis 1:26-2:25 - This talk backtracked to look at the place the man and the woman have in creation - specifically what it means to be made in God's image.

Genesis 3 - The entry of sin in the world brings undone God's creation. Relationships are damaged.

Genesis 4-5 - Sin spreads and death follows with it.

Genesis 6-9 - The God who made the world is also the God who can judge and punish the world. The story of the flood is a terrifying example of how serious sin is and the damage that it does in the world.

Genesis 10:1-11:9 - In some ways this is a repeat of the Garden of Eden. Man rejects God's authority and tries to become like God himself.

Genesis 11:10-12:9 - God remains committed to his plan and purpose for the world. His calling of Abraham is the major turning point in the Bible narrative. The promises he makes to Abraham are what will shape the rest of the Bible.

Resources

The commentary I relied on most was Gordon Wenham in the **Word** series. This is a wonderful commentary with more technical detail that I needed - but a thorough grasp of the text.

I didn't have John Sailhamer's **The Pentateuch as Narrative** at the time I did this series. I purchased it and used it on a Genesis 12-25 series and found it invaluable. It takes the literary structure of the book seriously and shows some great links to other parts of the Pentateuch.

I also found it helpful to look back at books like **According to Plan** (Graham Goldsworthy), **The Faith of Israel** (William Dumbrell) and **The Days are Coming** (Mark Strom).

Talk 1 - "And God Said..." - Genesis 1

1. A Problem of Familiarity

Opened with the illustration about the Mountains in Cape Town (see page 11). When it comes to a passage like Genesis 1 we can feel like we know what it says and forget how amazing it is. This is a stunning opening chapter.

2. Asking the Right Questions

When you are looking for answers you need to make sure you are asking the right questions.

You've probably heard the story about the 8 year old boy who went to his father and asked "Where did I come from?". The father took a deep breath because he realized that the time had come to have that father/son talk. So he began to explain about what happens when a mummy & daddy really love each other... and you know the rest. The father thought that he had done a good job of the explanation but the child looked rather perplexed at the answer. So the father said "Why the interest in this". The son said "A new boy at school said he came from Melbourne and I was just wondering where I came from."

People often look at Genesis and try to ask questions the passage isn't dealing with. Genesis 1 has a total of 813 words in the NIV. The instruction book for programming my video has far more than that. Genesis 1 is not trying to tell us everything about the creation of the world. But at the same time Genesis 1 tells us everything we need to know.

Let's make sure we learn what Genesis is saying. It deals with 2 things.

2.1 - The World God Made

Note the poetic quality and repeated phrases of Genesis 1: And God said ... and it was so ... and there was evening and there was morning ... and God called ...and it was good.

God alone made the world. There is also a pattern and order to creation, it doesn't happen in a hap-hazard or chaotic way. Days 1-3 give the form (space, sky & sea, dry ground). Days 4-6 give the filling (stars

& moon, birds & fish, land animals & man). To a world that was "formless and void" (Gen 1:2) God gave form and filling. And it was good - that phrase is repeated 7 times. And this is not our good - this is God's good.

2.2 - The God Who Made The World

He is the God of EVERYTHING - everything is created by him. Note those religions that worship the sun or moon or stars are put in their place. YHWH is the creator of those things.

"And God said...and it was so" - everything happens effortlessly and powerfully. There is no struggle or contest. God speaks and it happens.

"And God called..." - It is God who gives the names to things. It is his world.

3. The Man God Made

Man is the pinnacle of creation - but more about that next in Talk 2.

4. The Goal of Creation

The final act of creation was rest. That was the goal of the creation.

5. This is Your God

We should be in awe of the God who created this world we live in. Look at what these passages say about God: Psalm 148:1-6, Psalm 95:3-7, Revelation 4:9-11.

God is worthy of our praise simply because he created. It would be arrogant to think you could live in this world and ignore the creator.

But the New Testament takes it one step further. Jesus is God. He was there at the creation of the world. In fact, the Bible says that the world was made through him and for him (John 1:1-5, Colossians 1:15-17). It is not enough to simply acknowledge that God is the creator. We also need to acknowledge that this world belongs to Jesus.

Talk 2 - The Way things were Meant to Be - Genesis 2

1. Taking a Closer Look

I was given a microscope for my birthday. Great to look at things under different levels of magnification. Genesis 2 is zooming in on the most significant part of the creation.

2. Making a Garden

Man is the pinnacle of creation and rest was the goal of creation. The description of the creation of the man and woman breaks the pattern in Genesis 1. The writer is clear that he is talking about real events in space and time - the geographical description makes that clear (Gen 2:10-14).

3. It Is Not Good...

In chapter one we saw the repeated phrase "It was good...". But now we see "It was not good..." (Gen 2:18). A suitable helper had to be found for the man. One of the things that come out clearly in this passage is that relationships are that the core of the world that God made.

Adam was a bit like the first Bill Gates. He could honestly say that the whole world was his - and it was. God had given it to him to rule over. But wholeness as human beings is not about power or control. If it was then Adam would have had everything. He would have been complete. Wholeness as people is about relationships. That is what we are like. That is how God has made us.

The woman is made as a suitable helper. They complement each other - they are literally made for each other.

4. Made in the Image of God

Back to Genesis 1:26-27. What does it mean to be in "God's image"?

Look at what the verse says: 26 Then God said, "Let **US** make man in our image, in **OUR** likeness, and let **THEM** rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air, over the livestock, over all the earth, and over all the creatures that move along the ground." 27 So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created **HIM**; male and female he created **THEM**.

How is man in God's image:

1. Ruling over creation - man gets to name the animals, man is God's 2IC.
2. Male and female - not the plurals in the verse - "Let **US** make man in our image, in **OUR** likeness". Part of the male & femaleness of humans is a reflection of the Godhead. Within the Godhead there are relationships (Father, Son & Holy Spirit) - three who are together one. So to the man and the women are going to reflect those relationships. They are created male and female to be in God's image. We see that the two become one (Gen 2:24).

5. One Command

They were given one prohibition (Gen 2:16-17).

6. Naked & Unashamed

Adam and Eve are naked and unashamed. There is nothing to be ashamed of. Sin is not yet in the world.

7. How things were meant to be

Here are some amazing facts about the world we live in:

- *The surface area of the world is over 500 000 000 kms².*
- *The earth weighs approximately 598 000 000 000 000 000 000 000 TONS. (598 sextillion tons - yes that is a number - it is 598 with 21 "0's" after it.)*
- *The hottest place on earth is in Libya where the temperatures can get up to a rather warm 50° C.*
- *The coldest place on earth is the Antarctic where the temperature can get down to a chilly -89° C.*
- *And when you look out beyond the earth the statistics get even more mind-boggling. Pluto, the planet furthest away from us in our solar system, is 4 226 000 000 kms from the earth. That is virtually a meaningless figure. Let me try and put that into perspective. Let's say you could go there by car. If you traveled at 100 kms per hour without stopping then it would take you 115 780 yrs to get there. (You'd want to make sure you'd gone to the toilet before you left. I can say as a father of 4 children that you would be sick of the Wiggles CD by the time you got there!)*

All that may seem amazing - but by far the most amazing thing about this world is that we have been made to enjoy a relationship with the God and creator of this world. Man was no accident of creation. He was made to know God.

Talk 3 - The Fall - Genesis 3

1. Top 10 Events in Human History

I saw a man interviewed on TV about a book he had written. From memory he listed: development of the silicon chip, first atomic bomb being dropped, man walking on the moon, invention of the printing press. They are events that have no doubt changed people's lives.

What would you put on a top ten list. What events do you think have had the greatest impact on the world we live in? Invention of the wheel? Discovery of penicillin?

Genesis 3 gives us an account of the second most significant event in human history - and event that has influenced the life of every person on this planet - the fall.

2. One Command

In the perfect world God had made he gave one rule (Gen 2:16-17). If nothing else this rule gave Adam & Eve the chance to show their love and trust of God and their gratitude to him. It gave them a chance to acknowledge his authority.

3. Who's the Boss?

Read Genesis 3:1-6. This is not just about eating a piece of fruit. Eve was encouraged to doubt God - to think God couldn't be trusted, to think God didn't have her best interests at heart. The choice she made was one where she said "God doesn't know best". This was not an accident. This was a deliberate defiance of God.

Note the reversal of the creation order. It should have been God-man-woman-animals but what we see is snake-woman-man-God.

4. The Original Buck Passing

Adam wants to blame God and Eve. Eve wants to blame the snake. They both want

to abdicate their responsibility in what has happened.

5. The Punishment

And God punishes each of the participants in this breach of God's rule. The punishments strike at the heart of what was good about creation - relationships and work. They are placed outside the garden. They have begun to die.

6. Adam's Sin and Us

Every person born on this planet is infected with Adam's sin. Every person on this planet is born outside the garden - outside of a relationship with God.

SIN is now part of our make-up - part of what we are like. And everyone is destined to die (Romans 5:12, 18a & 19a). We are born sinners, subject to God's judgement, subject to death. The blood of Adam flows through our veins. It is not hard to see that the world still suffers from Adam & Eve's rejection of God. It is still rejecting God today.

7. Conclusion

The Fall was the second most significant event in human history - an event that touched every life on this planet. That is the bad news.

The GOOD NEWS is that God has done something about our situation. He has not simply left us to suffer the consequences of Adam's sin. He has made it possible for us to enter back into a relationship with him.

Read Romans 5:18-19. That is THE most significant event in human history - Jesus coming into the world to die so that we could be right with God. Paul makes the contrast between Adam & Christ (see also Phil 2:5-8).

I heard a rather amazing thing recently. Did you know that each year in Australia there are more than 27 000 people reported to the police as missing. Of those who are missing about 98% of them are found within a year of the report being lodged. Of the other 2% - 1% of the investigations find that the person has been murdered and 1% remain unsolved. But my far the most amazing thing is that the majority of people

who are reported missing don't even know it. They have the Police out looking for them and they don't even realize they are missing. They are just plodding long living a normal life - holding a job, playing sport, going shopping, taking a holidays - and all the time they are missing - but they don't even know it. For many of them the first they hear about being missing is when the Police come and knock on their door.

Who are the people you know who are missing and don't even know it? Who are the people who you know who are cut off from God and are unaware? Who are the work-mates you have who do not know Jesus? Who are the friends you have who are drifting along thinking that everything is fine?

You have an obligation to tell them how they can know God. You have the privilege of telling them how they can be made right with God.

God has not simply left us to suffer the consequences of Adam's sin ... he has made it possible for us to enter back into a relationship with him.

TALK 4 - Genesis 4-5

1. The Spread of Sin

The Aids epidemic... a tiny picture of how Genesis 4 presents sin. A terrifying disease: that brings death and destruction... When Adam & Eve disobeyed God, sin entered God's perfect world. (A dark, black, chapter.)

But Genesis 3 is just the beginning. As we turn the page to chapter 4, we see sin... like a killer disease, grow and grow into a hideous monster, completely unchecked. Bringing destruction and death wherever it goes.

Genesis 3 ended with a promise (3:15). From Eve will come a son... her offspring, who'll crush the serpent, defeat Satan. Who somehow, will put right all that's gone wrong with God's perfect world. So, if you were reading Gen for the first time, what are you thinking, as you turn the page to chapter 4 verse 1? Eve has a son. An

offspring. Is this one? She names him with great expectation... great joy. But if our hopes rise, at the birth of Cain. Cain's a son who'll dash her hopes, and break her heart. Instead of mastering sin, sin masters him. Instead of crushing the serpent, he's taken captive himself.

2. Worse

In fact Genesis 4, highlights how in every possible way, sin and its destructiveness, is growing in power, like a snowball getting bigger down a hill, is growing completely out of control.

Notice the differences with Genesis 3:

1. Back in Genesis 3, Eve had to be talked into taking the fruit. But Cain needs no persuasion. In fact, he can't be talked out of it. Not even the very visitation of God is enough to put him off killing his brother.
2. The stupidity of sin is even more obvious than with Adam & Eve. The thing he longs for is God's favour. Is this a course of action that'll secure it? We see even more clearly than in Genesis 3. Sinful minds make stupid choices.
3. When Adam and Eve eat the fruit and realize what they'd done. They hide from God trembling with fear. But when God comes looking for Cain, is he behind the bushes, quaking in his boots, his knees knocking? In fact when God asks: "Where is your brother?" Cain stands up to God. He's confronted, but doesn't flinch a muscle. He even back-chats God with a smart-alec answer "am I my brothers keeper?", a play on words, he literally says "am I my brothers shepherd?".
4. When God passed judgement on Adam and Eve there's no word of complaint. They just go. With their tails between their legs. But not Cain (vv14-15). He doesn't take his punishment silently. He again stands up to God. He grumbles that God is unfair. He wants to argue the point. Engage God in a debate, about his own justice.

3. Worser

But from Cain, sin and its destructive power just keeps spreading. Things go from worse to worser. Read Genesis 4:17-24.

Do you notice (in that passage) how Cain's descendants are very ingenious? They're creative & cultured people. Cities are built. (I don't know if you've ever built a city yourself, from scratch, but I imagine there's a lot engineering know how to get it all to work. Have the trains run on time. Put the airport in the right place.) Music invented. Tools are made out of iron and bronze. But, for all their technological advances, they can do nothing about the spread of sin. Sin is not the primitive person's problem. Something you leave behind when you get educated, and refined, and learn to play the cello.

4. Worstest

By the time we get to Lamech, Cain's descendant sin is something you boast about. He's written a song about himself (very creative). What Cain did in secret, in the field, Lamech brags about... sings about. For all Cain's brashness, he did try to evade God's questions. He didn't want to own up. But Lamech wants people to know about his sinfulness. He's shameless about sin.

5. A Warning about the Power of Sin

Before we go any further, can I say that for each of us, there's a lot to learn about sin in Genesis 4. The way sin takes hold, in Cain's family. Like God's warning to Cain that sin will master you, will take over and control you. Genesis 4 wants to warn us of the power of sin and its vice-like grip.

6. God's Surprising Generosity

But you know when it comes to sin, Genesis 4 has something else, something far more important to say. It wants to point us to Jesus. As sin spreads, so does God's grace. As sin gets uglier, God's grace becomes more patient and wonderful. God keeps blessing those, who sin against him. And the more they sin, the more he keeps blessing them.

1. In Genesis 3, even as Adam and Eve are ordered from the Garden, having

ruined God's perfect world and thrown all his generousness back in their face, God clothes them. Just a little gentle touch. He cares for them. Completely undeserved.

2. And then as Cain is banished, in verse 15, God marks him. A mark that somehow protected him. That marked him out as the one God especially watched over and cared about. Even as he leaves, grumbling at God, shaking his fist. God covers his with kindness. **THE MORE THEY SIN, THE MORE GOD BLESSES THEM.**
3. We'll see in the next talk that the pattern continues. By chapter 6, God grieves that he even made the world. Decides to blot it out with a flood. But even at that moment, in his grace, he sends a saviour: Noah. He covers Noah, not with clothes or a special mark but an ARK to protect him and his family as God's judgement falls on the world.

No matter how bad sin seems to get, how painful to God it must be...the more they sin the more amazingly generous God becomes. And as the Bible story goes on: that idea comes to its great climax, at the death of Jesus. No sin was more painful to God:

- As Cain killed his brother, his own flesh and blood. At the cross we killed the brother who came from heaven. The creator himself, who became flesh and blood with us, and entered our world.
- Cain killed his brother, the one God loved, because God was pleased with him. He liked Abel's sacrifice. But we killed the perfect one, who all his life pleased God in every way. The one who was God's beloved from all eternity.
- As Lamech laughs about his sin. They stood round the cross and laughed. Not trembling with fear, at their audacious act of rebellion. They taunted and mocked.

But even at that moment, when sin was at its worse. When we were at our most ungrateful God was being his most generous, giving for us the one he loved, the gift beyond words, his own dear son.

You see, here is the son of Eve, who came to crush the serpent and deal with sin. A son of Eve, not mastered by sin, but who mastered it.

Who at the cross paid the price for sin. Who at the cross was bitten by the serpent and died. But in doing so became the antidote for the serpents bite. To stop the killer disease. To put an end to sin's power.

When human sin was at its worst, God was being his most generous.

TALK 5 - When God says "ENOUGH" - Genesis 6-9

1. Introduction

The flood is one of the Top Ten Sunday School stories - but it seems a bit strange. This is a terrifying story. God is flooding the world.

2. The Sons of God, 120 Years & the Nephilim

Strange verses in the opening.

2.1 - The Sons of God and the Daughters of Men

Note what Jesus says in Matthew 24:36-38 about people marrying and being given in marriage. How does Jesus know that is how things were in the days of NOAH? I think the answer is what it says at the beginning of Genesis 6. Perhaps the identification of who these people are is not that important. Jesus seems to be saying that life was going on as normal prior to the flood.

Sin is spreading (Gen 4). Death is following hot on the heels of sin (Gen 5). But life is going on as normal (Gen 6).

2.2 - 120 Years and the Nephilim

Is this saying that people will only have a life span of 120 years? If so then why do Noah, Sarah, Abraham, Ishmael, Isaac and Jacob live longer than that? Better to see that the verse is saying God will judge the earth in 120 years.

And I think the mention of the Nephilim simply serves as a marker - a reference point for the original readers. These things happened - says the writer - at the time when the Nephilim were around.

3. God Looks Down on the World (Gen 6:5-8)

Genesis 6:5-8 gives a synopsis.

Jørn Utzon walked away from the construction of the Sydney Opera House before it was completed because he was frustrated at how things were going. Imagine the frustration God must have felt when he saw the world he had created going off the rails.

3.1 - God saw... (6:5)

God looked down on the world and what he SAW was a world TAINTED BY SIN. Sin has not only spread it has become worse (as we saw in Genesis 4).

3.2 - God was... (6:6)

It is surprising to see how personally God takes this. God is not dispassionately watching the events on earth. God's heart is filled with pain by what he sees on earth. When man's heart turns away from God God's heart is filled with pain.

3.3 - God said... (6:7)

The other big surprise is that God decides to wipe everything out. Four chapters ago God was justifiably proud of the world he man. Now he regrets making it. Note that sin is SERIOUS. God will not let it go unpunished.

3.4 - But Noah... (6:8)

Faint note of hope in an otherwise bleak situation.

4. The Flood

Detailed account of the flood. Note that Noah is a righteous man - he walks with God. His faith in God is demonstrated by his actions (Heb 11:7).

It is interesting that people often make a lot about how Noah's neighbours would have treated him. But the text doesn't mention anything about it. This is all is says about the construction Genesis 6:22: Noah did everything just as God commanded him. The focus of the passage is simply on the fact that Noah was obedient.

The Bible clearly says that everything perished - everything (Gen 7:21-23) you can't help but think it is sad that the world has come that far compared to Genesis 1:28f. Note that even some of the same phrases are used in these 2 passages (every living thing that moves on the earth, birds of the air, everything that has the breath of life, creatures that move along the ground). God's work in creation has now been undone.

5. A New Beginning?

Note the parallels between what God said to Adam and Eve and what he says to Noah (Gen 9:1f). Is God starting again? Things are looking good. A faithful man in Noah.

But in a funny story we are told that sin is still in the world...Noah is found NAKED by his sons. Nakedness was there in chapters 2 and 3. In chapter 2 they were naked and there was no shame. In chapter 3 when sin came into the world there was shame attached to nakedness. In Genesis 9 there is still shame attached to nakedness. It may be a new beginning with Noah - but it is a new beginning in a sinful world. The sin has not been flooded away.

6. Conclusion

Everyone wants to ask: "Why doesn't God do something about the evil in the world?" the answer is:

6.1 - He Has

We see that in the story of Noah.

6.2 - He Will

God has said that he will judge the world. See Matthew 24:36-39. God will again judge the world. The only escape from the judgement is through his son Jesus.

TALK 6 - Making a Name for Yourself - GENESIS 10:1-11:9

1. Technology to the Rescue

We live in a day and age that is far more technologically advanced than anyone could have imagined. Advances in technology are usually followed by pride and arrogance. Genesis 11 talks about a technological breakthrough and the pride that followed.

2. The World has Grown

Genesis 10 is not a boring list of names - it is the nations that have filled the earth - 70 nations or people groups - all descended from one man - Noah.

3. The Tower of Babel

Crucial piece on information at the beginning of chapter 11 - great numbers have spread, but there is one language. They decide to settle on the plain of Shinar. Have a look what happens (Gen 11:3-4) and listen to what happens next:

3.1 - We Can Do It

Man thinks that he can do anything and the implication is that he doesn't need God or thinks that he can become equal with God (Gen 11:3-4). God doesn't even rate a mention in their plan.

3.2 - Sticking Together

But it is not simply that they are ignoring God. They are also defying God. He told them to fill the earth - to spread out, to populate the earth. But the people are determined to "not be scattered" (Gen 11:4). Don't be fooled here. This is not a lifestyle choice - city versus country. This is defiance of God. They thought that they could make a name for themselves.

3.3 - Grasping at Heaven

But it goes even one step further. They are grasping at heaven. They want to reach up to where God is so they can become like God. The same sin that Adam and Eve committed - wanting to be like God. But that is not what Jesus is like (Phil 2:5-9)

The problem with the Tower of Babel is those 3 things:

1. Mankind has become arrogant about his own achievements
2. They have defied God's command to spread out and fill the earth
3. And ultimately mankind has made another desperate grab at being like God

He has the technology. He has the plan. And construction is under way.

4. God's Response

How does GOD respond to all this? Well, one of the great ironies of the story is found in verse 5.

The people think they are building a tower reaching to heaven but from where God sits he can't even see it. He has to come down to have a look. Man thinks it is impressive - but in God's eyes it is nothing.

Man's actions may have been pathetic - but what motivated them was dangerous. God decides to confuse their language. Note that God is not intimidated or threatened by what man has done. He is doing them a favour by confusing their language.

My 4 year old son was using a very sharp knife. I took it off him not as punishment but to protect him - so he wouldn't injure himself. God does the same thing in confusing their language. If speaking the one language they have this idea to build a tower then if they put their mind to it they could really hurt themselves. Note that God finally spreads them out (Gen 11:9).

5. The Problem with Babel Thinking

Babel is a lot like the world we live in. People think we have the resources and the technology to solve any of our problems.

Steven Hawking said that if we could come up with a theory of everything then we would know the mind of God. Hawking and the people at Babel got one thing right - there is a gap between us and God. But it can not be fixed from our end - by our technology. God has bridged the gap by sending Jesus. You want to know the mind of God then look to Jesus (Heb 1:1-5). Acts 2:5-11 says that through the work of Jesus and the preaching of the good news about him Babel is undone. Babel meant division and disunity. The Gospel brings unity and brings us to God.

TALK 7 - Sticking With the Plan - GENESIS 11:10-12:9

1. What's Wrong with the World?

Everyone has an opinion about what is wrong with the world - economic problems, social problems, environmental problems, etc. Genesis 1-11 tells us what is wrong with the world.

2. The Tower of Babel - The Final Chapter (11:10-32)

Genesis 11:10f gives us another genealogy. But this is not boring information. This is important.

Parents often bail out their children when they get in trouble. Genesis 11 is God bailing us out of trouble. Man got himself into the mess. It will need to be God who gets him out of it.

We have seen a pattern in Genesis 1-11: man sins, God punishes but God also shows grace. The promises God makes to Abraham are God's act of graciousness following the Tower of Babel.

3. Standing on the Promises

At the time God called Abraham he was living in Haran. He called him to leave behind his family and go to a place he had never been. And he was called to do it because of the promises God made. Abraham believed God. At the age of 75 Abraham left his home.

4. Abraham vs Babel

Note the connections back to the Babel story. God says he will make Abraham's name great (compare 11:4 and 12:1-2). The people at Babel wanted to make a great city. God tells Abraham he will make him a great nation. Hebrews even picks up the connection between the city of Babel and the city that Abraham was looking for (Heb 11:9-10).

God has not abandoned his purpose for the world. He still intends to have the people he made living in the place he gives them in a relationship with him. The world may keep turning its back on God - but God does not give up on his plan. But what God ultimately has in store is bigger than Eden, bigger than national Israel. God's purpose is that the whole world will be blessed through Abraham.

See Galatians 3:16. Compare Genesis 22:17-18. The NIV unhelpfully translates "seed" as "offspring". When God made the promises to Abraham it was "seed" - singular. Ultimately the "seed" that God had in mind was Jesus. That is where the promises to Abraham are fulfilled.

6. Sticking With the Plan

Abraham gives us a great example of faith. He acted because he believed the promises of God. We need to be like Abraham - committed to God's promises, his purposes and his plan.

God still has a plan and purpose for this world. His promises in Jesus still stand. But we need to be committed to this plan for the rest of the world as well. We need to be committed to seeing people come to know God through Jesus. We have to be intentional about doing it.

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**We need to be like Abraham - committed to God's promises, his purposes and his plan ...
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5. God Doesn't Give Up on His Plan

Genesis 12 is a big turning point in the Bible. Genesis 1-11 has been world history. Genesis 12f is salvation history. Genesis 1-11 the focus has been on the whole world. Genesis 12f the focus is almost exclusively on Abraham and his descendants. The promises made to Abraham will shape the rest of the Bible.