

LESSON 4 | THE BEGINNINGS

WEEK 4: DAY 1

THE THREAD

DISCOVERING THE THREAD OF THE GOSPEL THROUGH THE BIG-PICTURE STORY OF THE BIBLE

“And he took a cup, and when he had given thanks he gave it to them, saying, “Drink of it, all of you, for this is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins.”

- Matthew 26:27-28

This week, your memory verse is actually two verses. But you got this!

These verses speak to the new covenant Jesus set in motion with His sacrificial death on the cross. The word covenant is a little tricky to define, but ultimately, it is a binding promise between two parties. God entered into several covenants with various individuals in the Old Testament. But in every case, people were unable to uphold their end. (Not God. He is faithful to His promises, every time.)

God knew that humanity would never be able to fully keep their part of the covenant and that unless He made a way for us, we would continue to break our promises and further damage our relationship with Him. This is why He planned to send Jesus from the very beginning as a way to provide us with a covenant we could keep. By coming to saving faith in Christ, Jesus allows His righteousness to be our righteousness too!

Today, memorize Matthew 26:27-28.

You can use the “5 – 5 – 5” method you’ve used for the last couple of weeks. Or you can use a Bible app to listen to the verses repeatedly until you can say them without any help. While you’re learning the verses, praise God for providing the new covenant in Christ, a way for us to stay in perfect relationship with Him.

LESSON 4 | THE BEGINNINGS

WEEK 4: DAY 2

THE THREAD

DISCOVERING THE THREAD OF THE GOSPEL THROUGH THE BIG-PICTURE STORY OF THE BIBLE

“But I will establish my covenant with you, and you shall come into the ark, you, your sons, your wife, and your sons’ wives with you.” - Genesis 6:18

In our world, there have been many people who have done a good job of spreading the true message of Christ. However, there have also been some that have spread lies and falseness. As a result, some people who do not yet know God view Him to be angry or full of spite.

It is one of our duties as believers to tell them that God is actually loving and kind. So loving, in fact, that the Bible doesn’t just say that God loves, but that God is love (1 John 4:8). But is that all God is? What about the instances in Scripture when God shows His judgment upon those who have sinned against Him?

Read Genesis 6:11-22.

Not exactly what we would hope to read when talking about a loving God, is it? There are many people who would rather forget the accounts of God in the Old Testament. But these accounts show us that God loves in a different way than we are often taught to expect. In this instance, the lives of the people God made were characterized by constant violence against one another. And what we see in God’s character is a stance against what is wrong and harmful. Another word we might use to describe this is justice.

From how God relates to Noah in this same passage, it’s clear that God wants to be in relationship with the humans He created. Noah wasn’t perfect, but he was willing to respond to God when God pursued a relationship with him. The same could not be said of the others who were actively pursuing evil against themselves, their communities, and God.

In the midst of that violence, God made a covenant with Noah, not because Noah was sinless, but because Noah was willing. In the same way, you can experience a relationship with God. How does this apply to God’s relationship with you? It means that you don’t have to be perfect (no one is). All you need is to be willing!

Something to Think About . . .

- How does the way God reacts against injustice impact the way you think about your own sin? In what ways might you tend to take your own sin too lightly?

LESSON 4 | THE BEGINNINGS

WEEK 4: DAY 3

THE THREAD

DISCOVERING THE THREAD OF THE GOSPEL THROUGH THE BIG-PICTURE STORY OF THE BIBLE

“Go out from the ark, you and your wife, and your sons and your sons’ wives with you. Bring out with you every living thing that is with you of all flesh—birds and animals and every creeping thing that creeps on the earth—that they may swarm on the earth, and be fruitful and multiply on the earth.” - Genesis 8:16-17

Have you ever wanted to start over? It would be nice to get a second chance at some aspects of our lives.

Read Genesis 8:11-22.

As you read, think about what Noah and his family may have been feeling as they watched God flood the earth. Usually, when this story is told to kids, the teacher skips right to the rainbow. But imagine for a minute what it must have been like to set foot back on dry land after all that time on the boat.

All of the former animals and humans would have, hopefully, been washed away (but imagine for a minute if they weren’t! Yuck.). And the water likely destroyed most of the human-built structures. Imagine the silence that comes from being the only family in the world... This was a new start.

God had provided a new start, even after displaying His anger against a viciously rebellious world. It’s not that God ignores our sin or that He isn’t heartbroken over our rebellion. But even when we are at our worst, God shows His grace by letting us try again. We may not be able to go back in time and declare a “do over,” but we do get the chance to respond to God’s grace by doing it differently the next time.

Something To Think About . . .

- If you could choose one decision or action to take back or to do differently, what would it be?
- Spend some time today thanking God that He doesn’t hold our sins against us. Praise Him for the opportunity to start fresh each day.

LESSON 4 | THE BEGINNINGS

WEEK 4: DAY 4

THE THREAD

DISCOVERING THE THREAD OF THE GOSPEL THROUGH THE BIG-PICTURE STORY OF THE BIBLE

“When the bow is in the clouds, I will see it and remember the everlasting covenant between God and every living creature of all flesh that is on the earth.” - Genesis 9:16

Promises are easily broken, right? Think about the last time someone broke a promise they made to you. Because we take promises so seriously, it’s pretty painful when they are broken.

Read Genesis 9:8-17, and keep your eye out for the promise that God is making in this passage. We’re barely into the very first book in the Bible, and already we’ve seen a lot: God’s good creation, His creation of human beings, rebellion from those same human beings, terrible cruelty and injustice, God’s anger against that injustice, and a very large flood.

God could have stopped there. But God didn’t stop there. In fact, God made a promise (a covenant) to Noah and his descendants that He would never flood the entire earth again. The significance of this promise isn’t just that God would never flood the entire earth but that by even making a promise in the first place, He was saying to the human race, “I’m not done with you yet.”

God’s not done with you yet. You may feel like there’s not a lot of great stuff in your past. You may have been hurt. Or maybe you’ve hurt others. Just as God made a covenant with Noah, God has a covenant—His promise—for you: If you trust in what Jesus did for you when He died on the cross, you don’t get just a fresh start; you have eternal life!

Something To Think About . . .

- How does God’s faithfulness encourage you through hard times when you might be tempted to doubt His love for you?

LESSON 4 | THE BEGINNINGS

WEEK 4: DAY 5

THE THREAD

DISCOVERING THE THREAD OF THE GOSPEL THROUGH THE BIG-PICTURE STORY OF THE BIBLE

“So the Lord dispersed them from there over the face of all the earth, and they left off building the city.”

- Genesis 11:8

Many high schools take part in programs that allow foreign exchange students to travel the globe and live for the school year in a new place. This is typically a very impactful experience, but it can also be frustrating. For some, the language barrier can be the most difficult obstacle to overcome, aside from being away from family and friends.

Read the story above in Genesis 11:1-9.

Just like us, the people that existed after the flood found connection and community with one another. And that was easy because they all shared a single language! And as they grew, they found that their ability to work together could afford them to work on some big projects... both good and bad. In our story above, we see that they desired to do something as big as God, and they built a gigantic tower. God came down to see their accomplishment and was not happy with what they were doing. God saw that the people did not honor Him, and that they seemed to be heading toward how things had been before the flood (i.e., lots of sin and evil).

These were the descendants of Noah and his sons. They should have been spending their days building a tower that praised God, who saved their ancestors. Instead, the city and tower were all about them and their ability. They abused the gift of easy communication and used it as a way to worship themselves.

In response, God changed their language and spread them across the earth. Why? He did it to remind them of His glory and their weakness. The only reason they enjoyed communication with one another was God. And to prove to their prideful hearts that they did not have as much control as they believed, God made a way to remind them.

Something To Think About . . .

- Can you think of a time when you thought a decision you were making was a good one, but looking back, you see it was made out of arrogance? How did God show you mercy to put you on the right path?