

## Old Testament Survey 02 - Genesis 1-11 Primeval History for the Bible Institute at Gulf Coast Baptist Church Spring 2026 by Steve Thomas

### **Introduction**

The early chapters of Genesis explain much about what we see in today's world. There is beauty and brokenness in equal quantities to be seen all around us. God created the physical universe in 6 literal days and rested on the 7th. The scriptures do not reveal how much time passed before the Fall of Adam and Eve, but that fall took what God called good and broke it. It was not broken beyond repair, and the ensuing chapters begin to tell the story of how God planned to redeem the broken world. God created man in His image and likeness, but when Adam bore children, he bore them in his likeness. The image of God had been lost, and only portions of God's likeness remained. The course of history is the account of God's plan to restore His creation to its created "rightness". The Fall led to a corruption of God's creation that spread to the point that God had to judge creation and start over with a faithful remnant. This was both gracious and righteous judgement. Noah's descendants followed the pattern of men's failure and rejected God's command to be fruitful and spread out to fill the judged earth. Man unified in an attempt to worship the creation in the place of the Creator and God stepped in again. The resulting judgement reflected God's plan to redeem creation, for it laid the groundwork for the next step in His plan.

### **Creation, Fall, Flood, Nations**

The framework that allows us to study the OT in context are the dispensations and covenants. God used different administrations (economies) to dispense His blessings to specific groups of people. The first three dispensations found God teaching all of existing mankind about themselves. Those three dispensations are found in chapters 1-11 of Genesis: Innocence, Conscience, and Human Government. Dispensations don't mean different ways of salvation—God's grace is consistent. They highlight different responsibilities and tests across redemptive history. God's covenant with Noah is also found in the same passages.

### **Creation: God, Order, Image- Image and Likeness of God**

Genesis tells us that Adam was made in the image and likeness of God. *"Adam was created in God's image. The image was God's glory garment. God wears light like we wear clothing (Psalm 104:2). God created Adam and Eve in a state of light, which the Psalmist described as "crowned with glory" (Psalm 8:4-5). Since God is spirit and not a physical being, His image does not refer to physical likeness. It referred to Adam wearing light like God wears light."*<sup>1</sup> This is one of the explanations for why Adam did not know that he was naked before he sinned. Study of the scriptures in the Psalms is helpful to understanding the state that Adam and Eve were in at creation, and then what was lost after the fall.

*Adam was also created in God's likeness. This means that mankind is able to think objectively, outside the realm of experience, in a manner similar to God. Therefore, to insult men is to insult that part of them which is still similar to God (James 3:9). Animals have senses and emotions.*

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<sup>1</sup> Hoelcher, Tim. God's House Plans. Royal City, WA. John 14:20 publishing. [www.graceteaching.com](http://www.graceteaching.com). 2008.

*Therefore, animals can only operate within their sphere of experience. They can only relate to what their senses can experience. Man has a spirit in addition to a soul (1 Thessalonians 5:23). Animals can only "think" within the realm of their experience. God is spirit (John 4:24). God created Adam with a spirit and soul. Adam was able to think outside the realm of his experience. Man's spirit, his center of rationale, distinguishes him from animals. This capacity for rational thought in his spirit is how man bears a likeness to God.<sup>2</sup>*

Adam had children who were not after God's likeness and image - pre-fall - but in the broken state after the fall.<sup>3</sup> Adam passed on his sin nature to each of his children. After Adam sinned, the body began to die as God said it would. Man's understanding was darkened.<sup>4</sup> Man became dead in his trespasses and sins.<sup>5</sup> Man possessed and lost, after the fall, an outward manifestation that was characteristic of God, likeness and glory. God has made it possible that believers today can show forth a quality of the glory. Mankind today actually bears the image of fallen Adam.<sup>6</sup> God is personal, sovereign, and purposeful. Creation has order (distinctions, roles, goodness). Likeness of God grounds: Human dignity (worth is given, not achieved) Human purpose (representing God; stewardship).

### **The Fall: Sin, Death, Moral Disorder - The Anatomy of a Sin**

The Book of James gives the believer a clear picture of how a sin originates. One of the believer's three spiritual enemies seeks to solicit the individual to sin and plants a desire in the mind of the person. This becomes a problem when the individual takes ownership of that thought and is "drawn away". This leads to a determination (trespass) which is unrighteousness and offensive to God. When the person takes action, a sin has been committed, and confession is necessary to restore fellowship. Adam took the fruit from Eve and rebelled against God. Eve was deceived but Adam acted independently from God.

Adam's fall broke God's creation, and man was alienated from God, creating disillusionment and fear, as Adam and Eve hid themselves from God. What was previously a fellowship was now an adversarial relationship. God's response was to curse the serpent, the woman, the man, and the ground. In Gen 3:15 we have the first mention of God's intention to fix what man broke. The Fall explains why humans are simultaneously glorious and ruined. Sin is not only "mistakes" — it is rebellion + distrust of God. Death and disorder enter the human experience as a real rupture.

### **The Flood: Judgment + Remnant + Covenant**

Believers disagree as to exactly what the sin was that corrupted all flesh in Genesis 6, but it led God to purge the world of a great majority of its individuals. Noah was a part of the remnant

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<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

<sup>3</sup> Gen 5:3.

<sup>4</sup> Rom 1:21, Eph 4:18.

<sup>5</sup> Eph 2:1, Col 2:13.

<sup>6</sup> 1 Cor 15:47-49.

with his family. The Flood shows God's holy judgment is not a metaphor. The Flood also shows grace: God preserves a remnant and re-commissions humanity. The Noahic covenant provides a platform of stability for history moving forward.

### **The Tower of Babel - Nations & Babel: Pride, Dispersion, Stage for Israel**

Babel is humanity's attempt at unity without God and "making a name" for itself. God's judgment results in languages and dispersion—a world of nations. This sets up the next huge turn: God will call one man (Abram) from the nations (Genesis 12) to build a covenant people and ultimately bless the nations.

Romans 1:20-32 gives a NT commentary on this time of history. Man rebelled against God, abandoning the clear instruction to be fruitful and multiply, and replenish the earth. The word for replenish means to "fill to the ends". But the intention of man was to gather and unite, building a monument to the creation instead of obeying the Creator. This action would have made a "name" for them, instead of reverencing the Name of God. God intervened, judging them in 3 ways: language, land, and ethnicity. We see the division of language, race, and continents. Gen 10:32, 11:9, and 10:25 guides us to these conclusions. Given by way of introduction in 10:5.

Genesis 1–11 helps us see that God relates to humanity through identifiable stages of responsibility—often called dispensations or administrations. The point isn't the labels; the point is that God's governance unfolds in a purposeful plan. While God is unfolding His plan, He is teaching His creation about themselves and progressively revealing Himself, for His own glory.

### **Conclusion**

Creation: "God made the world good and humans with purpose."

Fall: "Sin explains the fracture—shame, death, disorder."

Flood: "God judges evil but preserves a remnant by grace."

Nations: "Human pride scatters the world into nations—setting up God's call of Abraham."

Creation: purpose, dignity, design

Fall: sin, death, curse, promise hinted

Flood: judgment, remnant, covenant stability

Nations: dispersion, stage for Israel, future kingdom context