



# Second Baptist Church Sunday School

Fall 2020  
Member's Guide

## **Lesson Schedule:**

September 6<sup>th</sup> – “How Did We Get Here and Why?”

September 13<sup>th</sup> – “The Foundation For Work”

September 20<sup>th</sup> – “Big Topic: God’s Design”

September 27<sup>th</sup> – “Big Topic: Homosexuality”

October 4<sup>th</sup> – “Big Topic: Evolution”

October 11<sup>th</sup> – “Big Topic: The Fall”

October 18<sup>th</sup> – “Cain and Abel”

October 25<sup>th</sup> – “Noah and the Flood”

November 1<sup>st</sup> – “The Tower of Babel”

November 8<sup>th</sup> – “Abraham’s Call”

November 15<sup>th</sup> – “Disbelief or Faith”

November 22<sup>nd</sup> – “God is Just”

# Second Baptist Church

FALL 2020

HOW DID WE GET HERE AND WHY?

GENESIS 1

9/6/2020

## MAIN POINT

The universe is here because God spoke.

## INTRODUCTION

As your group time begins, use this section to introduce the topic of discussion.

**In all creation, what is most intriguing to you?**

**What emotions do you typically experience when you immerse yourself in creation?**

**What are some elements of creation about which you'd like to learn more?**

The study we are about to experience together will help us understand our origin. Genesis is the book of beginnings, and this account starts with the beginning of creation. God created the universe by His own creative power and He deemed good every aspect of what He created.

## UNDERSTANDING

“God created man in His own image; He created him in the image of God“ (Genesis 1:27). Dr. Jeffress opens and closes this week's message with a reminder that we are not here by accident. We were created by God, in His image, for a purpose. Generally speaking, as believers, we are here to glorify God. More specifically, we are here to fulfill God's agenda—He wants to save people from sin and He calls us to be a part of that.

WATCH THE VIDEO FEATURING DR. ROBERT JEFFRESS.

**God created the universe, and He created us uniquely for His purposes. What desires has God placed in your heart? About what are you most passionate?**

**What are the unique gifts God has given you?**

**In what ways do you see these things working together in your life?**

READ GENESIS 1:1-3,6,9,11,14,20.

**Why does it matter what we believe about the origins of the universe?**

**Which of the six journalistic questions—who, what, when, where, why, and how— are addressed in Genesis 1?**

**What can we learn about our Creator from the opening verses of the Bible?**

**What can we learn about ourselves from these same verses?**

READ GENESIS 1:26-27.

**What feelings are stirred up when you read that you are made in the image of God?**

**What does it mean to be created in God's image? How does the fact that we are God's image bearers influence what we say and do?**

**How does knowing you were created in God's image affect your relationship with God and your relationship with others?**

The Bible points us to an all-powerful and personal Creator. We see the authority of God in creation given the fact that God spoke it into existence. Pastor Justin preached on the voice of God in his sermon on August 9, 2020. You can find that sermon at [www.sbcedartown.org/services](http://www.sbcedartown.org/services). He mentioned the Hebrew word for God speaking is the term "amar." It means to speak as a command. It is a different term than the one used for human conversation in Hebrew. That word in Hebrew is "dabar" and is utilized in places like Genesis 11 in reference to speech and the Tower of Babel.

**How does the difference in terms show us the special nature of what God did in creation?**

God is also very personal in creation, especially when we consider the creation of man. The established goal in the creation of man was for God to have a personal relationship with him and for man to worship God. We see the personal investment God made in creation when we read about the Spirit's intentionality in creation, the fact that God was pleased with His work, and the compassion of God in creating man.

**How else can we see God's personal and compassionate role in creation?**

## APPLICATION

**What keeps you from trusting God, the Creator of the universe?**

**Is there someone you know who doesn't believe that he or she is valuable? What can you say or do this week to show that person that he or she was created in the image of God?**

**What are some ways you can worship God by caring for His creation this week?**

# Second Baptist Church

FALL 2020

THE FOUNDATION FOR WORK

GENESIS 1-3

9/13/2020

## MAIN POINT

As God designed it, work is something that is supposed to draw us closer to Him, to use our gifts to accomplish His purposes in the world.

## INTRODUCTION

**What was your first job? How did you get it? What did you learn from it?**

**Since then, what has been the best job that you have had, and why?**

Average Americans will spend about 150,000 hours of their lives at work, yet roughly two-thirds of Americans are unsatisfied in their jobs. This disparity between time invested and satisfaction gained suggests that we need a new perspective on work. Perhaps if we saw our work from God's perspective, we may actually enjoy what we do.

## UNDERSTANDING

READ GENESIS 1:1-2:3.

**What words would you use to describe God's work in creation?**

From the very creation of the universe, work has been a part of God's design for humanity. While we don't know how God created, we do learn a few characteristics of His work that we can apply to our own jobs. God was intentional, creative, methodical, diligent, and focused. He also found great delight and joy in His work.

**Look at Genesis 1:26-28. In what ways were humans set apart from the rest of God's creation? What does it mean to be made in God's image or likeness, specifically in regard to our work ethic?**

The creation of humans constituted the climax of God's creative work. The Bible indicates the importance of humanity's creation in several strong ways. First, God built up to humanity's creation by creating all other living things first. Second, the description of the creation of humans comprises a longer account than the creation of any other living thing. Finally, the use of the phrase "Let Us" rather than "Let there be" indicates the personal involvement of the Triune God in humanity's creation. The term "image" refers to the aspects of reason, personality, the ability to make value judgments, and other qualities that cause a human being to resemble God. Just as family members take on the qualities and personality traits of one another, God created people in His own image to reflect some of His qualities, including all of those that were evident in the work of creation.

**What initial responsibilities did God give to men and women (v. 28)?**

**What do the concepts of subduing the earth and ruling over its creatures mean? What are the limits to our ruling and subduing?**

**How does your job intersect with this mandate?**

God created humans in some sense to represent Him or to have dominion over all of creation. Neither expression provides humans authority or freedom to exploit. Today, we subdue and rule under God's authority, maintaining His creation to glorify Him rather than to merely satisfy our selfish desires. Thus we are to care for God's creation, maintain its beauty, and exercise responsible stewardship of its resources. We also have the responsibility of creating a God-glorifying culture. God's original design for the world was one in which all of creation glorified Him, and as Christians today, we are to make every effort to develop a God-glorifying culture around us. Because our jobs are where we spend so much of our time, they are an obvious place for us to put this command into action.

**Genesis 2:3 says God set aside a holy day to rest from His work. What is the difference between resting and being lazy? Why does rest please God, even though He values work so much?**

**Do you see a connection between the quality of your work and the quality of your rest?**

When God took a Sabbath following His work of creation, He demonstrated that hard work earns rest. Just as God created us to work, He also created us to need His restorative peace, which is the point of the Sabbath. When we give ourselves wholeheartedly to whatever we're doing, we glorify God in our work and play, in our effort and leisure.

READ GENESIS 2:15-25.

**God gave Adam the specific responsibility to work and care for the garden of Eden. What does it tell you about God that He created us to work? What does this tell you about your relationship with Him?**

Work is the first responsibility God gave to humanity, specifically the work of caring for His creation. As God designed it, work is something that is supposed to draw us closer to Him, to use our gifts to accomplish His purposes.

**Why do you think God referred to Eve as a "helper" in verse 18?**

The creation of the man left creation incomplete. The man was alone, which was not good. He needed someone to whom he could relate and with whom he could fulfill God's will, so God created the woman as a helper for the man. Helper refers to someone who supplies what another lacks. While the woman would be like him, she also would be different. The man did not need another person exactly like himself. The woman's

strengths complemented his own and allowed them to accomplish God's commands together.

**READ GENESIS 3:17-19.**

Genesis 1–2 describes God's work in creation and His command for His people to work. When work is functioning as God originally planned, it is a way for us to use our God-given gifts to develop a God-glorifying culture. This was the original design for the garden, but we are not in the garden anymore. When sin entered the world, it affected everything, including our relationship with our work. Genesis 3:17-19 describes the consequences Adam faced as a result of his sin.

**What connections do you see between the consequence of Adam's sin and our rebellion against work, as seen through our dissatisfaction and laziness? How do you see this play out in your attitude toward work?**

God's judgment on Adam was that "the ground is cursed because of you." God did not curse Adam as He had the serpent (3:14), but He did curse the ground that had been created for growing crops to provide for humanity's dietary needs. The ground itself would turn against human beings in their attempts to grow crops so that the plants needed for food would be difficult to grow. Humanity's very existence was now in danger, and attaining food would remain a struggle. The work Adam was created to do became burdensome, rather than joyful.

## APPLICATION

Help your group identify how the truths from the Scripture passage apply directly to their lives.

**What are some specific ways that our culture's approach to work has strayed from God's original design?**

**Based on what we've read and discussed today, what should the purpose of your work be, no matter what you do? How does this translate to your specific job? Why does your job matter for eternity?**

**What is the next step you need to take in order to align your work ethic and attitude with God's original design?**

## PRAYER

Take a few minutes to share prayer requests specifically related to people's jobs. Then close in prayer by lifting up these requests and asking God to begin to transform your work ethic and attitude into ones that glorify Him.

# Second Baptist Church

FALL 2020 BIG TOPIC: GOD'S DESIGN

GENESIS 2:21-25 9/20/2020

## MAIN POINT

God has a specific design in order for humankind to flourish.

## INTRODUCTION

**We live in a culture of debate regarding gender, sexuality, and marriage. What has been most surprising to you about this debate?**

**If a non-Christian were to ask you why gender and marriage are such important topics to Christians, how would you respond?**

**Why is the authority of Scripture an important issue to understand alongside the issues of gender and sexuality?**

The issues of gender and sexuality are not just one of many issues facing the church today; in many ways, these are the pivotal issues facing the church today. Now and into the future, our stance as Christians on these issues will increasingly become defining characteristics of Christ followers. For this reason, we must not only understand where our culture stands today, but also how we got there. Through this lesson, Dean Inserra will guide us to understand the biblical basis of gender and sexuality; and as Christians, we must willingly acknowledge the Bible's authority over our lives first and foremost if we are to respond to these issues appropriately. In Scripture, we will see that God has a specific design for gender and sexuality in order for humankind to flourish.

## UNDERSTANDING

Unpack the biblical text to discover what the Scripture says or means about a particular topic.

PLAY THE SESSION 1 VIDEO WITH DEAN INSERRA.

**What stuck out to you the most from this teaching? Why?**

**Why is it important to look all the way back to Genesis to understand God's design for gender and sexuality?**

READ GENESIS 2:21-25.

**Based on the teaching you heard and this Scripture passage, how would you summarize God's intent, or His design, for humanity?**

READ MATTHEW 19:4-6.

**Jesus quoted the passage from Genesis when He was asked about an issue in marriage. Why is it significant that Jesus quoted from Genesis?**

**How do Jesus' words help us recognize the rightful place of Scripture in determining issues of gender and sexuality?**

Through His quoting of Genesis, Jesus showed us His own view of Scripture. He showed us that to Him, Scripture is binding and authoritative. Therefore, in issues like these, what we think or feel doesn't matter. What matters is what the Bible says. As Dean pointed out, it wasn't only Jesus that affirmed the lasting validity of the Scripture. Paul the apostle did the same thing.

READ EPHESIANS 5:25-33.

**Dean helped us see that marriage is more than a relationship—it is also a visible portrait of an invisible reality. How do these verses present marriage as a picture of the gospel?**

**How does understanding this greater purpose of marriage influence the way we think and talk about it as Christians?**

**How do the views of marriage we see in culture today distort this picture of the gospel?**

**How do we as Christians practically live out this picture of the gospel?**

For the Christian, the issues of gender, sexuality, and marriage are not merely issues about family roles and societal acceptance; they are gospel issues. For this reason we must not only defend God's view of gender and sexuality, but also we must model His design in our own marriages. We do this not only to have stable homes, but also to present a visible picture of the invisible reality of the gospel to a watching world.

## APPLICATION

Help your group identify how the truths from the Scripture passage apply directly to their lives.

**How does this study influence the way you will talk about issues of gender and sexuality to your friends, neighbors, and co-workers?**

**What is one practical change that needs to happen either in your own marriage or in the way you view marriage in order to present this visible portrait of the gospel?**

**One of the key issues of this session is the issue of biblical authority. Does your attitude toward or practice of reading Scripture need to change in light of the Bible's authority?**

# Second Baptist Church

FALL 2020

BIG TOPIC: HOMOSEXUALITY

GENESIS 1:26-28, 2:18-25

9/27/2020

## MAIN POINT

God created marriage as a union between one man and one woman for life.

## INTRODUCTION

As your group time begins, use this section to introduce the topic of discussion.

**When was the last time you got really, really lost?**

**Where were you trying to go? Where did you end up instead? How did it happen?**

There's been a lot of talk about same-sex marriage in the news over the last several years, and a lot of Christians have been left reeling at how quickly the culture has shifted around us. Like a traveler who looks around and finds themselves in unfamiliar surroundings, we might wonder, "How did we get here?" Despite the societal pressure to approve of homosexuality, we must maintain a biblical view of marriage and speak grace and truth into a culture that desperately needs to hear it.

## UNDERSTANDING

Unpack the biblical text to discover what the Scripture says or means about a particular topic.

READ GENESIS 1:26-28; 2:18-25.

**What does Genesis 1:26-28 tell us about our identity?**

**Why is it important that we recognize we are created in the image of God? How does recognizing that fact influence the way we treat other people?**

God created people in His image. This tells us that all human beings have inherent value. It also tells us that all human beings are utterly dependent on God and owe everything to God. In other words we are not in charge of the world, God is.

**Why is that an important distinction that God created sex between a husband and wife and not a man and woman?**

**How does gay marriage seek to redefine marriage as God defines it? How does it redefine sex?**

**How does gay marriage devalue the institution of marriage?**

Sex is one of God's good gifts to us, but He designed it to be enjoyed in the confines of marriage. God gave us sex to deepen the relationship between husband and wife (Gen. 2:24-25) and for the purpose of bearing children (Gen. 1:28). God also created marriage and defines it as a lifelong union between a man and a woman (Matthew 19:6). Thus, gay marriage is a radical redefinition of both sex and marriage. Marriage is the most fundamental relationship God designed into creation; when we begin to redefine it according to our preferences, we empty it of its meaning and purpose. While we must love and show grace to homosexuals, we must also recognize that acceptance of gay marriage denotes a radical shift away from God's design for marriage, sex, and families.

READ ROMANS 1:18-27.

Paul says here that what can be known about God is plain to all, yet not all acknowledge God's existence. We deny Him. And so our sin distorts our thinking.

**What does Paul specifically point to as evidence that humanity has denied God?**

**How should this help us understand the issue of homosexuality?**

Paul is unapologetically clear on this point: homosexual behavior is the result of sin. Because we've sinned against God, our thinking is corrupt, and God has given us over to "impure desires." We do things that ought not be done. But more than that, it distorts our identity. We were made in the image of God—that means our primary identity was to be God's image bearers. But sin corrupts our minds such that we seek identity in other things.

**Is there a difference between same-sex attraction and homosexual behavior?**

**Read Mark 7:21-23. How do Jesus' words here contradict the claim that homosexual desires are latent in the human heart and therefore permissible?**

The claim that people are born with homosexual desires does not change the reality that Scripture defines homosexual behavior as sin. Jesus makes clear that the human heart is plagued by sin. From birth, the hearts and minds of all people are afflicted by sin (Ps. 51:5; Rom. 5:12). There is, however, a massive difference between attraction and homosexual behavior. It's the difference between sin and temptation. It's not a sin to be tempted to do something. Jesus was tempted as we are, but did not sin (Hebrews 4:15). Same-sex attraction is a temptation to be overcome. It is sinful to have lustful thoughts towards those outside of the confines of Biblical marriage, and homosexual behavior is a lifestyle that must be repented of.

READ 1 CORINTHIANS 6:9-11.

**Is homosexuality greater than any other sin?**

Homosexuality is a very serious sin—in fact, all sexual sins, including fornication (sex before marriage), adultery (sex outside of marriage), and homosexuality, are grievous sins in the eyes of God.

**What do verses 9-10 tell us about the dangers of sexual immorality (both homosexual and heterosexual)?**

Paul is very clear that people who are characterized by these behaviors—homosexuality, reviling, swindling, greed, and all the rest in the list—will not enter the kingdom of God. That means that if this is your lifestyle, you don't spend eternity with Jesus. But Paul gives such wonderful news in verse 11.

**What does verse 11 tell us about God's power to change the hearts and minds of those who are slave to sexual immorality?**

Paul leads off saying, "And some of you used to be like this." The Corinthians were engaging in homosexual behavior. They were swindlers. They were greedy. They were adulterers. They were idolaters . . . But they were "washed . . . sanctified...justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God." They were forgiven, made clean from their sins, and set free to live a life in pursuit of Jesus. Paul says here that there is no sin too big for Jesus.

## APPLICATION

Help your group identify how the truths from the Scripture passage apply directly to their lives.

**Read Hebrews 13:4. What are some practical ways you could hold marriage in honor? What could we do as a group to strengthen the marriages of our church?**

**What are some practical ways you could serve and point homosexuals to Christ? What could we as a group do?**

**How do we balance standing up for God's definition of marriage with serving and minister to homosexuals? How might our ministry as a church suffer if we promote one of these two tasks to the exclusion of the other?**

## PRAYER

Thank God that He frees us from the power of sin through the work of Jesus. Pray that we would respond biblically to the culture's pressure to conform to an affirming view of same-sex marriage and that God would use us to speak grace and truth into the lives of members of the homosexual community.

# Second Baptist Church

FALL 2020

BIG TOPIC: EVOLUTION

GENESIS 1:1-25

10/4/2020

## MAIN POINT

God created the world out of nothing, giving us eternal hope and a clear purpose in life.

## INTRODUCTION

As your group time begins, use this section to introduce the topic of discussion.

**If you were asked to describe yourself in one sentence, what would you say?**

**Have you ever had your sense of identity change drastically? If so, share.**

The most common way people define themselves today is by what they do. We can quickly and easily identify ourselves as dads, accountants, cyclists, moms, supervisors, taxi drivers, etc. Scripture, however, tells us that our identity is rooted in our creation. It is only when we realize that we were created by a good and holy God that we will discover the hope and purpose for which we were created.

## UNDERSTANDING

Unpack the biblical text to discover what the Scripture says or means about a particular topic.

Evolution is a fact only at a very small scale. It is fantasy when it is used to explain how plants and animals came into existence or how human beings supposedly evolved from apelike ancestors. Microevolution refers to a process of cyclical (back and forth) variation in response to changing environmental conditions, then evolution is a fact that can be observed both in nature and in laboratory experiments. Macroevolution, however, is the grand theory of how life supposedly evolved by purely natural processes from very simple beginnings to become complex, multicelled plants and animals and eventually, human beings, without God's participation at any step along the way.

**How does macroevolution contradict a Christian worldview?**

**What does macroevolution teach about the purpose of life? What are the moral and ethical implications of adopting macroevolution?**

There are numerous problems with macroevolution. If macroevolution were true, we would expect to see intermediate forms (creatures that have some characteristics of one species and some characteristics of another species) in the fossil record, but these simply do not exist. Furthermore, there is no proof in nature that life ever did or ever

could evolve from nonliving matter. No matter how much time we might allow for evolution to do the necessary creating, the evidence shows that the process would never get started, because all evolution can do is to further minor variations in organisms that are already living. When the Bible says, “In the beginning God created” (Gen. 1:1), it is presenting us with a fact, which we need to know to understand everything else, including what we were created for and how God wants us to live.

READ GENESIS 1:1.

Genesis 1:1 makes clear that God, not some impersonal force or so-called mother nature, was in charge. The special Hebrew word for created is only used when God makes or does something not done before.

**What does the Hebrew word for “creation” imply about God? What does it imply about us? How can we take comfort in that definition?**

**What do we learn about God from the account of creation in Genesis 1:1?**

**What does it mean for God to be eternal? What implications does God’s eternal nature have on us?**

Genesis 1:1 reminds us that God is eternal—He has no beginning or end. God is the source of all things but has no source. He always has been, is, and always will be the God of all creation. If God is our creator, He is the source of all that we are and all that we have. This tells us that we owe our existence to God. We are dependent on God for our dignity, purpose, and hope.

READ GENESIS 1:2-3.

**How did God create? From what did God create all things?**

By simply speaking, God created everything “ex nihilo,” which is Latin for “from nothing.” Prior to that moment there was nothing. God didn’t make the universe from preexisting building blocks. He started from scratch.

**What words in the text describe God as Creator? Why is it important that God created?**

**How could God create everything out of nothing? What is the importance of God speaking things into being?**

READ GENESIS 1:4-25.

**What is significant and logical about the order of creation? What did God say about each day of creation?**

On Day 1 of creation, God created the heavens, earth, light, and darkness. On Day 2 of creation, God created heaven and sky. On Day 3 of creation, God created dry land, the seas, and vegetation. On Day 4, God created the sun, moon, and stars. On Day 5, God

created creatures in the air and water. And then on Day 6, God created animals and people. After each day of creation, God announced that His creation was “good.”

**Why did God create anything in the first place? (see Isaiah 43:7)**

**How does Genesis 1 contradict the theory of macroevolution?**

Genesis chapter one makes it clear: the Bible is a story about God. The Christian faith begins and ends with God. Here God is pulling back the curtain; He’s revealing something about Himself, His glory, His majesty, His power, and His authority. God’s act of creation gives us eternal hope and a clear purpose. Our goal and purpose as Christians is to glorify God, to know and love our Creator. Macroevolution, on the other hand, is a hopeless, purposeless worldview.

## APPLICATION

Help your group identify how the truths from the Scripture passage apply directly to their lives.

**What areas of your life are the most difficult for you to submit to the glory of God? What would it look like for you to begin glorifying God in those areas of your life?**

**Why does God being the Creator give Him the power to speak into all areas of your life? What do you need Him to speak to you about right now?**

**Read Psalm 19:1. How have you witnessed God’s glory in creation recently? What is one step you could take this week to be more mindful of God’s glory in creation?**

## PRAYER

Thank God for revealing Himself to us in creation. Thank Him for giving us eternal hope and a clear purpose. Pray that He would give your group members the strength and wisdom they need to remain steadfast in their faith in a world that questions God’s role as creator. Pray that God would use your group members to trust in God as their Creator and Savior and point those who do not trust in God to their need for Christ.

# Second Baptist Church

FALL 2020

BIG TOPIC: THE FALL

GENESIS 3:1-24

10/11/2020

## MAIN POINT

The ability of human sin to distort and twist our identity is the problem every human must address.

## INTRODUCTION

**Have you ever had to confront someone about something they did wrong? How did it go? How do most people respond when confronted with wrongdoing? Why?**

**Why don't people generally like to take responsibility for their actions that harm others?**

As sinners, we all do wrong, but seldom do we like to take responsibility for our wrongs. It's part of our fallen human nature. As we'll discover today, it's been an issue since sin entered the world in Genesis 3. We blur, downgrade, and redefine truth to the point that we no longer recognize it as such and, therefore, believe lies.

## UNDERSTANDING

Unpack the biblical text to discover what the Scripture says or means about a particular topic.

READ GENESIS 3:1-7.

The irony of this scene is heavy. The Bible began with God speaking all things into existence—including the serpent. And now the serpent that was created by the word of God has questioned the authority of the One whose word created him! With one subtle question, “Did God really say?,” He usurped the clearly communicated word of God. The serpent knew that if Eve doubted the source of the command, she would disregard the command itself.

**Let's begin by comparing Genesis 2:16-17 with this passage. What did God really say? What did Eve change? What contradictions and lies did the serpent make?**

**What are some examples of how we change or redefine God's commands as Eve did?**

**How are we tempted or deceived by influences that give similarly twisted messages? What are some examples?**

In his attempt to deceive and tempt, the serpent (Satan) directly contradicted God's words, cast doubt on God's sincerity, and spoke partial truth. As this conversation unfolded, Eve's own doubts emerged in the form of her adding a harsh exaggeration to God's word. Eve belittled God's word by adding to it. Her addition to the word of God misrepresented God as a harsh taskmaster.

**When have you been forced to answer the question “Did God really say?” How did you respond to the temptation to distrust God?**

**What does the serpent say about God's command in verses 4 and 5? What does he imply about God's character?**

When Satan can't get us to undermine God's Word through outright unbelief, he will try to get us to undermine it through misplaced trust. From this account we learn that one of the great dangers we face when handling the Word of God is the temptation to place ourselves in the seat of authority over it. What started as subtle skepticism became outright rebellion. Satan implied that God is a liar. Furthermore, he undermined the character of God by leading Adam and Eve to believe that God was withholding goodness from them.

READ GENESIS 3:8-13.

**What were Adam's and Eve's explanations for their disobedience?**

**Why do people often cast blame on someone or something when confronted about their wrongdoing?**

People still blame their sins on Satan, their environment, parents, friends, or someone or something else. While temptation comes to us from many sources, we alone decide to disobey God; thus we are accountable for our sins (see Rom. 2:3-11; 14:12; 1 Pet. 4:5).

READ GENESIS 3:14-24.

**What consequences did Adam and Eve face as a result of their sin? How have you personally experienced the effects of these curses even today?**

God punished the serpent, the woman, and the man, drastically changing their lives (and thus also the lives of their descendants) forever. Their punishment included death. Adam and Eve did not voluntarily leave in penance for their sin, God sent them away. Life would be difficult. Their sin had driven a wedge between themselves and God. Their previous life was forever gone. They had sinned and thus had to live with the consequences. Sin entered into the world and the consequence of sin entered as well: death. Everyone will die because of sin.

**What do these verses reveal about the relationship between God and Satan?**

**What hope for the remedy of sin is given in verse 15?**

God's final statement to the serpent, while sealing his ultimate defeat and destruction, provided humanity with a glimpse of hope. Although hostility in the form of a life and death struggle would continue between the serpent and the woman's descendants, God declared that the serpent's life expectancy was limited and his end would be a violent one. The woman's offspring would deliver a mortal blow to the serpent's head, while the serpent would only be able to strike the heel of the woman's offspring. Thus God promised the ultimate defeat of the Evil One.

**Read Matthew 1:21. Who is the woman's offspring?**

**What will be the outcome of Satan's conflict with Jesus, according to God's punishment?**

**Read Romans 5:12-15. How do these verses relate to the sin problem of Genesis 3?**

**What is the gift God offers despite our sin, and what is the proper response to that gift?**

## APPLICATION

Help your group identify how the truths from the Scripture passage apply directly to their lives.

**How is the work of Christ on the cross a game-changer for Christians when we think about sin and death, the consequences of the fall?**

**In your own life, where might you be tempted to blur the lines of sin, to downgrade the issue, or even redefine it as something other than sin?**

**How can we encourage one another this week in our battle with sin and with remembering our true identity?**

## PRAYER

Finish your time in prayer. Give group members an opportunity to privately resolve to confess to God any sins they are aware of. After a few minutes of silence, conclude with prayer asking for God's forgiveness and thanking Him for His grace and mercy.

# Second Baptist Church

FALL 2020

CAIN AND ABEL

GENESIS 4:1-16

10/18/2020

## MAIN POINT

Confession and faith in Jesus Christ are all that is necessary for freedom from the burden of religion.

## INTRODUCTION

**What is the hardest you have ever worked at a job or task? What motivated you to work so hard?**

**In what area of your life do you get the most reward for your hard work? Your job? Your relationships? Your physical fitness? Why?**

In most areas of our lives, our success directly correlates to how hard we work. This explains why we are so susceptible to the enslaving mind-set that our relationship with God is performance-based. When we understand that through God's grace, our salvation is based on faith in Him alone, and that we can't do anything to earn or lose it, we're set free from the checklists that enslave us. Just like today, early Christians also struggled to apply this truth to their lives.

## UNDERSTANDING

Unpack the biblical text to discover what the Scripture says or means about a particular topic.

READ GENESIS 4:1-16.

**How did Cain and Abel prepare their offerings for the Lord? What was the content of their offerings?**

**Why was Cain's offering rejected by God? Why was Abel's offering pleasing to God?**

**What does a religious approach to God, such as Cain's, look like in our culture today?**

Cain's offering came from a sense of obligation. He felt he had to obey to check it off of his list. His religious spirit lacked a true appreciation for God. Abel gave the best that he had—the firstborn. Abel was commended for his offering while Cain was rejected, because Cain's heart was not in his offering.

**In what part of your life are you most likely to perform out of a religious spirit like Cain? In what area of your life are you more like Abel?**

Between Genesis 4 and Galatians 3 were thousands of years of addiction to religion. In Galatians 3, Paul explains that Christ is the way to freedom from religious chains.

READ GALATIANS 3:1-9.

**Why is Paul's question in verse 2 so crucial? How would you state his question in your own words?**

**How do you feel about yourself and your spirituality when you try to impress God with your works? How does that compare to how you feel when you rest in faith?**

The believers in the Galatian church desired to follow Jesus well, but we learn from Paul's letter that many had fallen into a trap—legalism. Legalism is the belief that we must fulfill certain requirements in order to gain God's favor. The Galatian church was being influenced by false teachers known as Judaizers, who taught that people had to keep the Jewish Old Testament laws even after becoming Christians. Their teaching negated Christ's work on the cross, given that He became the perfect, final sacrifice for our sins.

READ GALATIANS 3:10-14.

As Paul continued his warning, he illustrated the dire circumstances of people living as slaves to works and the law. Quoting the Old Testament, Paul reminded us we are cursed. Because of sin, we deserve eternal death. Our cursed nature is evident in the brokenness of this world and our inability to fulfill God's entire law.

**What evidence do you see in yourself of your cursed nature? What evidence do you see in the world?**

**How did Jesus become a curse for us (v. 13)? What purpose did that fulfill?**

The sin in our lives curses us and keeps us separated from God. But Paul pointed out that when Jesus came to earth as a human and died on the cross, He took sin's curse off of us and put it on Himself. Sin is such an assault on God and His creation that it demands punishment. Luckily for us, we don't have to bear that weight. Instead, we must choose whether we pursue a relationship with God through our own efforts or through the death and resurrection of Jesus.

**What punishment does your sinful nature deserve? Why can't works set you free from sin's curse?**

**What effect does Jesus' work on the cross have on your life? Do you think it could potentially have a greater effect? Why or why not?**

Working for salvation is tempting, because rules and lists can give us a sense of identity. They also provide a tangible way to measure how “spiritual” we are. But ultimately, religious addiction leads to a false sense of strength that makes us think we can earn God’s grace when, in reality, we have been saved by faith, not works (Eph. 2:8-9). We receive life, identity, freedom and strength through the work of Christ. Our new life comes through Christ’s payment on the cross, and it is transferred to us because we believe in Him.

## APPLICATION

Help your group identify how the truths from the Scripture passage apply directly to their lives.

**Based on what we’ve studied this week, are spiritual works important? Why or why not? In what act of obedience and faithfulness do you need to improve?**

**Why is it more difficult for most of us to trust God in faith than to try to reach Him by religion and works? What can we do to increase our trust?**

**What can you do this week to start living in light of your freedom?**

## PRAYER

Make today’s prayer a time of thanksgiving. Thank God for sending Christ on our behalf, freeing us from bondage to the law. Thank God for giving us the law, which shows us what righteousness and holy living look like, providing us with a goal to strive for. Thank God for the Holy Spirit’s daily presence in our lives to guide, convict, and comfort us as we seek to live by faith.

# Second Baptist Church

FALL 2020

NOAH AND THE FLOOD

GENESIS 6, 8-9

10/25/2020

## MAIN POINT

Persistent sin brings inevitable judgment, but God offers mercy and hope to those who walk with Him.

## INTRODUCTION

**Have you ever served on jury duty? What do you think the most difficult part of serving on jury duty is?**

**What are some kinds of cases that might be particularly difficult? In what ways does a jury's decision affect the lives of others?**

Serving on a jury is no easy task. The decision that a jury makes will drastically affect the life of the accused, of the victim, and of the families of both parties. We do not want to send the innocent to jail, and we also want to see justice for the victim of the crime. Careful judgment also takes a great deal of time, sometimes months! It is no wonder that so many people try to avoid jury duty!

In the days of Noah, God pronounced judgment on the entire earth. The earth's inhabitants had turned away from God, and had become so evil, that God decided to destroy the whole population. Noah and his family were the only exception. Today we will explore why God made such a seemingly harsh judgement upon the earth.

## UNDERSTANDING

Unpack the biblical text to discover what the Scripture says or means about a particular topic.

READ GENESIS 6:5-7.

**Why might things have been worse in Noah's day than they are in our day? What advantages in grace do we have that they did not have?**

**Why do you think the Bible says here that God was "grieved" over mankind's wickedness and not that He was "angry"?**

People are no less evil than they were in the days of Noah. If we watch the news at all, we will see that people are capable of any wickedness one can imagine. The difference between Noah's day and ours isn't that people are better, but that grace has abounded. Since the days of Noah, God has gifted us with the Scripture. After Noah, God gave to Moses His law, and God gave to Israel the prophets. Eventually, God sent us Jesus, and

through Jesus, we have the gospel. The church is now present in this world, and the Holy Spirit works through the church to bring hope to all mankind. Noah's generation did not have these gracious advantages, and so there was little to restrain the wickedness of mankind.

The heart of mankind is depraved, and apart from the grace of God, we are "by nature under wrath" (Ephesians 2:3). God is just to judge us for our sins, and so when He chose to judge the world, He did no wrong because that is what our wickedness deserves.

READ GENESIS 6:8-13, 17-22.

**Do you have any idea why Noah found favor in the eyes of God?**

**Why do you think that God shared His plan to destroy the earth with Noah? What kinds of things has God shared with the church regarding judgment and salvation?**

Grace is a mystery. The word translated as "favor" in Gen. 6:8, is often translated as "grace." This favor, or grace, that Noah "found" in the eyes of God cannot be something that Noah merited himself. As the Apostle Paul writes, "Now if by grace, then it is not by works; otherwise grace ceases to be grace" (Romans 11:6). Noah was a sinner, just like Paul, and just like us. Noah needed salvation, and for reasons known only to God, God chose to extend His covenant, steadfast love to Noah and His family and to rescue them from judgement. While Noah responded to God's grace, the initiative of salvation came from the Lord.

God shared His plan with Noah because Noah had God's favor. In Genesis 18:17, before the destruction of Sodom, the Lord asks, "Should I hide what I am about to do from Abraham?...For I have chosen him so that he will command his children and his house after him to keep the way of the LORD by doing what is right and just." God warns His people of judgement to come, and He shares with them the beauty of grace to come as well.

READ GENESIS 8:15-22 AND GENESIS 9:8-17.

**What was the nature of God's covenant with Noah? How valuable would the sacrifices of Noah have been after the flood?**

**What are the graces that we can see in this covenant with Noah and his descendants?**

God promised to refrain from destroying the earth by flood again. The Lord said He would spare the world from flood "even though man's inclination is evil from his youth" (8:21). This is an amazing grace from the Lord as He promises no matter how wicked people become He will not wipe them out as He did before. For thousands of years now, God has withheld such judgment upon the earth because of His covenant with Noah.

God's choice to be gracious to Noah meant many benefits for mankind. We would be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth. We can count on the seasons being consistent.

We can rest assured of God's patience toward us even when we are wicked. Ultimately, God's grace towards Noah meant that Jesus would be able to come and save us from our sins. Not only do we not have to worry about the world being destroyed by flood, we have the happy hope that someday the world will be remade without sin because of Christ!

## APPLICATION

Help your group identify how the truths from the Scripture passage apply directly to their lives.

**How important is it for us to understand the consequences for sin against God?**

**How does understanding judgment help us be bold in sharing the gospel with others?**

**How might understanding sin and judgment give us a better understanding of God's grace toward us?**

## PRAYER

In a time of group prayer, thank the Father for sparing us from judgment through Christ. Pray that we would live lives of gratitude for sending us Jesus instead of sending us destruction. Ask that we would be bold to share the gospel so that others might be spared from the judgment still to come.

# Second Baptist Church

FALL 2020

THE TOWER OF BABEL

GENESIS 11:1-9

11/1/2020

## MAIN POINT

God is sovereign, working out His purposes through people who resist Him, as well as through those who obey Him.

## INTRODUCTION

**Come up with a list of the authority figures or experts in our day-to-day life, such as doctors, coaches, policemen, and so on. Why do most of us do what these people tell us to do?**

**Why do we sometimes ignore what they tell us? What happens when we ignore the rules or advice of the authorities?**

It's not hard to come up with a list of ways we think we are above the law. Nor is it difficult to make a list of consequences that come when we break it. In this study, we will see the consequences that a generation of people faced because they ignored God's purposes for their lives.

## UNDERSTANDING

Unpack the biblical text to discover what the Scripture says or means about a particular topic.

READ GENESIS 11:1-4.

Shinar is an area in Mesopotamia—around the rivers Tigris and Euphrates. We know this area now as Iraq. These two rivers were also mentioned in Genesis 1 as we learned about the garden of Eden. We see already that these people were straying from God's purposes by not filling the earth. They had returned to near the site of the original sin.

**What do we know about these people based on what they have to say?**

**What are they interested in doing?**

The people mentioned in the beginning verses of Genesis 11 intended to make a name for themselves. They believed their completed city and tower would form an impressive, lasting monument to their power and ability. In seeking to ensure their fame and prestige, they tried to take over a right that belongs only to God and not to any human being.

**Read Genesis 11:4 again. What does this verse reveal about the nature of their sin?**

Pride was the central issue. God gave a command to Noah to spread over the earth (Gen. 8:17). However, these people deliberately disobeyed that command. A prideful people cannot fulfill God's purposes. God alone can make an individual or nation's name great. God promised to make Abram's name great (12:2) as well as David's (2 Sam. 7:9) and kept both promises. By trying to make their name great, the people demonstrated incredible arrogance.

Pride and arrogance prevent us from organizing our life around God's purposes. Believing we know what is best for us, we do not seek God's guidance or we intentionally resist His purposes. When we substitute our purposes for God's, we miss out on the blessing of serving Him, and we go in directions harmful to ourselves and others.

**How has pride sometimes led you astray from God's purposes?**

**How do we "settle in" in our own ways today?**

**Are there any clear commands from God that are difficult to obey?**

Adam and Eve had sought to become like God (3:4-6). In doing so they overstepped their human limitations and tried to seize divine prerogatives for themselves. In response God prevented Adam and Eve from eating the fruit of the tree of life and trespassing further against Him (3:22-24). Faced again with humanity's attempt to seize divine power and authority, God acted to punish the sinners and prevented them from committing greater sin and suffering its consequences.

READ GENESIS 11:5-9.

**What does verse 5 remind us about God's nature?**

**Why was God concerned with "nothing they plan to do will be impossible for them"?**

**Couldn't God have simply destroyed the tower and city? Why did He choose to confuse the people's language instead?**

The buildings were only a symptom of the greater problem of pride. Forcing the people to scatter shows God's purposes will be accomplished one way or another.

**What do you learn about God's judgment and mercy from the story of the Tower of Babel?**

God has chosen to work through people to accomplish His purposes. Sometimes people cooperate with God and receive the blessing of participating with Him in His work. At other times people choose not to cooperate with God and even resist His purposes.

## APPLICATION

Help your group identify how the truths from the Scripture passage apply directly to their lives.

**Have you ever built a “tower” or structure for yourself only to have it shattered by God? What happened?**

**To a God who created the entire universe just by speaking, how big do you think that tower really appeared? How big do you think our resistance to God appears to Him by comparison?**

**Have group members silently consider: Will you choose to cooperate with God and experience the joy of being in His will, or will you choose to resist Him and experience the consequences of your disobedience?**

**Close by discussing Christians from all points in history who have accomplished great things in Jesus’ name. Spend time finding the commonalities in their lives and stories.**

## PRAYER

Pray that the people in your group would choose to follow God’s plans for their lives and experience the blessings of obedience. Ask God specifically for the Holy Spirit’s strength to resist temptation in the days ahead.

# Second Baptist Church

FALL 2020

ABRAHAM'S CALL

GENESIS 12:1-7; 15:1-21

11/8/2020

## MAIN POINT

Believers obey God's call by faith, receive God's promise by faith, and trust God's promise by faith.

## INTRODUCTION

**What is the most significant promise you have made? Were you able to keep that promise? Why or why not?**

**What determines whether we believe a promise made to us?**

The source of a promise, the nature of the promise, and the time frame in which it was made affect our decision to trust the promise. Most of us would likely say we believe promises from God. Today, as we look at the life of Abraham in Genesis, we will consider how willing we are to take God at His Word and surrender to His plan.

## UNDERSTANDING

Unpack the biblical text to discover what the Scripture says or means about a particular topic.

READ GENESIS 12:1-7.

God told Abraham some very specific things about how He would bless him. First, God promised to make Abraham into a great nation, meaning that he would represent an entire line of people. Then He promised to give Abraham a great name and a new land. Finally, God told Abraham that all of the peoples on the earth were going to be blessed through him.

**What did Abraham have to sacrifice in order to obey God's call?**

**Why is it often difficult for us to take God at His Word? What does our unbelief say about our view of God's character and power?**

To do all God called him to, Abraham had to let go of his community, security, and identity. To Abraham, these promises must have seemed extravagant and unlikely. His wife was barren. How could he be the father of a great nation if he could not produce one son? How could his name be great on the earth if there was no son to carry it on after he died?

READ GENESIS 15:1-6.

Many event-filled years have passed since God first made His promise to Abraham in Genesis 12. Abraham almost lost his wife to Pharaoh and the promised land to his nephew Lot. He almost lost his life and all his possessions in a war with four kings. He still had no child, and his current heir was a Syrian slave.

**Why did Abraham doubt he would ever become a father? What indicates Abraham had given up hope?**

While grateful for God's promises, Abraham wondered about the value of the reward if he had no son to give it to. Abraham had entered Canaan at age seventy-five with Sarah, who was then sixty-five years old. Several years had passed and the couple remained childless. Abraham may have wondered if he would ever have a son. It seems as though Abraham had little hope God would actually fulfill His promises. Fear and worry were starting to creep into his heart.

**What does God's kind response tell us about His character and grace?**

Abraham was persuaded by God's promises and by His power to bring them into existence. This kind of faith takes on the character of obedience. This kind of faith in God alone is credited for righteousness.

READ GENESIS 15:7-21.

**How did God respond to Abraham's doubts (vv. 9-10)? Why did God ask Abraham to do this?**

It was a common Ancient Near Eastern custom to seal a covenant with the sacrifice of animals. According to this custom, when an agreement was made between two people, the lesser person in the agreement would walk between the severed pieces of the dead animals to indicate that if he broke his end of the agreement, he too would be torn in two.

**Who is the lesser person in the covenant between God and Abraham? Who do you expect to walk between the pieces of the dead animals?**

**Who walks between the pieces of the animals (v. 17)? What does a "smoking fire pot and a flaming torch" symbolize? How does this story remind you of the gospel of Jesus Christ?**

Smoke and fire are symbols in the Old Testament of God's presence. God met Moses in a burning bush (Ex. 3:2) and God led Israel out of Egypt in a pillar of cloud by day and a pillar of fire by night (Ex. 13:21-22). Thus in verse 17, God Himself passes between the pieces of the animals. By doing this, God was promising to bear the consequences of His own covenant (2 Corinthians 5:21). As the lesser person in the covenant, Abraham should have passed between the pieces, but instead God passes through the pieces giving us sure hope that He would fulfill His promises to Abraham and to us as the

covenant God made with Abraham has been extended to us through Christ (Rom. 4:23-25).

READ GENESIS 22:1-18.

**Knowing God waited 25 years before providing a son for Abraham, how would you expect Abraham to react to God's instructions in verse 2? Why doesn't Abraham object?**

**What did God want from Abraham? What do you learn about Abraham based on his prompt, obedient actions?**

God tested Abraham by asking him to take his son, his only son (through whom God had said He would fulfill His promises), and to sacrifice him to God. Faced with God's difficult command, Abraham promptly obeyed.

**What is your "Isaac," your most valued treasure? What would you think if God asked you to sacrifice your Isaac?**

## APPLICATION

Help your group identify how the truths from the Scripture passage apply directly to their lives.

**What are some ways that your heart is like Abraham's heart? In what ways are you struggling to surrender trust and control to God?**

**How does knowing that God always remains faithful to His Word help us through seasons when our faith is weak?**

**How might we tangibly encourage one another to believe God and surrender to His plans this week and in the weeks ahead?**

## PRAYER

Spend some time thanking God for His promises and His faithfulness to always uphold His end of the covenant, even when we are unfaithful. Take time to thank God for sending Jesus and declaring us His righteous children.

# Second Baptist Church

FALL 2020

DISBELIEF OR FAITH

GENESIS 17:15-19

11/15/2020

## MAIN POINT

Today we will learn about two kinds of laughter—one of disbelief and one of amazement at what God has done.

## INTRODUCTION

**When you find yourself in an uncomfortable or awkward situation, how are you most likely to respond? Do you try to flee? Do you clam up or shut down? Do you laugh?**

**Why do you think laughter is such a common response to awkward situations?**

**Have you ever been disappointed in God because the circumstances you faced were not what you expected? What did you think about Him during that time? How did it affect your faith in Him?**

The story of Abraham in Genesis gives us one of the best pictures of what faith in God looks like through the ups and downs of life. One of the reasons Abraham's example is so important for us to learn from is because he wasn't perfect. God promised to do amazing things in Abraham's life, but choosing to trust those promises was a struggle for Abraham. Through his story, we see that God makes promises to His children, and we can trust those promises, no matter how laughably impossible they seem. True faithfulness, birthed in us by the Holy Spirit, is perseverance with God through all seasons of life.

## UNDERSTANDING

Unpack the biblical text to discover what the Scripture says or means about a particular topic.

GENESIS 17:3-6 AND 17:15-19.

The events of Genesis 17 pick up 13 years after the birth of Ishmael, the son Abram bore to his servant Hagar when he doubted God's power to give his wife, Sarah, a son to be his heir. Thirteen years after Ishmael's birth, God again appeared to Abram when he was 99 years old (17:1). It was during this encounter that God changed Abram's name to Abraham and Sarai's name to Sarah.

**What was Abraham's initial response to God's plan?**

**What did God accomplish by waiting so long to complete His plan?  
What did He reveal about Himself?**

Abraham and Sarah were 99 and 89, respectively, when God told them they would have a son. They weren't exactly of childbearing or child-rearing age, a reality which Abraham found laughable (v. 17). But through Sarah's conception, God demonstrated His power over nature, and through her womb came a brand new nation, God's chosen people. God fulfilled His covenant promise in such a way that only He would receive the glory for it. There would be no question that God was behind the miracle of Isaac's birth.

**Now read Genesis 17:23-27. Although Abraham initially laughed at God in disbelief, how did he ultimately respond? What does this reveal about his faith?**

God alone was the engineer of Abraham and Sarah's destiny, and their attempts to go it alone paled in comparison to the grandeur of God's plan. God would be the one to bless them. God would be the one to give them the promised son, Isaac, and make their descendants as numerous as the stars. And God would be the one to receive every last bit of the glory. God's faithfulness and ability to do what He says overcomes all of our flaws and uncertainties.

READ GENESIS 18:9-15.

Some time later, the Lord again visited Abraham, and He gave Abraham a timeframe for the birth of his long-awaited son. While God was talking to Abraham, verse 10 tells us that Sarah was listening from outside the tent.

**How did Sarah's reaction to God's news compare to Abraham's reaction in 17:17?**

**Both Sarah and Abraham laughed at God's news of a son, but how they acted next is notably different. Read Genesis 17:23-27 again, and then read 18:13-15. How do Abraham's and Sarah's responses to God differ following their laughter?**

**What is the takeaway for us from Abraham's response? What about from Sarah's?**

Laughter revealed the disbelief in both Abraham's and Sarah's hearts. Neither could imagine how they would have a son at their old age, something for which both of them had longed for decades. But when we compare the two individuals—Abraham's obedience and Sarah's lie—we are reminded of the importance of trusting the promises of God, no matter how impossible they might seem.

**Read Genesis 18:14 again. In what area of your life do you need to believe that nothing is too hard for God? What keeps you from believing this?**

READ GENESIS 21:1-7.

**In Genesis 21, we read that finally Sarah became pregnant and eventually gave birth to the son for whom they had waited. What does this reveal about God?**

**Verses 6-7 point out that Sarah again laughed at what God had done in her life. How was her laughter different this time?**

**What do you learn from Sarah's laughter in this scene?**

Truly, nothing is too hard for God. Genesis 21 reveals that God was faithful to keep His promise to this couple, and one year later they had a son, Isaac, despite their old age. When Sarah laughed at God's promise, she revealed her doubt in His power and her lack of faith in Him. But now that God had made good on His promise, Sarah's laughter revealed her awe and amazement at what He accomplished through her. Finally she arrived at a place of trust and gratitude.

## APPLICATION

Help your group identify how the truths from the Scripture passage apply directly to their lives.

**What are you trusting God with today? Are you anxiously or patiently waiting for God to fulfill His promises?**

**How is Jesus a reminder to us of God's faithfulness?**

**How can you show God you trust Him, even when His promises seem unbelievable? How can we encourage each other in this effort?**

## PRAYER

Pray for a better understanding of God's faithfulness. Thank God for the ultimate fulfillment of His promises—the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus. Also pray that the Holy Spirit will help you learn to trust God's promises and stand in amazement at what He does.

# Second Baptist Church

FALL 2020

GOD IS JUST

GENESIS 18:16-33; 19:23-29

11/22/2020

## MAIN POINT

God is just, no matter the circumstances.

## INTRODUCTION

**When you were a kid and wanted something from your parents, how did you try to persuade them?**

**When have you recently put your negotiating skills to the test? Did you ultimately obtain what you were after?**

In Genesis 18:1- 8, God and two angels appeared to Abraham at his home in Mamre. After enjoying a lavish meal, God reminded Abraham of a promise He'd already made—Sarah would have a son within a year. Then, the visitors prepared to leave traveling in the direction of Sodom. In verses 16-33, we read of a conversation between Abraham and God concerning the sinful city of Sodom and God's judgment of it.

## UNDERSTANDING

Unpack the biblical text to discover what the Scripture says or means about a particular topic.

READ GENESIS 18:16-26.

Walking with the three men a short way, Abraham overheard God talking silently, as if to Himself, about the sinful city of Sodom. Abraham quickly stepped in to plead for God's mercy to be shown on behalf of the righteous people living in the city.

**Using verses 17-21, how would you describe God's thoughts on the city of Sodom?**

**What question does Abraham raise to the Lord?**

**What does God's openness to Abraham's requests tell you about God?**

**What do these verses reveal about God's relationship with Abraham? How would you describe their relationship?**

**In your own words, what does it mean to be just? How would you explain that term to someone else?**

Verses 16-26 reveal a unique relationship between God and Abraham. God clearly and intentionally allowed Abraham to hear His thoughts on the sinfulness of the city of Sodom. Further, He engaged into a discussion with Abraham concerning the city's inhabitants, even though God held all authority to spare or wipe out the city.

**READ GENESIS 18:27-33.**

God initially agreed to spare the city if 50 righteous people could be found. Abraham bravely repeated his request for God to show mercy on Sodom until he reached the count of 10 righteous people.

**In Abraham's intercession, what do you admire enough to emulate?**

**What hope does God's response to Abraham give you?**

**To what extent are you willing to go for others in your community to know of salvation only found in Christ? What are you willing to do both individually and corporately (with your church)?**

**Does it surprise you that God was willing to concede to spare Sodom for only ten righteous people? Explain.**

The entire exchange between God and Abraham reveals several things. First, God's twin qualities of love and justice are displayed to Abraham. God simultaneously loves His people and punishes sin. Second, the depth of His mercy was demonstrated. For only ten righteous ones, the Lord would spare the city. Finally, God's relationship with Abraham deepened further, better preparing Abraham for the future role God had for him.

**READ GENESIS 19:23-29.**

**What's your initial reaction to verses 24-26?**

**How would you describe God's definition of sin and its consequences? How does our society define sin and its consequences? How do these two definitions compare?**

**Does this passage give evidence that God operates in a just manner? Explain.**

The cities of Sodom and Gomorrah were completely destroyed by the Lord because of their sinfulness, with the exception of Lot and his family who were allowed to flee the land beforehand. God's judgment on the sinfulness was both widespread and complete. No living thing remained. This passage teaches us of God's merciful heart and His just actions.

## **APPLICATION**

Help your group identify how the truths from the Scripture passage apply directly to their lives.

**When you pray, what do you expect God to do?**

**Does your understanding of the severity of sin and its consequences align with God's Word?**

**How can we resist downplaying sin and its seriousness? How do we personally acknowledge the seriousness of sin?**

**How does this passage give us a comprehensive grasp of God's character? Give examples to support your answer.**

## **PRAYER**

Close your time in prayer. Thank God for the privilege we have of being in relationship with Him, and experiencing a right standing with Him because of Jesus' death on the cross. Ask Him to deepen your concern for others and for opportunities to step out of your comfort zone for the sake of the gospel.

# Second Baptist Church

FALL 2020

THE LORD PROVIDED THE SACRIFICE

GENESIS 22:1-19

11/29/2020

## MAIN POINT

Just as God provided the sacrifice to take Isaac's place, so He has provided Christ, the Lamb of God, to take our place.

## INTRODUCTION

**What is the most difficult sacrifice or decision that you've ever had to make?**

**How did this decision test your faith? How did your faith inform your decision at the time?**

**How did the results of that decision confirm and/or challenge your faith?**

God in his infinite and mysterious wisdom sometimes leads us to do things that don't make sense to our finite minds. It is only after some time removed from the event or decision that we can see His purpose in it. God does not always act how we expect or prefer that He would. Genesis 22 is a vivid and well-known example of this. Nevertheless, we should not avoid difficult passages such as these because God is pleased to reveal Himself and His purposes in them. In this specific passage, God's command for Abraham to sacrifice his son Isaac seems not only strange but also morally atrocious. Yet, here we are given a glimpse of the gospel itself: blessing and salvation will come to the world through a son of Abraham, one who is offered up as a sacrifice.

## UNDERSTANDING

Unpack the biblical text to discover what the Scripture says or means about a particular topic.

READ GENESIS 22:1-10.

**Why do you think people struggle with passages like these in the Bible? How can we keep ourselves from feeling embarrassed or ashamed about parts of the Bible that are not pleasant or endearing to our culture?**

**What is most shocking to you about Genesis 22 and God's command for Abraham to sacrifice Isaac? Has God ever shocked you with one of his commands in Scripture and/or with a life situation?**

**Given Abraham and Sarah’s experience with barrenness and God’s earlier promises to them, why would this command come as a shock?**

**Which details in verses 1-10 indicate that Abraham was obedient to God’s command?**

**How do verses 5 and 8 indicate that Abraham believed that Isaac would somehow survive the burnt offering?**

READ GENESIS 22:11-19.

**Why would God wait until the last moment to intervene in order to prevent Abraham from killing Isaac?**

**What does God’s providing a ram as a substitute indicate about His character and grace? Why is God within His rights and justice to require Isaac’s life?**

**What does God’s statement to Abraham in verses 16-18 say about His role in bringing about God’s earlier promises to him and for the world (e.g., Gen 12:1-3)?**

READ HEBREWS 11:8-12,17-19; ROMANS 4:16-25; JAMES 2:20-24.

**In light of these New Testament passages, what does the Abraham-Isaac story tell us about the nature of the gospel and salvation?**

**According to Hebrews 11:17-19, how does the Abraham-Isaac story point not only to Jesus’ sacrifice but also to His resurrection?**

## APPLICATION

Help your group identify how the truths from the Scripture passage apply directly to their lives.

**When has God provided for you in a “last moment” sort of way? What did this reveal to you about your level of confidence and trust in God? How is Christ’s sacrifice the ultimate display of “last moment” provision?**

**What can we glean from this passage about how we should approach difficult texts in the Bible? Why must we keep the “big picture” in view when looking at difficult texts (or any individual text)?**

**How does Abraham’s trust in God—even to the point of nearly sacrificing his son—challenge you? What sort of things might God be calling you to sacrifice in order to demonstrate your trust in Him?**