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YT11S

BEGINNINGS

Genesis

BIBLE STUDIES FORYOUTH

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CHAPTER ONE

THE GOD OF CREATION

Aim: I will understand how the creation of the world reveals God's grace and love.

Background Scripture: Genesis 1:1-2; 2:4-6; John 1:1-5; Psalms 19:1

Verse in Today's Lesson: Genesis 1:1-2; 2:4-6

Memory Verse: "The earth is the Lord's and the fullness thereof, the world and those who dwell therein" (Psalms 24:1).

A STUDY OF THE LESSON

Introduction

In the early sixties, there was a young African man who set out to build an aircraft that could fly by using a motorbike engine. He gathered the necessary materials, and with the help of his co-workers he started making the aircraft.

The time came when they completed building the aircraft and had to test it for flying. It actually took off from the ground for a short distance, and then it crash landed. Think of the excitement those men felt and their faith in achieving their goal.

In the Bible we read in the book of Genesis how God created all the things we see, including plants, animals and even man. These were all created by God's power.

Interpretation

Can you imagine what the earth would be like without God? Read Genesis 1:1-2. What do these verses tell us about the earth before God began his work as Creator? They say the earth was empty. Nothing lived in it. It was vacant.

The world was dark -- very dark. There was no light at all. The darkness was there, but God had not created it. "...God is light and in him is no darkness at all" (1 John 1:5). When God began creating the world he brought light into darkness.

The surface of the earth was called "the deep." This means there was only an ocean, only deep water. There was no land. In the ocean there was no life at all. There were no fish and nothing was growing on the bottom.

Then God came and things began to change. The Spirit of God came into the darkness and began to move over the lifeless waters. God began his work, and the earth slowly took shape. He separated dry land from the ocean. But still there was no life. The world was empty. Without God there can

be only emptiness. When life began to appear it came from the hands of God. "In him is life..." (John 1:4).

God created the world. This means everything was made by God and is under the authority of God.

Our Memory Verse tells us, "The earth is the Lord's..." (Psalms 24:1). God made the world and everything in it. It is his. There is nothing in the world that belongs to us that we can give him. God knew there was no offering we could give him to pay for his great work. He created the world and gave us our lives because he loves us. This is called "grace." Grace means that because God loves us he gives us something that we do not deserve and can never pay for. Our world and our lives are ours because of the grace of God.

Application For My Life

There are many theories about how our world came into existence and where man came from. Some of the theories are taught in school. What are some of them that you have heard? What does the Bible teach about the beginning of the world? With so many different ideas about how the world began, why should a person believe that the world was created by God? There is no way that creation can be proved so one who is not a believer would be convinced. Can you list some reasons why you think the creation story is true? It comes down to a matter of faith, doesn't it? "I believe in creation because I believe in God." "I believe in creation because I believe the Bible." "God has been true in all his promises and dealings with me. He would not be untrue in something as important as creation."

We base our belief in creation on what we know about God, not on what we know about science. By our faith in Christ we have experienced salvation. Our lives have been changed. Our minds have been renewed. Therefore, we believe what God has said about creation. This type of faith is a matter of grace. That is, it is something God gives to us.

For us who are Christians, the creation brings some very important questions. Read the Memory Verse, Psalms 24:1. Because "The earth is the Lord's," what are my responsibilities to God for the way I live in his world? In what ways am I responsible for the world I live in?

Many times people spoil their land to satisfy their needs for the moment. They cut down trees. The rain washes away their soil, and they do nothing about it, and so their farms are ruined for their children. Why is this wrong? Do you think man is responsible to God for things like this? What about our wildlife? Is poaching wrong simply because it breaks the law, or is it wrong because it abuses God's creation and purpose? We must take care of our world.

Our Memory Verse also tells us that all who dwell in the earth belong to the Lord. This means your life belongs to God. He created you with talents and abilities to do certain things. What are your personal obligations to your Creator? The world and everything in it belongs to God. You must live your life in the light of this truth.

Things To Do

1. Read the Memory Verse; learn to say it.
2. Make a list of things the world contains. Make this a list of your blessings. Thank God for each one.
3. Write the names of some of those “who dwell there in.” Pray for them as individuals.

CHAPTER TWO

THE WORLD GOD CREATED

Aim: I will understand that God created a good world according to his plan and that all creation glorifies him.

Background Scripture: Genesis 1:3-24; Colossians 1:15-19

Verse in Today's Lesson: Genesis 1: 3-24

Memory Verse: "For in him all things were created, in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or authorities -- all things were created through him and for him" (Colossians 1:16).

A STUDY OF THE LESSON

Introduction

In chapter one we saw how a man in his determination made an aircraft by using a motorbike engine. Perhaps you have observed that people have an instinct of possession and beauty.

There was a young man who had the high ambition of having his own house. After completing the building of his house, he planted flowers around it, filled it with nice furniture and utensils and kept poultry and some animals. His heart was at peace with his possessions.

In Genesis 1:3-24, you can see God's creation of the heavens, earth, the waters and all the creatures living therein. Notice the order by which he made them all.

Interpretation

When God created the world he followed a plan. He divided his work of creation into six periods of time called days. He created everything at just the right time. Today we look at the first days of creation.

1. Read Genesis 1:3-5. This is the first day of creation. On this day God created light. God called for the light and immediately light filled the world. God created light first because everything else depends upon it. This light was not from the sun. It was the light of God. God is light, and there is no darkness in him. In Revelation it is said that the new Jerusalem has no need of sun or moon for Jesus is the light. This was the first light of creation.

2. Read Genesis 1:6-8. This is the second day of creation. On this day God created the firmament. There are three words which explain what firmament means. They are sky, air and atmosphere. The atmosphere of the earth is different from that of other planets. It has enough oxygen in it to support life. Our atmosphere is a gift of God to us. He gave it so there could be life.

3. Read Genesis 1:9-13. This is the third day of creation. On this day God separated the waters from the dry land. He called them earth and seas. God let the earth itself bring forth vegetation, plants and fruit bearing trees. This was the first form of life on earth. But the dry land does not have the power within itself to produce life. Life comes only in response to God's command.

4. Read Genesis 1:14-19. This is the fourth day of the creation. On this day God made the stars, the sun and the moon. By his word they began to give light to the earth. The difference between the light given on the first day and that of the stars, the sun and the moon is that these bodies were created by God. They do not make light themselves but only bear light that was there without them and before them.

5. Read Genesis 1:20-23. This is the fifth day of creation. On this day God let the waters bring forth life and made the birds of the air. He commanded them to multiply. Now the world is ready as a place for living creatures. Everything that is needed for life has been created. All the creatures God made are good in his sight.

Application For My Life

In this chapter we have studied the first five days of creation. List the things created in the order of their creation. Do you see the plan and wisdom of this order of creation? Step by step God created the world to support life. Science confirms this plan of creation.

Science says all of this took millions of years. The Bible says it took five days. The question is, how long is a day in the creation story? Most Bible teachers would agree that a day in creation was a period of time, not a 24 hour day.

Let us look at three important words that are used throughout the Bible.

1. The first word is darkness. The world was darkness before creation. This was because God was not yet there. In your New Testament read John 1:4. When Jesus came the world was in darkness. What does this mean? Read John 3:19. This tells us that men live in darkness. They like it better than light. What do you think this darkness is? Read Ephesians 5:8. Before you were saved, "...you were darkness." The darkness was inside of you. The uncreated world was darkness. The world without Christ is darkness. The unsaved person is darkness.

2. The second word is light. The first thing God brought to creation was light -- his light. Read John 1:9. What is this "true light"? Read John 8:12. What did Jesus call himself? In a world of darkness God said, "Let there be light and there was light." God sent his Son, the true light, into a world of spiritual darkness; and that light shines in the darkness.

3. The third word is life. After the light comes life. Read John 1:4. When the Light of God shines in our hearts, it overcomes the darkness of sin and gives us new life. Read Ephesians 5:8. "You were darkness." What are you now? Now the light is inside you. Jesus said, "You are the light of the world" (Matthew 5:14). Remember, light is necessary to bring forth light. Your light is the hope of life to those who are still living in darkness.

Things To Do

1. Talk to some of your friends about what they believe about the creation. Be able to explain to them what the Bible teaches.
2. Learn the Memory Verse. Use this verse as you talk with your friends about creation.

CHAPTER THREE

THE MAN GOD CREATED

Aim: I will understand that God created man in his own image with a special purpose to fulfil.

Background Scripture: Genesis 1:26-31; 2:7-17; Psalms 100:3

Verses in Today's Lesson: Genesis 1:26-31

Memory Verse: "Then the Lord God formed man of dust from the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and man became a living being" (Genesis 2:7).

A STUDY OF THE LESSON

Introduction

In the course of his duties the inspector of primary schools, Mr. John, came to a certain primary school. He found that the school compound was very untidy, and some of the classes were very noisy and had no teachers. He established that the head teacher was occasionally drunk and absent. Some of the lazy teachers took advantage of the absenteeism of the head teacher.

In his report the inspector recommended that the head teacher be demoted and removed from the school and a more responsible head teacher be appointed to run the school.

In his creation of the world, God saw that it was necessary for there to be someone responsible for the running of the world. This person should be in his likeness, and so he created man. Furthermore, God wanted someone whom he could love and who would love him. None of the good things he had made could do this. And so he made man. Interpretation

It was the sixth day of creation. God had finished creating everything except man. There was a pause while God announced his plan for making man. This is the only part of creation where God explained what he was going to do before he did it. "Let us make man in our own image." It is plain that this is the greatest moment of creation. Verses 26-27 emphasize two things. First, God created man. Second, God made man in his own image. The word, created, is used three times in verse 27. It is making it clear that man did not evolve from animal life. He is a separate creation, made in God's likeness and given a very special purpose. Human life is very precious in God's sight. God did not just will that man exist or speak a word and let man come into being. He carefully made a plan and announced it. He then made man with his own hands and breathed into him the breath of life. Man has always been the most special part of God's creation. This was never seen more clearly than on the cross. There we see that God the Creator became God the Redeemer in order to save man whom he had created in his own image.

After God had created man and woman he blessed them. His blessing is revealed in three ways. First, through the task that he gave them. He told them to multiply and fill the earth. They were to subdue the earth. They were to discover and make use of all its wealth and resources. Second,

God's blessing to man is revealed through the authority he gave him. He was to have dominion over all life on earth: fish, birds and animals. Third, his blessing is revealed through the provision he made for man. He provided food from all the grain of the fields and the fruit of the trees. God's blessing on man and love for man were evident from the beginning.

Though man was to have dominion over all other life on earth, he was never to misuse this power. His rule over the earth is never absolute. He is always under the higher power of God. Though he is to subdue the earth, he must always obey the higher laws of God. Man must be wise and try to fulfil his special purpose in God's world.

Application For My Life

Read Genesis 1:27-28 carefully. In verse 27, how many times is the word, created, used? This verse emphasizes that man was created by God. Create means to cause to exist, to make something new or original. This means that man did not come from some lower form of life. Man is a new creation. Someone said man's understanding of God begins with these words: "I believe that God created me." Do you believe that about yourself? If you do, what does it mean about your life? Do you think God would create something that has no purpose? God created each of us just as surely as he created Adam. True, it was by the natural means of birth; but we are here, God's creation, in God's image, by God's will. This means God has put you here for a purpose. There is a reason for your being here. Think about that. What do you think God's purpose is for your life?

Now, let's think about the responsibilities God gave us in verse 28. He said we were to be fruitful, multiply and fill the earth. Of course, this verse is speaking of bearing children. But does that mean that today we should have an unlimited number of children? Are we being told here to have as many children as we can? Remember this was said to man at a time when the world was seriously under-populated. Now that the world is rapidly becoming over-populated, now that man has multiplied and filled the earth, don't you think his responsibility is becoming somewhat different? We are responsible for each child we bring into this world. We must feed them, clothe them, educate them, love them and bring them up in the church to know and love God. Do you think we fail in our responsibility when we have more children than we can care for?

God also said that man is to subdue the earth. That means to make it yield what we need to live. Some have interpreted this to mean that we have God's permission to use the earth any way we like. But do you think God is always pleased with what we do with his world? We are responsible for the way we take care of God's earth. Read Isaiah 24:5-6.

Things To Do

1. Think about ways you can take care of God's earth.
2. Read and learn Genesis 2:7.

CHAPTER FOUR

THE WOMAN GOD CREATED

Aim: I will understand better the dignity and worth of woman in God's sight.

Background Scripture: Genesis 2:18-22; Ephesians 5:25; Colossians 3:19; Titus 2:4-5

Verses in Today's Lesson: Genesis 2:18-22

Memory Verse: "Husbands, love your wives, as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her" (Ephesians 5:25).

A STUDY OF THE LESSON

Introduction

In the Kano plains of Kenya there is an institution for the disabled. This institution planned to build a social hall for various activities. A steering committee was set up. The committee hired the services of a building contracting company, and the work started straight away.

When the long rains set in, it was realized that the ground drained very poorly. The walls of the building were already up to window level. For more than nine months no work could be done, and by the time the rains subsided the foundation was no longer good for further construction work.

The committee and the contractors could not agree on further work for each blamed the other for problem. All that was happiness in the beginning ended in confusion.

This type of confusion is common with man. In God's creation there was no such confusion. Read about his further work as he created woman.

Interpretation

The second chapter of Genesis tells us many things about creation that we did not learn in chapter one. Here we learn the beautiful story of the creation of woman. Verse 18 says that something was missing from creation. Man was alone, and God said, "It is not good." This was the only time that God said this about his creation. Man needed others to be around him. So, God said, "I will make him a helper." This means someone to be beside him, a companion to share life with him. There was a need, and God was going to meet it.

Verse 19 and 20 add to what we know about the creation of the animals and birds. God made them out of the ground, that is, from the dust. Chapter one tells us God made the animals before he made man. Now he brought all of them before man to see what man would name them. The man gave names to all the animals, but there was none that was equal to man or with whom man could have fellowship.

Read verses 21 and 22. God knew that if man was to have a companion, he would have to create someone especially for him. He caused a deep sleep to come on man and removed a rib from his chest. God made the rib into a woman. When God made woman he made the most unique of all his creations. Nothing else was created in the same way. The animals and even man were made from the dust of the ground. Woman was made from the rib of man, the part of his body which is nearest his heart.

When God was looking for a companion for man, he looked at all the creatures he had made. None could stand along side man and be the helper that he needed. Man needed someone with whom he could share his life and work. It was not good for him to be alone, so God made woman. But she was not created only to meet man's need. She was not given to man that she might be his property. No bride price was collected. Her value was not counted in beasts of the field, for none of them could compare in worth to her. She was created as a person in her own right just as man was. God has given her her own purpose to fulfil.

Application To My Life

In verse 18 of our lesson God said it is not good that man should be alone. Think about that. Why is it not good for man or woman to be alone? Can you imagine what it would be like not to have family or friends or someone you love to share life with? This does not mean God is commanding everyone to marry. But it is not good for a person to be alone in life. We need other people. We cannot live our fullest and best life if we separate ourselves from others. God has given us the church as a place to meet together to worship and to fellowship. It was not God's plan for a person to live his life apart from other people.

In this same verse (verse 18) God said, "I will make him a helper." What do you think of when you hear the word, helper? Perhaps you think of a child who is his mother's helper. Or of a worker who helps his boss. Or of a slave who helps his master. A child, worker, a slave! Do any of these words describe what God had in mind? God was speaking about someone to share man's life with him, to be his companion and bear responsibility with him. This is a helper in its highest sense.

Because we have pointed out that woman is not the property of her husband, does this mean she has no responsibility to him? What are the responsibilities of a Christian wife to her husband? After they had sinned, God told the woman, "...he (her husband) shall rule over you" (Genesis 3:16). Ephesians 5:23 says, "The husband is the head of the wife." God said to the woman, "...your desire shall be for your husband" (Genesis 3:16). Paul said, "Wives, be subject to your husbands" (Ephesians 5:22). But the Bible brings in another important word: love. A husband and wife are to love each other. Paul said, "Husbands, love your wives, as Christ loved the church" (Ephesians 5:25). This gives a new meaning to the words, rule over, for it is completely self-giving love. They come together in love, each having a part to fill, and each sacrificing part of self that they might become one new person in Christ.

Things To Do

1. Write down what a husband will do if he loves his wife as Christ loves the church.

2. Write down how a wife should react.

CHAPTER FIVE

THE CREATION OF THE HOME

Aim: I will become aware that holy marriage is the foundation upon which the home is built.

Background Scripture: Genesis 2:23-24; Matthew 19:4-6; Proverbs 18:22; Matthew 5:32; Hebrews 13:4

Verses in Today's Lesson: Genesis 2:23-24; Matthew 19:4-6

Memory Verse: "Therefore a man leaves his father and his mother and cleaves to his wife, and they become one flesh" (Genesis 2:24).

A STUDY OF THE LESSON

There was once a young married couple who were very happy. After some time they had two beautiful children. But a few years later the lady and children were poorly nourished and dressed, the home was shabby and all looked miserable. What happened?

Some women in the village had been advising the woman wrongly. As a result quarrels had started in the family. The man had started drinking very heavily.

You see, in marriage it is necessary for both the man and the woman to be of strong character. Then people outside the home cannot cause confusion. In Proverbs 18:22 we read, "He who finds a wife finds a good thing, and obtains favor from the Lord."

Interpretation

Here is a problem for you: How many is one plus one? It is two, of course. But when you are speaking of marriage, according to God's math, one plus one is one. God brought the woman and man together and gave them to one another. The man was happy. "At last," he said, "here is one for me." God joined them together. The two became one. Marriage is a union between a man and a woman. They are united in the sight of others, the government and the church. Most important, they are united in the sight of God. The man is to leave his father and mother. They are not to stay on as a part of their father's families. They have been joined together to go out and start their new home.

God made woman because man was alone and this was not good. God's first purpose was to give man a companion. From the beginning the main purpose of marriage has been companionship. A man is not to use his wife only as a servant to take care of his house and bear his children. This is to abuse God's purpose for marriage. She is to be companion, someone he talks to and with whom he makes his plans. They share their lives with one another. They are to fulfil God's will for their lives together. For Christians there are only two basic reasons for getting married. First, because each believes it is God's will. Second, because they love one another and want to share their lives together.

When God brought man and woman together, he created marriage. It is a sacred union. The two are joined together physically as well as spiritually. The physical union must always be holy. God said that the marriage bed must always be undefiled. (Hebrews 13:4) Adultery is wrong. When two are joined physically they become one. The only foundation for this type of joining together is marriage. God's plan from the start was that marriage would last a lifetime. It is not a human relationship that can be broken simply because one of the parties involved wants to break it. The union is sacred. It must always remain so.

Application For My Life

Marriage is a very important step in life and Christian young people must face it with a real sense of responsibility. There are three basic questions that you must consider before getting married:

1. Is it God's will for my life that I marry this person? This is the most important question for a Christian facing marriage. If I marry this person will it make it easier for me to serve God or more difficult? Does this person share my faith? Does he or she feel the way I do about the type of life we ought to live and the type of family we ought to have?
2. Is this person the type of companion with whom I can be happy? Companionship has been an important part of marriage from the very beginning. Do I really enjoy being with this person with whom I can share the rest of my life?
3. Do I love him or her? Do not confuse love with physical attraction or sexual desire. The fact that you desire each other does not mean that you are in love. Love is what you feel for a person in your heart. There is no basis for Christian marriage apart from love.

Marriage is important because God has always intended for marriage to last for a lifetime. God said that when two people get married, they become one flesh. Not only is there a joining spiritually, but when they come together in sexual intercourse this physical union makes them one flesh in God's sight. They leave all others, that is, their primary responsibility is toward one another. Let's list now some negative things that this should mean to you:

1. Divorce is wrong. Jesus said, "What therefore God has joined together, let no man put asunder" (Matthew 19:6).
2. Adultery is wrong. This breaks one of the ten commandments and violates the marriage union.
3. Sex union without or before marriage is wrong. The only basis for this type of physical union is marriage.

Marriage is sacred. Let's not forget it.

Things To Do

1. Read and learn Genesis 2:24.

2. Think about your friends who are married. Do some seem to be happier than others? Write down the things the happier ones seem to do. Do they share work, responsibilities of the home, conversation, worship, etc.? Have they become one in other ways than physical?

3. If you are married pray for your husband or wife. Decide on one action you can do to please him/her this week.

If you are not married, ask God to guide you in this important decision.

CHAPTER SIX

THE SABBATH -- DAY OF REST AND WORSHIP

Aim: I will understand why God set aside a day for worship and rest.

Background Scripture: Genesis 2:1-3; Exodus 20:8-11; 34:31; Matthew 12:1-8; John 20:19; Acts 20:7

Verse in Today's Lesson: Genesis 2:1-3; Exodus 20:8-11

Memory Verse: "This is the day which the Lord has made; let us rejoice and be glad in it" (Psalms 118:24).

A STUDY OF THE LESSON

Introduction

A farmer in the western part of Kenya, with the help of his co-workers, set out to plant his eight acres of land in one week. This was a modern kind of planting. Tirelessly they worked day and night with the intention of finishing within the set time. After working for four days, they found out that the seeds were finished. The farmer had to go buy some more seeds in the town. On returning home, his car overturned. He had a knee dislocated and had to be taken to hospital for treatment.

The next morning when he got home, they began to work although he was still feeling pain. Because of misfortune, the men were not able to finish the work within their schedule.

The Bible tells us that God had a schedule for his week of creation. With his almighty power, he finished the work in six days. Then he set aside a day for worship and rest.

Interpretation

The work of creation was finished. From a dark place having only deep water, God had created our beautiful world. There were trees and flowers, birds and animals of every description. The sun and moon and all the stars were in the sky. Most important, man and woman were there, living in a perfect relationship with God. Everything had been put under their authority.

God had done his work in six periods of time called days. On the seventh day God had finished his work, and so he rested from all his work on that day. Sometimes we call the seventh day the sabbath. Notice that the word, sabbath, means "to stop your work." It is not until we come to our verses in Exodus 20 (the Ten Commandments) that we see the word, sabbath, used in connection with the seventh day. The seventh day had become the sabbath, a day of rest. People were following the pattern established by God at the time of creation. The sabbath is a special day because God chose to bless it and call it holy.

In Exodus 20:8-11, when God gave Moses the Ten Commandments, one thing he told his people to remember was the sabbath day. It is something that is so easily forgotten. We are to remember to keep it a holy day. We keep it holy by using it as the Lord's day. On this day we worship and serve the Lord. We keep it holy by being happy and joyous in it. The Lord's special day should not be a day of sadness. We keep it holy by not working on it. The Bible says, "Six days you shall work." It is right and necessary to work, but six days are enough. There must be a day of rest. The seventh day was a day to be committed to God. For the Christian the other six days are important as well. A Christian is to live as God wants him to every day. But the sabbath is the day when we are to worship and serve the Lord in a special way. Jesus said that the sabbath was one of God's gifts to man. It should be a day that would bring joy and peace to man, a day committed to the Lord for worship and service.

Application For My Life

A question that often arises when we study about the sabbath is: Why do Christians worship on Sunday instead of on the sabbath? When we say "sabbath" we mean Saturday. Saturday is the seventh day of the week. It was the Jewish sabbath. We get confused because we think sabbath means seventh, but it does not. Sabbath means "a day when work is stopped." It means "resting from work."

In Exodus 20:8 God is not telling us to remember the seventh day. Instead, he commands a day when work is put aside, a day of rest. For Christians it has come to mean a day especially dedicated to the glory of God. The Christian sabbath is on Sunday because that is the day Christ arose from the dead. This is the day when the work of redemption, the second creation, was finished. This is our day of sabbath rest. We are told to remember the sabbath day to keep it holy. (Exodus 20:8) Why do you think God would have to remind us of that? Are we likely to forget to stop working for one day each week and rest? Probably not! What we are likely to forget is to keep it holy.

The sabbath is to be a holy day. To keep it holy, perhaps we should ask ourselves two questions. The first is: What should we do on Sunday (the sabbath) to keep it holy? We must make this a special day for God. How should you do this? Perhaps the first thing that comes to your mind is church, and that is good. There is Sunday School (or Bible study), worship and choir practice. What other activities do you have at your church that you could be a part of? The second question is: If we are to keep Sunday holy, what should you not do? Here are some ideas from the Bible. You should not work as you do the other six days of the week. You should not do business such as buying and selling. What other things can you think of to help you observe the Christian sabbath properly?

Things To Do

1. Read and learn Psalms 118:24.
2. Write down some ways you can show you are glad there is a day of worship.
3. Think of the past four Sundays. List as many of your activities as you can remember. Did you remember to keep the day holy?

4. Pray that God will help you keep Sunday as a day of worship and rest.

CHAPTER SEVEN

HOW SIN BEGAN

Aim: I will understand that sin came into the world as a result of man's willful disobedience.

Background Scripture: Genesis 3:1-7; Isaiah 53:6; James 4:17; Romans 3:23; 5:12; 6:23

Verses in Today's Lesson: Genesis 3:1-7

Memory Verse: "All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned everyone to his own way; and the Lord has laid on him the iniquity of us all" (Isaiah 53:6).

A STUDY OF THE LESSON

Introduction

It is important that in the study of this chapter we note first what the Bible teaches. The story of creation in Genesis ends by telling us that when God looked on everything he had made, he saw that it was very good. (Genesis 1:12) We can still see that goodness in the order and beauty of the world.

In Genesis 3 we find the story of how sin came into the world. The will of the Creator was to have a happy people in a happy world. His will has not been fulfilled because of sin. We see sins of every kind in the good world of God. There is pain, sickness and death because of sin. From Genesis it is clear that the beginning of sin is distrust of God. It is man turning away from God.

Interpretation

In verse 1 of our Scripture we meet the serpent. He is not called Satan although we assume that he was. He came to the woman and said, "Did God really say that you are not to eat of any tree in the garden?" His question implied that the idea was ridiculous and that one would be very simple to believe that. God had not said that all, as the serpent well knew, but by asking the question he made the woman doubt the wisdom of her belief.

The woman corrected the serpent's mistake. "No," she replied. "We may eat of the trees of the garden. What God said was that we should not eat of the tree in the middle of the garden." Then she went beyond the Word of God and added, "We are not even to touch the tree lest we die." God had not said that. She and her husband had made the tree to be very mysterious, as if there were an evil all around it. "Even to touch it would mean death," she said.

The serpent denied the truth of what God had said. "You will not die," he said. Next, the serpent told the woman that God had lied because he did not want them to be as smart as he (God) was. Finally, the serpent told the woman that if she would eat of the fruit of that tree she would be like God. "Now, God is holding you back, but if you will eat this fruit your eyes will be opened." What strong temptation the serpent brought to Eve!

In verse 6 the woman was alone. She stood before the tree and began to think. First, she decided that it was right to eat the fruit for it was good for food. Second, she was drawn by the beauty of the tree for it was a delight to the eyes. Third, she saw that the fruit would help her for it would make her wise. Thus, she made her decision. After she had eaten the fruit, she tempted her husband in the same way, and he ate.

After the sin their eyes were opened, but instead of being like God, they saw how far from God they were. Now they did not want to see God or be near him. They felt shame because they saw that they were naked. Their innocence and purity were gone. Much of the beauty was now gone out of God's good world because man, the highest of his creations, had fallen in sin.

Application For My Life

What do you think Satan is like? We usually think of him as being evil, mysterious and living in darkness. While this may have truth in it, it does not follow the usual biblical picture of Satan. How does Satan appear to you in these verses or in our study today? Aside from the fact that he was a snake, which didn't seem to bother Eve, what else was there about him which was so terrible? The Bible says he was very subtle. (Genesis 3:1) That means he is very clever. In other places in the Bible he is pictured as one who is tricky. That is, he never does what you would expect him to do. He is deceitful. It also says that he often appears as "an angel of light." Jesus described him as one who sows his seed at night when no one notices, whose harvest looks so much like God's harvest that the difference would hardly be noticeable to man.

The truth is that when the forces of Satan tempt us to disobey God, most of the time we are unaware that it is Satan with whom we are dealing. Notice the way he tempted Eve:

1. He misrepresented God's rules and made them sound silly. (verse 1.) Do you ever get embarrassed because of something you as a Christian should believe but which others ridicule as being silly or impractical?
2. He made the woman doubt she was doing right after all. Perhaps she thought, "Maybe it is silly to be so strict. Perhaps it wouldn't hurt just this once."
3. It made her doubt that God really loved her. He seemed to be holding her back. (verse 5) Do people today ever believe that being a Christian holds them back from having fun and being as great as they could be? Where does this idea come from?

Satan had tempted Eve, but did he make her sin? Whom did God hold responsible for Eve's sin? We may be tempted by Satan, but when we sin it is our own decision, and we are responsible for it.

Things To Do

1. Ask your friends how they would define sin. Write down their answers and take them to class with you. Perhaps you can share with the others.

2. Read and learn Isaiah 53:6. Do you understand what iniquity means? Look it up in a dictionary and write down the definition.

3. Think about the sheep and goats on a farm. How do they act? Do they need a shepherd? Think about your life. Do you go your own way? Pray that you will be more yielding and obedient to God's leadership.

CHAPTER EIGHT

THE PENALTY OF SIN

Aim: I will recognize the seriousness of sin and disobedience toward God.

Background Scripture: Genesis 3:8-21; Romans 3:10, 23; 5:12; 6:23

Verses in Today's Lesson: Genesis 3:8-19

Memory Verse: "For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Romans 6:23).

A STUDY OF THE LESSON

Introduction

In Kenya a long time ago many pagans believed that sometimes their gods could change seasons as punishment to the people. In this case the chief would gather his people at a certain hill so they could pray together to their gods.

They would kill a black or white cow as a sacrifice, thus seeking to persuade the gods not to change the season.

When one looks carefully into the pagan mind, one sees that sin and forgiveness are not new concepts to them.

In the Bible, we find the concept of the supreme God, who is ageless, Almighty, the Creator, the Provider, the King and the Supporter. He is very remote, yet he controls the powers of nature and the affairs of man. When sin is committed, there will be no favor in the sight of God, our Creator, for the punishment of sin is death.

Interpretation

Read Genesis 3:8-10. When man sinned his relationship with God was spoiled. He was guilty before God. He showed his guilt by what he did. Adam and Eve heard the sound of God's footsteps in the garden. It had been their custom to be with God when he walked in the garden of Eden. Now, they hid themselves like children who had done wrong. When God asked them what they had done, they did not have the courage to tell him the whole truth. They felt guilty and did not want God to see them or to know what had happened.

Read Genesis 3:9 again. They could not remain hidden from God. God was looking for them. He called out a question, "Where are you?" The question God asked them was not put to gain information but to give them an opportunity for confession. God does not abandon the guilty. He seeks them. The question in this verse is one that comes to everyone who thinks he can hide from God.

Read verses 11-13. In these verses we read how Adam and Eve struggled with their guilt and made excuses for what they had done. Whose fault was it? Adam tried to clear himself and place the blame on God and on the woman he had given him. Adam betrayed the woman. The sin they committed together did not unite them. It drove them apart. They stood alone before God. The woman also made an excuse. She said her action was the fault of the serpent.

Read verses 14-19. Here we read of the penalty for sin. A curse was pronounced upon the serpent. Many say that verse 15 is the first prophecy of the coming of Jesus. He is the seed of the woman that shall bruise the head of the serpent. The penalty for the woman was much greater pain in childbirth and submission to the rule of her husband. Adam was told that the ground was cursed because of him. It would bring forth only thorns and thistles when left to itself. The only way it would bring forth food was by the hard labor of the man. We also read in verse 19 about death. Death is always related to sin in the Bible.

Application For My Life

We know we are sinners. No one has to be convinced of that. But we don't like to think that sin brings bad results in our lives. Our sins don't seem so bad to us. We do not enjoy being reminded of what they look like to God. But sins -- our daily, little, insignificant sins -- do bear their results in our lives.

What happens to you when you sin? To answer this question let's look at the experience of Adam and Eve. When they sinned they felt a lot of different ways they had never felt before. These feelings are called emotions. Sin brought them many new emotions. Let's first list the emotions we see in their experience. You will find that when you sin you feel these same emotions. Sin causes a person to feel this way.

1. First, there was fear. (Genesis 3:10) They heard God and they were afraid. Adam had never been afraid before. He had no reason to be. But since he had sinned he was afraid. Many times when we sin we are afraid to face others or afraid of being discovered.
2. Then, there was shame. (verse 10) "I was naked." Adam felt shame. He had never felt like that before. When you have done wrong, do you not also feel shame before others?
3. Adam and Eve felt guilt (verse 8). They hid themselves from God. This is always a result of sin. We don't feel that we can face God. We have done wrong and we know he will be displeased. We are guilty and we know it.
4. They felt resentment. They resented each other, and they resented that ugly snake. Adam blamed Eve, and Eve blamed the snake. Both of them felt it might even be God's fault. We never really feel that we are to blame for our sins.

Sins always make us feel very badly. That is why, when we Christians sin, we should do just what 1 John 1:9 tells us to do. (Read that verse.)

Things To Do

1. Memorize Romans 6:23.
2. Discuss with the class members what your friends had to say about sin. (from Things To Do last week)
3. Do you have a torch(flashlight)? Does it use batteries? Turn one of the cells(batteries) backwards. What happens? When the connection is broken it doesn't work. Sin is like a cell turned backwards. Our connection to God is broken.
4. Read 1 John 1:9. Confess your sins to God and ask his forgiveness.

CHAPTER NINE

VICTORY OVER SIN

Aim: I will understand that man's only hope for eternal life is in Jesus Christ.

Background Scripture: Genesis 3:22-24; Luke 19:10; John 3:16-17; Hebrews 7:25

Verses in Today's Lesson: Genesis 3:22-24

Memory Verse: "For the Son of man came to seek and to save the lost" (Luke 19:10).

A STUDY OF THE LESSON

Introduction

When people get angry with one another, they often try to say things which will annoy the other person and make him feel that he is despised. In some parts of Africa, if a man wishes to mock another man, he asks him if in his country the people live in trees, meaning by this that his relations must be monkeys. We often hear people who are angry call each other by the names of animals, like a dog or monkey. Now the reason that no one likes to be compared with animals is that, while animals have senses to know what is good for their bodies, God has given man another sense as well that tells us what is bad for our souls. That inward voice that tells us what is right and what is wrong is found in all men.

This voice of God in our hearts is called conscience. It is this that lifts man above animals and makes him to seek after God and to know his will. Today there is hope for man in Christ.

Interpretation

Then God said, "Behold, the man has become like one of us" (Genesis 3:22). This does not mean that man had started looking like God, for man had been created in the image of God from the beginning. It means that man now knew what was good, and he knew what was evil. In his independence he was like God. But with his new knowledge came the greatest tragedy of all time. Man had fallen away from God. He was lost.

Now God had to guard against a greater tragedy. There was a danger that man would take by force the fruit of the tree of life and live forever. To live forever in a state of sin would be against God's will. Man is now under the weight of God's punishment. He longs to be free of God's sentence of death. Man has always longed for immortality, but he could not enjoy eternal life in his present fallen condition. He had to be changed. He had to be made righteous and pure again.

So, God drove man out of the Garden of Eden. He was not sent out to wander aimlessly without a purpose. He was sent out to become a farmer. Paradise was lost. The entrance was heavily guarded, so it was not possible for man to regain it by his own strength. With the first tree (of the knowledge of good and evil) there was freedom. Man could decide whether or not he would disobey God and

eat of it. With the second tree there was no freedom. How is a man ever to find the eternal life he is seeking?

In our Memory Verse today we find the answer. God made a plan whereby man could come back to him. Jesus, the Son of God, was sent to the world, born of Mary, to live his beautiful life among men. He came with one great purpose: "The Son of man came to seek and to save the lost" (Luke 19:10). Man left God and became lost in his sin. Jesus came to look for him and bring him back to God. "In him was life..." (John 1:4). The eternal life man has longed for is to be found in Jesus. In him we regain paradise and much more, for now we have become the children of God. (John 1:12)

Application For My Life

Do you believe in eternal life? Certainly all Christians do. Perhaps you may be surprised to learn that most people, whether they are Christians or not, believe that there is a life after death. The thing people cannot agree on is how you get it. What are some of the ideas people have about eternal life that you have noticed in talking with them?

Let's list a few beliefs that are very common among people concerning the way to have eternal life:

If you live a good life and are good to people you will go to heaven.

If you are religious, that is, you believe in God and go to church occasionally that will get you to heaven.

If you accomplish a great deal in your life, that is, if you are successful in business or politics then God will accept you in heaven because of your position and great name.

If people like you and think you are a good person and say good things about you at your funeral, then God will accept their opinions, and you will go to heaven.

All of these ideas focus on the big word, "you." It all depends on "you," what you do, and how you relate to other people. The Bible says eternal life can not possibly be earned by us because of the good lives we try to live or the great things we accomplish. It says the best of us is not good enough to deserve eternal life. It all depends on Jesus Christ and our acceptance of him as our Lord and Saviour.

This chapter is about victory over sin. Jesus won that victory, not us. In order to have this victory we must accept Christ. There is no other way. In today's study there is only one application to make in your life. If you are to have victory over sin and eternal life, it must be in Christ.

Things To Do

1. Think about eternal life. What does it mean to you? Write down your thoughts about what it means.
2. Talk with at least two of the leaders of your church about their beliefs about eternal life.

3. Read and learn Luke 19:10.

4. In prayer, claim the victory over sin that Christ offers you.

CHAPTER TEN

CAIN AND ABEL

Aim: I will become aware that man's attitude in worship makes a difference to God.

Background Scripture: Genesis 4; Hebrews 11:4; 1 Chronicles 16:29; Psalms 95:6; John 4:24

Verses in Today's Lesson: Genesis 4:1-10; Hebrews 11:4

Memory Verse: "O come, let us worship and bow down, let us kneel before the Lord, our Maker" (Psalms 95:6).

A STUDY OF THE LESSON

Introduction

The God who created the heavens and earth requires man's obedience in worship. Cain and Abel were the first seed from Adam and Eve. Eve looked upon Cain, her first-born son, as a gift from God. When the son grew he became a tiller of the ground. His brother, Abel, was a keeper of flocks.

If you read Genesis 4:1-15 you will see that there is no indication in the Scripture that any requirement for offerings in worship had been given at that time. Cain brought of his harvest from the field, and Abel brought the firstlings of his flock. Abel's offering was accepted and Cain's rejected by the Lord. This made Cain angry at his brother.

Surely man's attitude in worship makes a difference to God. Cain's reaction toward God was expressed in his anger toward his brother. This shows that his heart was not right with God; otherwise he would have sought the source of his difficulty.

Interpretation

Because of their sin Adam and Eve had been put out of the Garden of Eden. Now they had to make a new life for themselves. Soon Eve became pregnant and bore a son. They gave thanks to God. She said, "I have gotten a man with the help of the Lord" (Genesis 4:1). What did they name their first-born son? Then they had another son. How happy they were! As the boys grew up, both of them worked hard. Cain was a farmer. What work did Abel do?

Read Genesis 4:3-4. One day Cain and Abel decided they would make an offering to God. We are not told that God required this of them. It was a natural thing for them to do. From the beginning man has known that he must worship God. Cain offered a part of his crop. Abel offered from his flocks. The Scripture said Abel offered the very best he had. It does not say this about Cain. There was something in the heart of Abel that was missing in Cain. Read Hebrews 11:4. What was it that Abel had that Cain did not have? Because of his faith God accepted Abel's offering. Because Cain did not have a real faith, God did not accept his offering.

Read verses 5-7. Cain was very angry. He was jealous of Abel. Even though God had rejected Cain's offering, he did not reject Cain himself. He would still talk with Cain and give him advice. God told Cain that his offering had not been accepted because his attitude was not right. There was something wrong with Cain's worship. He failed because of his sin. Sin is like a wild animal waiting outside the door to attack. But Cain had a freedom of choice which would enable him to overcome evil temptations. God said he must do this.

Read verses 8-10. Did Cain overcome his evil temptations? After Cain had killed Abel, God went immediately to Cain. He asked Cain where his brother was? Cain said that he did not know, but God knew that he did. How did God know? There has been a moral law from the very beginning. It says that life is sacred, and no man should take the life of another. Cain had broken this law. He was responsible to God for what he had done. Truly, he was his brother's keeper.

Application For My Life

Suppose as you were leaving church on Sunday morning after worship the voice of God would speak to you from heaven and say, "Your worship today was not good. I can not accept it." That would be very bad, wouldn't it? This is what happened to Cain. Though God does not speak to us in this way today, we do know that certain types of worship are not acceptable to him.

Perhaps we can look at the experience Cain had and learn some of the things that do not please God. The Scripture says plainly that Abel offered the best of his flocks. It says nothing about Cain's offering. Maybe the maize was a little wormy. Let us learn that when we worship we must give God our best. There must be no half-hearted attempt at praise and prayer.

It could be that Cain was only offering his sacrifice to fulfil a duty he felt toward his religion. Perhaps he felt it to be a tiresome duty at that! Do you ever feel that going to church is just a duty to be performed? Is it a routine that must be followed so you will be blessed by God?

What does the Bible tell us about the right way to worship? Read John 4:23. To worship the Lord in spirit and truth means to worship with all of your heart, honestly and openly. There must be no hypocrisy and nothing held back. The Bible also tells us that we must have faith as we worship God (Hebrews 11:6) for it is impossible to please God without it. Psalms 51:17 tells us that the sacrifice or worship God really wants from us is a broken heart. This means we come to God with sorrow for our sins and joy because of our forgiveness, and we humbly give ourselves a new to him. This is worship in spirit and in truth.

Things To Do

1. Review the ideas in "Application For My Life."
2. Ask yourself, "What is necessary for me to do in order to worship God?" In your book underline the sentences in that section which will help you worship.
3. Read Psalms 95:3-7. List the reasons for worshipping God.

4. Just now, do what Psalms 95 says. Come to the Lord, kneel before him with a thankful heart and praise him.

CHAPTER ELEVEN

NOAH

Aim: I will be aware of God's continuing plan of salvation for a sinful world.

Background Scripture: Genesis 6:8; Matthew 24:37-39; Hebrews 11:6-7

Verses in Today's Lesson: Genesis 6:5-8, 17-19

Memory Verse: "And without faith it is impossible to please him. For whoever would draw near to God must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who seek him" (Hebrews 11:6).

A STUDY OF THE LESSON

Introduction

"Where there are elders there is no need of worry," the old man said. "This is a proverb of our tribe, and so it must be true."

"But remember another proverb," said Daniel, a young Christian. "All wisdom is not gray-headed."

The old man smiled. Young Daniel had answered well. Then the old man spoke once again.

"We know about God. We begin the day with this prayer: 'God is good. He has kept us safe all night.'"

"That prayer is a good one," replied Daniel. "Let me share with you more about God. He gave us life and many blessings. But the greatest gift God can give is salvation, which comes by faith in Jesus."

"What is the greatest gift? Salvation?" asked the old man. "But what is salvation?"

"Let me tell you about salvation," said Daniel. "God's continuing plan of salvation for a sinful world can be seen in the story of Noah."

As we study today's lesson, we will understand how young Daniel explained salvation to the old man. We, too, can be witnesses of God's salvation.

Interpretation

Noah was a man of strong faith. Hebrews 11:7 explains that Noah did all he did because of his faith in God. God had told Noah to build a large boat called an ark. What a strong command: to build an ark on dry land! Do you think Noah understood why God wanted him to do this? Certainly those who watched him build it did not understand. Noah did just as God commanded him. He even went on board just at the time God told him to. Then God shut the door.

How long did Noah and his family stay in the closed ark before the flood waters came? (Read Genesis 7:10.) During that time do you think Noah began to doubt their reason for being in the ark? But God's word was true. The flood came, and all the earth was covered. All of the people and animals who were not in the ark died. Noah and his family were in the ark about nine months. The last forty days the ark was resting near the top of a mountain, but there was still too much water for them to leave the ark. What test did Noah make to see if the waters had dried up? (Read Genesis 8:6-12.) How anxiously they must have waited after sending out the dove! Finally the land had dried, and they were able to walk out of the ark. They knew God had saved them from a terrible destruction.

This experience of Noah has much to teach us. Let us look at some of the things:

1. Read Genesis 6:5-8 and 17. We learn about sin. It is not just evil deeds. It is a matter of our hearts and minds. The whole direction of life is wrong because of sin.
2. Read again Genesis 6:5-7 and notice what they teach us about God. First they tell us that God saw the sinfulness of man. We can not hide our sin from God. Second, they tell us that God's heart was grieved because of sin. Our sins break God's heart. Third, they tell us how serious sin is in God's sight. He cannot allow it. It must be punished.
3. Read Genesis 6:18-19 and notice how God's plan for saving man was to be continued in Noah. A covenant is a promise, an agreement. God was going to save Noah so through him his plan for saving the world might be carried out.

Application For My Life

Name some of the sins that you think are common in our world today. Probably most of the sins you think of first are actions, that is bad things that people do. These things are wrong, but there is much more to sin than things we do. Have you ever felt that there was something wrong in your life even when you have not done any of the bad things you think of as sins? Why do we sometimes feel guilty or wrong in our hearts when we can not think of anything we have done that is wrong?

Do you remember that recently we said sin always makes us feel badly? This is because sin is in our hearts before it is in our actions. Let us look at the way the Bible describes the sins of the people in the time of Noah and apply it to our lives.

The Bible says that wickedness was very great. Wickedness refers to actions. Sin is doing wicked things, but it is more than that. It speaks of their evil imaginations. This speaks of your mind. Sin is giving your mind over to evil thought.

But sin goes far beyond your mind. It speaks of the thoughts of the heart. Your heart is your inner self. Sin lives deep down inside us. This is where it all starts, and this is the main thing that is wrong with us. Our actions are wrong because there is wrongness inside us. That is why God, when he saves us, has to change us on the inside.

The story of Noah teaches us the necessity of obedience. Noah did exactly what God told him to do, at exactly the time and in the exact way that God told him to do it. What if Noah had made his own plan to save himself? What if he had decided that he could wait outside until it started raining? Obedience was necessary to his salvation. It is necessary to ours too. If we are saved we must do exactly what God has told us to do. What has God told us to do? Read Romans 10:9-10.

Things To Do

1. Take a piece of paper. Make two columns. In one column list action or doing sins, like stealing or lying. In the other, list thinking or feeling sins, like greed or pride.
2. Read Romans 10:9-10.
3. Look at your list again. Underline those sins which are in your life.
4. Read and learn Hebrews 11:6.
5. In prayer, ask the Lord to help you to live in such a way that is pleasing to him.

CHAPTER TWELVE

AFTER THE FLOOD

Aim: I will understand how God's new covenant with Noah is a blessing to all men.

Background Scripture: Genesis 5:32; 6:18; 9

Verses in Today's Lesson: Genesis 9:8-17

Memory Verse: "I will not violate my covenant, or alter the word that went forth from my lips" (Psalms 89:34).

A STUDY OF THE LESSON

Introduction

After the flood there was only one family to replenish the whole earth. Noah built an altar to the Lord and offered sacrifices of clean animals. The Lord responded to this act of worship by promising never again to destroy the earth because of man's sin.

The intentions of man's heart are evil, but God determined to deal with sinful man in a different manner. The meaning of the flood to sinful man is that God is righteous and requires righteousness on the part of his creatures. Then, after the flood, God established his covenant with Noah, in which each of them assumes responsibility. Noah began agriculture and started a new venture in civilization. The Bible tells us that Noah, who was righteous, got drunk after the flood and disgraced himself.

God established a new covenant with Noah and his sons, but sin continued.

Interpretation

The flood was over, but what an ordeal it had been for Noah and his family! They had spent months in the ark. It had been the only safe place while the world was being destroyed. But floods do not last forever. He had to leave the ark and face life again. How do you suppose Noah felt as he left the ark? Relieved? Grateful? Probably! But also surely he must have been afraid. Would floods come again? Was it safe to leave the ark? It was hard for Noah to go away from the ark for he might need it again. Every time the clouds came he would return, and he would want to run back to the ark. But it had not been the ark that had saved him. God had. Now God came to remove his fears.

God took away Noah's fears by making a covenant with him. The word, covenant, appears often in the Bible. It means a "solemn promise." When two persons or two groups have had a break in their fellowship, they come back together by means of a covenant. It is an agreement that says what each side will do to heal the fellowship.

Read about this covenant in Genesis 9:9-11. Who did God make the covenant with? It was very general. It was between God and all men (verse 9) and also included all living creatures (verse 10). That means it is still in effect for us today.

Read verses 11 and 15. What did God promise us in this covenant? He promised that the floods would never come and destroy all flesh again. God was telling us, "I will not solve the problem of sin that way." The flood came because of the sinfulness of man. But the flood did not take away sin. Sin continued in the life of Noah and the others that survived the flood. This covenant is telling us that in the future God will deal with the sins of man by his love and grace. He will forgive sinful men who will accept his grace instead of sweeping them off the earth as he did in the flood. In Jesus Christ God made a new covenant with man. (Matthew 26:27-28) He promised us that through the blood of Christ our sins can now be forgiven.

Application For My Life

We have already thought about how difficult it must have been for Noah to leave the ark. Do you have "arks" in your life that you are afraid to leave? We are afraid that if we leave them we will be in danger when the next storm comes. God uses things like arks, but we must not think arks can save us. He tells us to enter them; he also tells us to leave them. We must learn to trust God rather than things to save us.

How can we really learn to do this? Here is the most important thing: learn his Word and believe his promises. God made a covenant with Noah. A covenant is a solemn promise. God has made many solemn promises to us. God makes his promises to us for the times in our lives when we really need them. Often they begin with words like, "Do not be afraid," or "Do not worry." What are some of the fears you have? For every fear that you have, God has made a promise that he will help you. Search for these promises as you read your Bible. When you find one, draw a line under it and learn it.

When you find something God has promised, you never have to be afraid about that thing again. Read our Memory Verse for today, Psalms 89:34. What does God promise us in this verse? Read Titus 1:2. This verse tells us that God never lies. What he says is truth. What God has promised he will do. You can believe it.

When God made his covenant with Noah, he gave a sign of the covenant. What was the sign? (See Genesis 9:12-13.) When will this sign appear? (verse 14) Isn't it strange that the rainbow only appears at the time of the storm? You do not see a rainbow when there are no clouds in the sky and the sun is shining. But when the storm comes, God also comes and says, "Do not be afraid. I remember my promise." When we are afraid and do not know what to do, then we see the rainbow and remember that we can depend on God. He has promised, and he will do it.

Things To Do

1. Ask yourself, "When I see a rainbow, what do I remember?" After studying this lesson, you should always be reminded of a promise of God.

2. Read these verses and write down a promise of God: John 3:36; John 15:7; Isaiah 40:31; 1 Corinthians 10:13; Psalms 4:8.

3. Learn the Memory Verse, Psalms 89:34.

4. Determine to study your Bible to learn more of God's promises.

CHAPTER THIRTEEN

THE TOWER OF BABEL

Aim: I will learn of the judgment of God on man's disobedience and pride.

Background Scripture: Genesis 11:1-9; Acts 2:5-12; 1 Corinthians 12:12-13

Verses in Today's Lesson: Genesis 11:1-9

Memory Verse: "In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of his grace" (Ephesians 1:7).

A STUDY OF THE LESSON

Introduction

Moses watched the huge eagle rise swiftly in flight. The eagle's powerful wings lifted it rapidly into the sky. Higher and higher it flew. Moses watched until the eagle seemed no larger than a tiny spot in the sky.

Then, suddenly and strangely, the tiny dot which was the eagle appeared much larger. The giant bird was falling!

With head and wings crumpled back, the eagle plunged down, landing near Moses. He ran forward, stopping, staring at the eagle. Only one question was on his mind: why? Why did that powerful bird fall from the sky?

Moses soon saw the answer to his question. Slowly from the right wing of the dead eagle, crawled a small poisonous snake. How high the eagle had flown, but how swiftly he fell!

Moses wondered, "Could the eagle and the snake be a picture of people I know?" With money or education or pride, they climb upward like the people in our lesson today. But, like the eagle, something deadly often brings them down. Something deadly -- like sin.

In today's lesson we study about the judgment of God on sin.

Interpretation

After the flood the population of the world increased quickly. Everyone spoke the same language. There was no problem in understanding one another. The people moved around until they found a nice place to settle in a plain that would later be known as Babylon. Read Genesis 11:1-4. What important decision did they make? (verse 4) Why did they feel it would be good to build themselves a city? (verse 4)

When God came to visit their work, he was not pleased with what they were doing. Read Genesis 11:5-6. These verses do not explain why God was displeased. It sounds as if God wanted to hold them back from progress, doesn't it? Yet God has blessed and guided in the advancement and progress of the world through all of history. What do you suppose was the great sin of the people that so displeased God? There may be other sins, but notice these three:

1. The sin of disobedience. What was the first thing God told Noah and his sons when they got off the ark? (Genesis 9:1) Man had fulfilled part of God's command, "Be fruitful and multiply." But he was not fulfilling the second part, "to fill the earth." It was God's purpose that men should spread out over the whole earth. Building the city and tower was their effort to avoid doing the will of God. This would have interfered with God's plan for history.

2. They wanted God to come to them on their terms. It is believed that the purpose of the tower was to have a place where God could come and visit with man. But this was their plan, not God's. Man does not relate to God by his own achievements. It is only by the faith in his heart that he can have such a relationship with God.

3. The sin of pride. Men had a desire to be great. They felt there was strength in being together. They did not want to be scattered.

Read Genesis 11:7-9. What did God do to cause them to stop their building and to scatter over the earth? The word, Babel, means "confusion" or "mixed." There God "mixed up" the languages of man. Men who no longer understand one another have to separate. God continued to move through history.

Application For My Life

People often find it difficult to understand why God caused the people to separate at Babel. But the answer is not difficult. It was because of the sins of the people. Sin always divides. Perhaps we find Babel difficult to understand because we do not realize how serious our sins are in the eyes of God. Sin often seems so harmless to us. The sins of the people at the tower of Babel are repeated in our lives many times, and they do not seem so bad.

Building towers is more pleasing to us than doing the will of God. To do what God wants may be difficult, so instead we will stay where we are and build a nice "tower." Surely that can bring glory to God just as much as the unpleasant thing he wanted us to do in the first place! Jesus said, "If any man would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me" (Luke 9:23). So, in the spirit of Babel we begin to think, "I will follow Jesus, but the cross is too difficult, and I do not wish to deny myself. Surely it is enough just to be one of his followers!" So we try to follow Jesus without any of the sacrifice or any real commitment. The people at Babel were trying to do a part of what God wanted. They felt that he would overlook the rest. This is very displeasing to God.

It is also in the spirit of Babel when we want to do something genuine for God, but at the same time we want to be sure that it will be something others will know about and will praise us for. We want our towers to be high so others will be impressed. We find it very undesirable to do some hidden

but good service that no one will know about. Or, worse, they may know about it but not know who did it. Or, worse yet, they will probably think someone else did it! So it is the spirit of Babel that makes us want to build our towers high so others will see and know. Sins, such as pride, that do not seem so bad to us, are very bad in the eyes of God.

Things To Do

1. Read Ephesians 1:7. What is another word for “redemption”? Look in a dictionary or ask your pastor.
2. Read 1 John 1:8-10; 2:1-6. What is required of a Christian? Read verse 5. Obedience to his command is necessary.
3. Pray that God will enable you to do as verse 6 says, to walk in the same way he walked.