

### FAMILY DEVOTIONAL YEAR 1

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Generations of Grace 13248 Roscoe Blvd. Sun Valley, CA 91352

www.generationsofgrace.com

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ISBN 978-1-4951-6206-0

# WELCOME TO Generations of Grace



This curriculum has been designed to deepen your own study of God's word so that you might be able to properly understand and accurately teach each lesson. It's our prayer that this curriculum would be a blessing to your ministry and home as God uses it to encourage your family.



### Share the Lesson

- Five-Day Devotionals Guides the family through the Generations of Grace lesson, a cross-reference passage, and a passage about Christ to lead the family through the whole counsel of God.
- Generations of Grace Passages Reinforces the lesson that your child learned in Sunday School.
- Cross-Reference Passage Points to another passage that reinforces the central truth of each week's lesson.
- Christ-Centered Passage Connects each week's lesson to Jesus Christ and to the gospel.
- Explain Helps parents clarify key truths from the passage for their children.
- Ask See what the children learned and help them remember key facts from the passage.
- **Discuss** Help parents counsel their children in real life based on the passage.

### **Additional Resources**

Use these additional resources to help support your lessons and to knit together the church and the home, ensuring that what is taught on Sunday matches what is learned throughout the week.

- Coloring Book
- Craft Book
- Activity Book
- Student Journal
- Teacher Book

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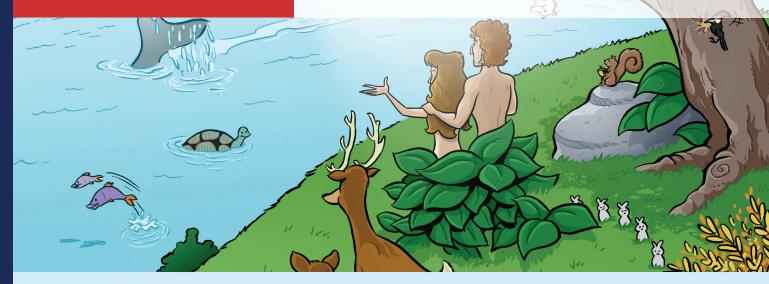
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### SHARE THE BIBLE LESSON WEEK 1

### God creates the heavens and the earth

Genesis 1:1-2:3



### DAY 1

God existed before creation • Genesis 1:1-2

### READ



Genesis 1:1-2

### **EXPLAIN ©**



Where did this world come from? It came from God. God has always existed. Nobody created God. He is eternal. He does not have a beginning or an end. He existed before creation and everything else exists because of Him (Col 1:16). This shows that the world we live in is personally designed. It is not random. It is not just a bunch of material that happened to come together in just the right way. Before any of the stuff existed, a person did. And before any of the stuff was made into trees and animals and oceans, the Spirit of God was already there making sure the earth would be formed in just the right way. So in the first two verses of the Bible, we learn that this world is about a person. It is about God. He has left His mark on this world for us to see. God made everything so that we could see how amazing He is and love Him more than anything in the whole world (Ps 19:1; Rom 1:20).

### ASK 🔞



- 1. Who was already existing in the very beginning? God was. God was never created. He is eternal, without beginning or end.
- 2. What does Genesis 1:1 say that God created? "God created the heavens and the earth."
- 3. So what existed first, things or a person? A person.
- 4. What does that show us about the world? It shows us that it is designed for people to know and love God, the best Person ever.

### DISCUSS



- 1. What are some ways God is different than anything in creation (Job 38:4-39:30)?
- 2. Do you value people more than things, or things more than people? How can you value people (God and humans) today?

#### God created a perfect world ● Genesis 1:3-30

### READ I

Genesis 1:3-30

### EXPLAIN **(9)**

### The truth of Genesis 1:3-30

Have you ever built something? Did your project turn out just like you planned it? No one has ever built anything as amazing as the universe—light and dark, sky and sea, dry land and plants, all kinds of animals in the sky, in the water, and on land, and even human beings! Everything had to be designed just right, or it would all die and fall apart. Only a perfect God could create something like this. Did you notice three things that were repeated several times? First, "God said." God is so powerful that when God orders something to happen, it happens, all the time. Second, "It was so." Everything went exactly according to His plan, because God is in charge. Third, "It was good." God's creation is excellent and perfectly designed. It is beautiful. It is just right for people like us to live, enjoy creation, and see God's goodness in the world around us. So next time you look up at the stars, or travel to the mountains, or visit a zoo, or even just take a breath, remember to worship God for His great wisdom, power, and goodness.

### ASK

- 1. How long did God take to complete the creation? He took six, 24 hour days of actual creation and one day in which He rested.
- 2. What did God create on each day of creation? (1) Day and night, (2) sky, (3) dry land and plants, (4) sun, moon, and stars, (5) flying and swimming animals, (6) land animals and man.
- 3. What did God do to create the heavens and the earth? He spoke and it was so.
- 4. Was there anything wrong with God's creation? No. It was good.

#### DISCUSS S



- 1. List some of your favorite things in creation. What do these things show you about the God who made them?
- 2. When God spoke, it happened exactly as He said. When God gives you instructions (in the Bible or through your parents), do you do exactly what He says?

### DAY 3

God rested from creation • Genesis 1:31-2:3

#### READ I



Genesis 1:31-2:3

### EXPLAIN **②**

#### The truth of Genesis 1:31-2:3

Why did God rest? Was He tired? Did He need a nap? No, God never gets tired (Isa 40:28). When God rested from His work of creation, it means He stopped creating. He stopped because the world was finished, but He also stopped on the seventh day to set a pattern for us to follow. He made the seventh day

holy, a day specially set aside to remember God. This day also gives us a pattern of work and rest. We were made to work for Him, and we should work hard. But we were also designed to rest in Him. We were not designed to work and work by our own strength, and we were not designed to depend on our own work. If we do, we will get tired and fail. So God kindly set aside the seventh day as a reminder that we need to depend on Him. So long as we find rest in Him alone, we can do our work for Him without getting tired and giving up (Isa 40:31).

### ASK 🔞

- 1. What did God do on the seventh day? God rested from His work of creation.
- 2. How did God make the seventh day special? He blessed it and made it holy.
- 3. How is the seventh day a pattern for us? The seventh day reminds us that we need to rest. We especially need to rest by depending on God and not on our own work.

### DISCUSS S



- 1. What are some ways that you regularly stop to worship God and depend on Him?
- 2. What is your favorite way to rest? What is our real and best rest (Heb 4:1-13)?

### DAY 4

Creation declares God's glory • Psalm 19:1-6

#### READ



Psalm 19:1-6

### **EXPLAIN ©**

The truth of Psalm 19:1-6

When you look at the world around you, what do you see? God made the clouds, sky, sun, moon, stars and planets to help us see His glory. But what is God's glory? It is when God shows us His goodness and greatness in a way that we can see. When you look at creation, you are seeing how amazing God is. You are seeing that God is the most important person in the universe. You can see His glory at any time, day or night. And you're not the only one. Every person gets this message. No one can say they did not know (Rom 1:20). No matter where a person lives, the message of God's glory is there for Him to see. Even a blind person gets the message, because everyone feels the warmth of the sun! Some people look at amazing parts of creation like the sun and want to worship them, but this psalm tells us that even the sun is just God's messenger. And what is the message? Worship God alone, because the whole universe is all about His glory.

### ASK 🔞



- 1. What is God's glory? It is God's goodness and greatness shown to us in a way we can see.
- 2. When does creation show us God's glory? All the time.
- 3. Who does creation show God's glory to? To every person.
- 4. Why do the sun, moon, stars, sky, and all the rest, exist?

To show us God's glory so that we will worship Him.

#### DISCUSS S



- 1. Can anyone complain that they did not know they were supposed to worship God (Rom 1:19-20)?
- 2. Think of one of two amazing parts of creation that you noticed this week. Does this lead you to love and trust God more?

### READ 📖

Hebrews 1:1-4

### EXPLAIN **②**

The truth of Hebrews 1:1-4

Genesis 1:1 says, "In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth." But guess who was there doing the creating for God? Jesus was! He was there with God because He is the Son of God. This shows us three amazing things about Jesus. First, because He is God's Son, He is God's heir. Everything that belongs to God belongs to Jesus too, including the whole universe. Jesus made everything, and everything exists for Him (Col 1:16). Jesus created not only the physical earth but also time, space, energy, and matter, since the word "universe" or "world" in verse 2 means "the ages." Second, because Jesus is God's Son, He is also just like God in every way. One way Jesus is like God is that Jesus holds all of creation together so that it does not fall apart. Can you even imagine how powerful Jesus must be to do that? Third, as God's Son Jesus rules over the world with God. He deserves to be in charge, because He also gave His own life to pay for sins. Jesus really is the most amazing person ever.

### ASK 🔞



- 1. What are three things that show us that Jesus is the best person ever? He is the heir of all things, He is exactly like God, and He rules over the world.
- 2. What does it mean to be an heir? It means that whatever a father owns belongs to the son too.
- 3. What did God create through Jesus? Everything.
- 4. Why doesn't creation just die and fall apart? Jesus holds it all together by His power.

#### DISCUSS S



- 1. Who made you? Who do you exist for? If you exist for the sake of Jesus, how does that affect the decisions you make each day?
- 2. Think of some reasons why you have treated people unkindly. What were you trying to get by doing so (stuff, control, comfort, fun...)? By sinning to have these things, weren't you treating these as better than Jesus?

### **NEXT WEEK**

God creates man and woman

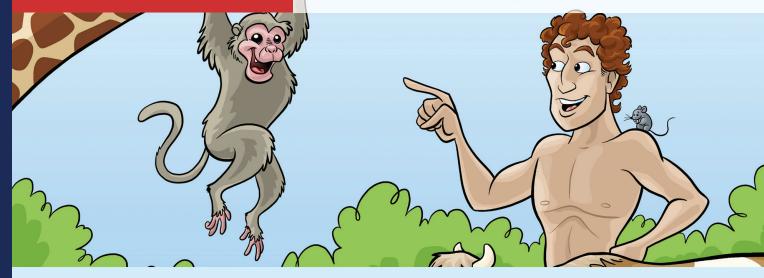
Genesis 1-2



### SHARE THE BIBLE LESSON WEEK 2

### God creates man and woman

Genesis 1:26-31: 2:7-24



### DAY 1

God created man in His own image ● Genesis 1:26-31

### READ 🛄

Genesis 1:1-2

### EXPLAIN (9)

The truth of Genesis 1:26-31

What makes you different than animals? The most important difference is that you are a little picture or copy of who God is. God wants your life to show people how amazing God is. But be careful: even though you are like God, you are not God. Here are three ways you are like God: first, just as God is relational, you are designed to be in relationships. But you aren't exactly God, so you are not to be the center of your relationships; God is (John 17:21). Second, God is creator and ruler, and God gave you power and authority over creation like His own (1:28). But you are not God, so you do not rule for yourself. You are God's servant, and you must use His resources (1:29) to honor Him. Third, God's creation shows that He is good (1:31). You also were made to be good. But you are not God, so you do not get to decide what is good; God does. Therefore, you are the clearest image of God when you live in relationship with Him, serve Him, and obey His standards of right and wrong.

### ASK



- 1. How are humans different from the rest of creation?
  - Only humans are made in the image of God.
- 2. What is an image? A picture or copy. The image represents the original and shows what it is like.
- 3. What are three ways you are in God's image, unlike any animal? You are relational (knowing, loving, communicating, etc.), you have authority over creation, and you are a moral being (capable of choosing right or wrong).
- 4. How can you best show God's glory? By having a close relationship with God, serving God on earth, and living by His standards of good and evil.

### DISCUSS S



- 1. What happens when you use a toy for something it was not designed for? What happens when you live in a way you were not designed for?
- 2. What can you do today to live as God's image in all three ways?

#### God prepared man for his task • Genesis 2:7-24

### READ

Genesis 2:7-24

### EXPLAIN (1)

The truth of Genesis 2:7-24

Do you remember the three ways people are like God? One way is that we have authority to take care of creation. But since we are not God, we need God's resources to do our job. So in the beginning, God made sure that Adam had all the resources he needed to do his job. God made Adam just right and gave him a beautiful home full of good things. But the most special gift was a woman. Unlike any animal, a woman is a perfect match for a man, because both man and woman are in God's image (1:27). Adam was so amazed at this gift that he wrote the first human words ever recorded—a love poem. This was also the first marriage, showing us that marriage is joining together one man and one woman for life. The husband is the leader and the woman is the helper, but both have one goal: to love and honor God more than anything else. Today many people try to change marriage to be something different, but if it is not what God designed, then it is not marriage and does not glorify God.

### ASK 🔞

- 1. Did God give Adam everything he needed to do the job God gave him? Yes—a nice home, food, clear instructions, and a perfect wife.
- 2. Why is a woman a helper just right for a man? She is created in the image and likeness of God just like a man is (1:27).
- 3. What is marriage? One man and one woman joined together for life.
- 4. What is the goal of marriage? To love God and show how amazing He is.

### DISCUSS 🤙



- 1. Has God given you everything you need to live successfully for Him (Josh 1:8-9; 2 Pet 1:3)?
- 2. How do some people try to change what marriage is today? Why do they want to do this (Rom 1:21-27)?

DAY 3

God graciously made man to rule creation • Psalm 8:1-9

READ |



Psalm 8:1-9

### EXPLAIN **②**

The truth of Psalm 8:1-9

Isn't it amazing that people like us are in the image of God? Think of how great God is! He is the ruler over all of creation. He set the moon and stars in their places and the sky shows how majestic He is. But even though God is so great, He has chosen to make humans the most important part of all of His creation. God has made humans a little lower than God. We

are not God, but we are like a picture or copy that represents God. As we use the authority He has given us to care for creation, we show God's glory even more than the stars. But why did God choose humans? Is it because we are so great? No, it is because God is kind and gracious. He has chosen to show favor to humans. He also loves to use the weak and lowly so that no one can brag about themselves (1 Cor 1:28-29). Instead, when the world sees what God does through weak people like us, they will know that God is the only one who deserves the credit.

**DAY 3 CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE** 

### ASK 🔞

- 1. What do the sky, moon, and stars show about
  - They show how great and majestic God is.
- 2. What is the most important part of creation? Humans. Only after humans were created did God say "very good" (Gen 1:31).
- 3. How are humans crowned with glory and honor? God gave humans authority and power to rule over His creation.
- 4. Why does God choose to work through weak and lowly people? So that he alone gets the glory (1 Cor 1:28–29).

### **DISCUSS** 9



- 1. What does a person who lives for their own honor say and do? What does a person who lives for God's honor say and do?
- 2. What are some ways you can rule over creation in your own area of life (examples: cleaning your room, doing your homework)?

### DAY 4

Jesus is the image of the invisible God  $\bullet$  Colossians 1:15–17

#### READ



Colossians 1:3-20

### EXPLAIN **©**

The truth of Colossians 1:15-17

Do you remember what makes humans special? They are created in the image of God. But because of sin, we have not been a perfect picture of God like God designed us to be. Like God, we are able to accept or reject things with our will, but unlike God we do not have pure motives or always choose what is good. We are not holy like God is holy. Every single human has failed—everyone, that is, except Jesus. Jesus is the only human who is the perfect image of God. He is exactly like God in every way (Phil 2:6). He is so much like God that He is God Himself living as a human (John 8:58; 10:30-33). Colossians 1:16-17 tells us that Jesus is exactly like God in three ways: (1) He is the Creator of all things, (2) He has always existed, and (3) He sustains the universe. Because of all this, Jesus is the "firstborn of all creation" (1:15), which means that He is the owner of all creation. It all exists because He made it, and it all exists for His honor.

### ASK 🔞



- 1. Who is the only human who is the perfect image of God?
  - Jesus.
- 2. How is Jesus the perfect image of God? Jesus perfectly represents God and shows what God is like.
- 3. How much is Jesus like God? Jesus is so much like God that He actually is God.
- 4. What are three ways Jesus is the same as God? (1) He is the Creator of all things, (2) He has always existed, and (3) He sustains the universe.

### DISCUSS S



- 1. Since Jesus is the best human ever and the point of all of creation, do you think it is a good thing to know Him? How can you know Him?
- 2. Is Jesus the most important in your heart? To find out what else you might love and serve more than Him, list some things you get angry about when you don't get to have them?

### READ 📖

Hebrews 2:5-10

### EXPLAIN **②**

The truth of Hebrews 2:5-10

Do you remember who the only human is who has ever been a perfect image of God? Jesus is the only one. Since He is the only one, He is also the only one who has total authority over creation. All humans were created to have authority over creation for God's glory, but Jesus is the only one who has perfectly accomplished that mission. He accomplished His mission perfectly because He lived entirely for God's honor, and we know that He lived only for God's honor because He obeyed even to the point of death. Because of this, God crowned Him with glory and honor above every other person. But what is amazing is that the honor Jesus received is a blessing for us too. It is a blessing because Jesus shares His reward with us. Because Jesus did what we all failed to do, we can be saved and will enjoy glory and honor with Him. This is just one more reason why Jesus is the best person ever. He is even better than the greatest angel. He is the one we should love and trust.

### ASK 🔞



- 1. How was Jesus a little lower than the angels? He became a human and died.
- 2. Why did God reward Jesus with glory and honor and authority over all creation? Because Jesus lived completely for God's honor.
- 3. Why can we be blessed through Jesus? Because Jesus completed our mission in His life, and He paid for our failure by His death.

#### DISCUSS



- 1. Many people want control but do not want anyone to control them. What does Jesus' example teach you about the way to get and use authority?
- 2. Because of sin, we often do not have control over creation, so we turn to idols in our hearts for help. When things are not going your way, what do you turn to for refuge or as a way of escape? Why should you turn to Jesus instead?

### **NEXT WEEK**

Man rebels against God

Genesis 2:15-17; 3:1-24





Adam and Eve sinned • Genesis 2:15-17; 3:1-6

### READ

Genesis 2:15-17: 3:1-6

### **EXPLAIN ©**

The truth of Genesis 2:15-17; 3:1-6

Why do you do bad things? You sin when you listen to temptation. Temptation is making sin look good. That is how Satan got Adam and Eve to sin. God had given Adam clear instructions not to eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. But Satan tempted Eve in four ways. First, Satan waited until she was weak. She was alone, away from Adam, her leader and protector. Second, Satan guestioned what God said. Third, Satan lied to the woman by saying that she would "not surely die." Fourth, Satan tempted the woman by suggesting that God's command was unfair. Eve listened and then also persuaded Adam. They both *sinned*, disobeying God's instruction. Their sin was more than just eating fruit. It was about knowing good and evil on their own, without allowing God to decide what is good and evil. They wanted to be in charge instead of God. This first sin is called the fall, when both Adam and Eve and all humans after them (except Jesus), became separated from God by sin (Rom 5:12).

### ASK 🔞



- 1. What could Adam and Eve eat in the Garden of Eden?
  - Fruit from any tree except the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.
- 2. In what four ways did the serpent tempted Eve?
  - The serpent tempted when Eve was weak, questioned God's word, lied, and made God's instructions seem unfair.
- 3. Why was it wrong to eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil? This is wrong because Adam and Eve wanted to decide what is right and wrong instead of letting God decide.

### DISCUSS S



- 1. Think about a sin you did recently. How were you weak at the time? How did the sin look good? Were you trusting God's instructions, or did you forget, ignore, or reject them?
- 2. What are some ways people today try to decide right and wrong apart from God?

#### Adam and Eve were separated from God • Genesis 3:7-13

#### READ



Genesis 3:7-13

### **EXPLAIN ©**

#### The truth of Genesis 3:7-13

Remember how temptation makes sin seem good? The good feeling does not last. Sin might give temporary pleasure, but the pleasure quickly turns into much greater pain. Adam and Eve's sin led to death, both spiritual and physical (2:17). They eventually died physically (5:5), but spiritual death began immediately. They ceased to be the perfect images of God they were designed to be. First, their morality was polluted as they felt awful guilt and shame over their sin. Second, their relational design was damaged as they no longer felt safe with each other or with God. Third, as we will read next time, their position as rulers was harmed, as nature would no longer submit to human care. In the end, when we sin we fail to accomplish our purpose as people made in God's image. We were made to live for His honor, but when we sin, we live for ourselves. Adam and Eve would not even honor God by rightly confessing their sin. Even though God gave them the opportunity to repent, they refused to confess and instead blamed others. Sin certainly is a killer.

### ASK 🔞

- 1. Did sin make Adam and Eve feel good? No. They felt guilty, ashamed, and afraid.
- 2. When God came to the garden, what did Adam and Eve do?
  - They hid from Him. Sin broke their relationship with God.
- 3. How did Adam and Eve die? They eventually died physically, but they died spiritually right away by being separated from God, who is their source of life and purpose for living.
- 4. After sinning, did Adam and Eve want to honor God or themselves? Themselves. They blamed others for their sin to try to make themselves look good.

### DISCUSS (\*)



- 1. When you sin, what does it do to your relationship with God (Isa 59:2)?
- 2. Describe a time you sinned recently. How did the sin look good at first? When you sinned, how long did it feel good? In the end, what pain did your sin cause?

### DAY 3

God punished Adam and Eve • Genesis 3:14-24

#### READ I



Genesis 3:14-24

### EXPLAIN **②**

#### The truth of Genesis 3:14-24

Sin has painful consequences. God judged Adam and Eve's sin with a curse. First, God cursed the serpent. He cursed the animal that had become Satan's tool. and Satan himself who had appeared as a serpent. Second, God judged the woman. She would find pain in the place where she should have found her greatest joy-in her role as mother and wife. In marriage, she

would be tempted to control her husband instead of submitting to him, and her husband would be tempted to control and use her instead of loving her. Third, God judged the man by cursing the ground. Work was a blessing Adam enjoyed before the fall, but now work would be hard, painful, less productive, and end in death. Because of Adam's sin, all creation suffers (Rom 8:20). Yet even in punishing, God was gracious: the woman could still have children, marriage would still exist, and the ground would still produce food. God is just, but He is also kind.

**DAY 3 CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE** 

### ASK 😱

- 1. How did God judge Satan? Satan would one day be crushed.
- 2. How did God judge the woman? He gave her pain in childbirth, the desire to control her husband, and the pain of having an unloving husband.
- 3. How did God judge the man? By cursing the ground.
- 4. How was God kind even in punishing? God did not completely destroy. He still allowed children, marriage, and food.

### **DISCUSS** 🦪



- 1. List some painful or sad things. Why has God brought such suffering into the world? (To get people to realize that there is something wrong with life apart from God.)
- 2. Adam's sin caused harm to many other people. Think of a time you sinned recently. How did your sin harm other people besides yourself?

### DAY 4

God promised Adam and Eve a Savior • Genesis 3:14-24

#### READ



Genesis 3:14-24

### **EXPLAIN ©**

The truth of Genesis 3:14-24

Adam and Eve's sin is very sad, but there is good news too. When God judged Adam and Eve, He also gave hope. A child would be born one day who would defeat Satan once and for all. This Savior would suffer because of Satan, but in the end the Savior would triumph. God also graciously provided clothes to cover Adam and Eve's nakedness, a symbol of the Lamb of God who would one day die to cover the sins of all who repent (John 1:29). In the midst of sin and judgment, the story ends with hope and faith. Adam named his wife Eve because he believed God's promise that she would bear children, and that one of her descendants would be the Savior. Adam believed that his sin would one day be washed away, and his relationship with God restored. This happened when Jesus was came to earth. When we trust in Him, our sinful selves are crucified with Him, and His righteous life is put into us. Because of that, we may once again live as friends of our holy Creator.

### ASK 🔞



- 1. Who is this child of the woman? Jesus.
- 2. What would Jesus do to Satan? Jesus would crush Satan. He would win the final victory.
- 3. What would Satan do to Jesus? He would cause Jesus to suffer and even die—but Satan would not win.
- 4. What did God do to make clothes for Adam and Eve? God killed an animal, just as Jesus would die to cover

### DISCUSS S

our guilt and shame.



- 1. When you sin, where do you turn for help? When life is hard, what do you put your hope in?
- 2. Adam believed God's promise of salvation. What do you believe?

#### READ 📖



Romans 5:12-21

### EXPLAIN **②**

#### The truth of Romans 5:12-21

Adam's sin in the garden has been passed down to every human, just like pollution in a spring pollutes the entire river that flows out of it. A child does not need to be taught how to be disobedient or selfish. Every person comes into this world with a sin nature. This sinful nature also brings death with it. So Adam, the first human, brought sin and death to all humans. But Jesus is the second Adam. Adam disobeyed, but Jesus perfectly obeyed. Adam chose to live by his own rules, but Jesus always did what His Father said. Adam lived for himself, but Jesus gave his life for others. While Adam brought death, Jesus brings eternal life. While Adam brought condemnation, Jesus brings justification. Adam brought slavery to sin, but Jesus brings victory over sin. So don't trust yourself like Adam did. Trust Jesus, and He will rescue you from sin and death.

### ASK 🔞



- 1. What bad things came to us because of Adam's sin? We all experience death, condemnation, and slavery to sin.
- 2. Who is affected by Adam's sin? Everyone. Adam represented all mankind in his sin.
- 3. Why is Jesus called the second Adam? Jesus lived the kind of life that Adam (and every person) was supposed to live.
- 4. What good things come because of Jesus' obedience? Jesus offers eternal life, righteousness, and freedom

#### **DISCUSS**



- 1. Does your sin ever cause you to be sad and hopeless? How does Jesus give you hope?
- 2. After hearing about who Jesus is and what He has done, how should a person feel about Jesus? How do you feel about Him?

### **NEXT WEEK**

Cain rebels against God Genesis 4:1-15





Cain offered false worship • Genesis 4:2-5a

### READ

Genesis 4:2-5a

### EXPLAIN (9)

The truth of Genesis 4:2-5a

Where does sin begin? It begins with wrong worship. Worship is loving, trusting, valuing, honoring, and serving someone or something with great eagerness and affection. Cain and Abel both knew that God wanted them to worship Him, since they both brought offerings to God. Abel worshiped God from the heart. He was so devoted to God that he gave his best. He valued God's holiness so much that he brought a blood offering to atone for his own sin. But Cain did not bring his best. His heart was not in it. He also did not bring a blood offering, which seems to show that Cain did not take his own sin seriously. He saw no need for blood to atone for his sin as the first step in worshiping God. These two things go together: Cain did not love God, and so he did not hate sin. Abel shows true worship. Cain shows false worship. Abel had a real affection for God. Cain was just going through the motions. But Cain did not fool God. God looked into the heart, saw Cain's hard heart, and rejected him.

### ASK 🔞



- 1. What offering did Cain bring to the Lord? Cain brought some of his fruits and vegetables.
- 2. What offering did Abel bring to the Lord? Abel brought the best part of his flock.
- 3. Was God pleased with the offerings Cain and Abel made? He was pleased with Abel's but not with Cain's.
- 4. Why did God accept Abel and his offering? Because Abel's offering showed that he worshiped God from the heart.

### DISCUSS 🦃



- 1. What do you do to worship God? Do these things come from a real affection for God in your heart?
- 2. Do you take your sin seriously? When you sin, do you confess it quickly and fully, or do you ignore it or act like it is not so bad?

### Cain rejected God's call for repentance • Genesis 4:5b-8

#### READ |



Genesis 4:5b-8

### EXPLAIN **②**

#### The truth of Genesis 4:5b-8

What should we do when we realize we have sinned? We should not do what Cain did. Instead of admitting his sin, Cain got angry, and his face showed it. But God did not give up on Cain. He asked Cain questions to help Cain see his sin and repent. Repentance is sorrow over sin, rejecting sin, and turning back to God instead. God reminded Cain that he could be accepted just like Abel if he would do what is right, and God warned Cain about the power of sin if he chose not to repent. God was being very kind to give Cain this chance to get right with God. But Cain refused to listen and or repent. Instead, Cain got even more angry, so angry that he murdered his own brother. He tried to lash out at God by killing Abel, someone made in God's image. Cain's sin grew worse and worse until in the end it led to death. So don't think you can enjoy some sin and keep it under control. Your only hope is to reject sin quickly and accept God's grace (Rom 8:13).

### ASK 🔞



- 1. What was Cain's attitude when he found out that the Lord did not respect his offering? Cain became very angry and his face showed it.
- 2. What does this show about what Cain was really worshiping? He was not worshiping God. He was worshiping what others thought about him.
- 3. Did God give Cain a chance to be forgiven? God told Cain that if he did well, he would be accepted.
- 4. How did Cain's sin get worse? Cain became more angry and killed Abel.

### **DISCUSS**



- 1. What is at the very center of true worship (Deut 6:5)?
- 2. Think through the last week. Is there any sin that you have not confessed yet? Take time to repent by confessing sin and coming back to worship God.

### DAY 3

God punished Cain for his rebellion • Genesis 4:9-16; 23-24

#### READ I



Genesis 4:9-16; 23-24

### EXPLAIN (1)

The truth of Genesis 4:9-16; 23-24

Would you give Cain another chance even after he had killed his own brother? God did. God is more merciful than we are. But Cain lied and refused to take responsibility for his sin. He tried to ignore his crime. but God knew that he had murdered his brother. So God punished Cain in a way that fit his crime. Since the ground had been covered in Abel's blood, the ground

would no longer grow food for Cain or give him a place to call home. God was being perfectly just, but people who sin are blinded by their sin and blame God for being unfair. Cain was blind to God's justice-instead of repenting, he pitied himself and blamed God. Even then God was merciful. He made a way to protect Cain's life. Yet Cain's heart never softened. He had no love for God. He never repented, and his sin encouraged even more sin in his children after him. The story of Cain shows that the only way out of sin and death is to admit our guilt and turn to God for mercy.

### ASK 🔞

- 1. Did Cain repent when God gave him another chance?
  - No. Cain refused to admit what he had done to Abel.
- 2. How did God punish Cain? Since the ground had been covered in Abel's blood, the ground would no longer grow food for Cain or give him a permanent home.
- 3. Did Cain understand that God's punishment was fair?

No. Instead of repenting, he pitied himself.

### **DISCUSS** 🦼



- 1. How has this story shown you something about what God is like? Is He worth loving, trusting, and even confessing our sin to Him?
- 2. When you choose to sin and keep sinning without repenting, how do you feel (Ps 32:3-4; Isa 59:2)?

### DAY 4

Abel offered his sacrifice by faith • Hebrews 11:4

#### READ



Genesis 4:2-5a

### EXPLAIN **(9)**

#### The truth of Hebrews 11:4

What made the difference between Abel's offering and Cain's? It was that Abel gave God his offering by faith. Abel trusted God's promises. He understood the problem of sin that came from his parents, but he also believed God's promise to them that a Savior would come. He knew that salvation would come at a high cost (Gen 3:15). He had seen how an animal had to die to cover his parents' shame (3:21). And he believed all that and offered the appropriate sacrifice. Because of his faith, God considered Abel to be righteous (Heb 11:4; Rom 4:4-8). Cain trusted his own way, but Abel depended on God. That is what God wants from us: faith. He does not demand perfection. Even Abel sinned, otherwise he would not have needed to sacrifice an animal. What matters is not perfection, but trust. Do you really believe God and depend on Him to bring you back to a right relationship with Him? Is your heart set upon Him, or do other desires control your attitudes, words, and actions?

### ASK 🔞



- 1. Why was Abel counted righteous? Because he believed God. He had faith.
- 2. How did Abel show his faith in God? He showed his faith by offering the kind of sacrifice required by God with a right heart.
- 3. What does God desire from us? God desires not perfection but trust.

### **DISCUSS** Se



- 1. If someone says he believes, but he does not worship God the way God says or with a full heart, what does this show about his faith?
- 2. If someone has faith in God, what will he be willing to give up in order to have God?

### READ 📖

Hebrews 10:1-10

### EXPLAIN (9)

The truth of Hebrews 10:5-10

Why did God accept Abel's sacrifice but not Cain's? Last time we learned it was because Abel offered his sacrifice in faith (Heb 11:4), but Cain did not. Abel offered the right kind of sacrifice with the right kind of heart. But not even Abel's sacrifice was perfect, because many more sacrifices were needed. Abel was not the Savior Adam and Eve hoped for. But much later, Jesus was born. He offered the perfect sacrifice. He did not offer a sheep or a bull or anything like that. He offered Himself. God prepared a body for Jesus in order to make Him the perfect sacrifice. Jesus always did exactly what God wanted, and that even included dying for sins. Through Jesus' perfect offering, all the rest of us can be sanctified. When we trust Jesus. our sins are washed away forever. Also, we now have Jesus' example of how to worship the right way. We truly worship God not by offering Him this or that, but by giving up our entire selves to Him. We worship when we choose to live every inch of our lives to please Him.

### ASK 🔞

- 1. Was Abel's offering perfect? No. It was the right offering and showed Abel's heartfelt worship, but it was still only an animal.
- 2. Why did Jesus take on a human body? To be the perfect sacrifice.
- 3. How did Jesus live as a perfect sacrifice? All He wanted was to do what the Father wanted Him to do, even if that meant dying for sin.
- 4. How can we offer true worship? First by becoming holy by faith in Jesus, then by living only to do what God wants us to do, like Jesus did.

### **DISCUSS** 🦼



- 1. What do you trust to make you holy in God's sight? Your sacrifices, or Christ's?
- 2. How do you decide what to do each day? Based on what is most fun? Based on meeting people's expectations? Or based on a desire in your heart to please and honor God?

### **NEXT WEEK**

God floods the earth

Genesis 6:5-7:24



### SHARE THE BIBLE LESSON WEEK 5

### God floods the earth

Genesis 6:5-7:24



### DAY 1

The LORD was disappointed by man's sin ● Genesis 6:5-7

### READ |



Genesis 6:1-7

### EXPLAIN (9)

The truth of Genesis 6:5-7

Don't play around with sin! It is deadly. Adam's sin infected the whole human race and now the earth was full of very sinful people. Even worse, there were wicked "sons of God," who were fallen angels (1 Pet 3:19-20; 2 Pet 2:4-6; Jude 6-7). When they married human women, the image of God in man was in danger of being destroyed. This sin had to be destroyed before the line of the promised Savior perished. When God saw all this wickedness. He was sad and full of wrath. The word "regretted" does not mean that God was taken by surprise, but it expresses His sorrow. The word "grieved" expresses God's violent hatred of sin. It is God's wrath, God's severe anger against sinners and His holy hatred of sin. Even in His wrath, God was patient and fair. He gave mankind another 120 years to repent. He also sent His Holy Spirit to restrain human wickedness. But mankind did not listen to the warning. The human race deserved to be destroyed, and God would give them what they deserved.

### ASK 🔞



- 1. Were the people who lived in Noah's time good or bad? They were very bad.
- 2. Where did God see evil in people? In their hearts. Their loved and chose sin instead of God.
- 3. What did God decide to do because people sinned so much? God decided to send a flood to destroy sinful men.
- 4. Why does wickedness grieve God? God hates sin, because sin rejects God and God's good and holy character.

### DISCUSS (



- 1. Write out a definition of sin (Matt 5:22, 28; Rom 7:7; Gal 5:17, 24).
- 2. When you do or say something sinful, where did that sin start (Prov 4:23; Mark 7:21)? So where does change need to begin, in your behavior or in what you like or dislike in your heart?

### The LORD was pleased with righteous Noah • Genesis 6:8-7:16

### READ |

Genesis 6:8-7:16

### EXPLAIN (1)

#### The truth of Genesis 6:8-7:16

In the middle of horrible sin and death, there is always hope. God showed grace to one man, Noah. Grace is God's gift of undeserved favor, as when a parent loves his child not based on the child's behavior but simply because the child is his own. God took pleasure in Noah and gave him a blessing that he did not deserve or earn. God's favor produced righteousness in Noah. Noah stood out so much from the wicked people around him that Genesis 6:9 describes his righteousness in three ways: Noah was (1) righteous, (2) blameless, and (3) walked with God. "Righteous" means that he loved and did what was right. "Blameless" means no sin stained his character. And "walked with God" means that Noah enjoyed a very special friendship with God, just as Enoch did (5:22). Noah responded to God's grace with faith, obedience, and love from a pure heart. When God told him to make an ark and gave instructions for filling it, Noah did exactly as God commanded. His obedience proved yet again that Noah was truly a righteous man.

### ASK 🔞

- 1. Did God keep at least one person righteous in the middle of all the wickedness? Yes. God gave grace to Noah, and Noah was righteous.
- 2. What three things do we learn about Noah that were pleasing to God? He was righteous, blameless, and walked with God.
- 3. What did God tell Noah to make? God told Noah to build an ark.

#### DISCUSS (•



- 1. How can this story help you trust God even when it seems like evil is everywhere?
- 2. How often do you think about God's favor and friendship? What can you do and how can you live so that you experience God's good presence in your life (Pss 1; 11:7; 15; 2 Chr 16:9; Heb 10:35-38; 11:1-7).

DAY 3

God destroyed everything but those in the ark • Genesis 7:17-24

### READ I



Genesis 7:17-24

### **EXPLAIN ©**

The truth of Genesis 7:17-24

Even when God destroys, He makes a way to be saved. God drowned the wickedness that had polluted the earth, but He saved Noah. The flood was massive. with the earth erupting and the sky pouring rain for 40 days. Even then the water kept covering the earth for 110 more days. It even covered all the mountains. Everything that breathed was killed—except the family

on the ark. God kept Noah and his family safe; He even supernaturally shut the door of the ark for Noah. By saving Noah, God also saved the line of Christ. God was keeping the promise He had made to send a Savior to crush Satan (Gen 3:15). In saving Noah, God also showed that He always saves a remnant, a small group of people who remain faithful to God (Rom 11:5). Finally, the ark shows how God always saves. He makes a way for anyone to be saved, but only those who trust His way will be saved. Anyone could have got on that ark, but if they did not, there was no other way to be saved.

DAY 3 CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE

### ASK 🔞

- 1. How did God destroy the sinful people? God destroyed the earth with a flood.
- 2. Did God save anyone from the flood? Who? Yes. Noah and his family.
- 3. Was there a way for anyone to be saved? Yes. Anyone could have believed God and got on the ark.
- 4. How was God keeping His promise about a Savior by rescuing Noah?

Because God saved Noah's family, Jesus could one day be born.

### DISCUSS 🦃

- 1. To be saved from the flood, there was one ark and one door into the ark. How many ways are there to be saved from sin and death (John 10:9; 14:6)?
- 2. Pick a few qualities about God seen in this story (such as power, justice, wrath, kindness, faithfulness) and spend some time praising Him for them.

### DAY 4

Noah prepared the ark by faith • Hebrews 11:7

#### READ |



Hebrews 11:1-7

### EXPLAIN **(9)**

#### The truth of Hebrews 11:7

Would you build a huge boat if you had never seen a flood? Would you keep building it if there was still no flood for 120 years? Noah prepared the ark by faith. He had never seen rain, and he had never seen God. Yet he obeyed God and spent 120 years fulfilling God's command to build a massive ark. When God told Noah that He would flood the earth, Noah did not argue, make excuses, complain, procrastinate, or question God. Rather, Noah responded to God's message with great respect and awe. He had conviction of things not seen and demonstrated his faith by his obedience to God. He believed God's word and preached, calling the world to repent (2 Pet 2:5). He also inherited righteousness by believing the message he preached. Noah's faith was proven genuine because (1) he responded to God's word, (2) he rebuked the world, and (3) he received God's righteousness. Like Enoch before him. Noah walked with God in faith and obedience (Gen 6:9).

### ASK 🔞



- 1. What kind of faith did Noah demonstrate? His faith was being convinced of what God said even when he could not see it.
- 2. How do we see Noah's faith? Noah (1) responded to God's word, (2) rebuked the world, and (3) received God's righteousness.
- 3. How long did Noah keep believing before the flood actually came? 120 years.

### DISCUSS 🦃



- 1. List some of God's promises that apply to you. Are you convinced of these promises, even when you do not see them coming true yet?
- 2. List some of God's instructions to you. Do you keep these instructions? Do you want to keep these instructions? What do you attitude and actions show about your faith in God?

### READ 📖

Matthew 24:36-51

### **EXPLAIN ©**

The truth of Matthew 24:36-51

When will Jesus come back? Why is it taking so long? Jesus said that no one knows the day or the hour when He will come again, not even the angels or the Son, only the Father. The coming of Jesus will be like the days of Noah. In the days of Noah the people ignored the signs of God's judgment. They saw Noah building an ark for 120 years and refused to acknowledge their wickedness. The people rejected Noah's preaching and never repented (2 Pet 2:5). They did not care that God was going to judge them. They cared only about the fun they were having each day. They only realized their mistake after the flood began, after it was too late. Before the Son of Man returns people will also ignore the signs. They will reject those who preach about repentance. They will not care about the Son of Man. They will only realize their mistake after the Son of Man comes and their last opportunity to repent is gone. So be alert, be ready, and be faithful. Stay loyal to Jesus, because He will return in the end.

### ASK 🔞

- 1. What were the people doing before the flood in the days of Noah?
  - They carelessly went about their daily lives.
- 2. Was God patient in Noah's day? Yes. Noah warned people to repent for 120 years.
- 3. Has God given us signs of what it will be like before the coming of the Son of Man? Yes. There will be wars and rumors of wars, famines, earthquakes, tribulation, and the abomination of desolation (24:3-35).
- 4. Will people notice or care about these signs? Hardly anyone will. It will be just like the days of Noah.

#### DISCUSS (



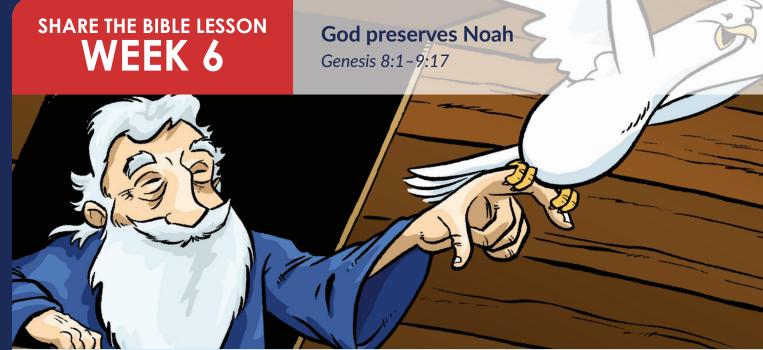
- 1. God warned the people for 120 years before sending the flood. What does that show us about God (Rom 2:4-5; 2 Pet 3:8-10)? How do you respond to God's kindness and patience?
- 2. What kinds of things did you think about yesterday? Was your mind focused on living for this world or for the coming kingdom of Jesus?

### **NEXT WEEK**

**God preserves Noah** 

Genesis 8:1-9:17





God remembered Noah 

Genesis 8:1-17

### READ

Genesis 8:1-17

### EXPLAIN (1)

The truth of Genesis 8:1-17

Imagine what it would be like to be in a boat in a storm for 150 days straight! To Noah and his family, it might have felt like it was never going to end. But God never forgot Noah. God was faithful to the covenant, which is a promise or an agreement, that He made to Noah before the flood (6:18). Because God kept Noah in mind, the water on the earth began to recede and God began to restore the earth. He caused a wind to pass over the water, and the water subsided. He stopped the water from coming up out of the earth and from coming down from the sky. Next, the bottom of the ark touched the under-water mountains of Ararat, then a few days later the water was low enough that the mountains were not under water anymore. Even so, Noah waited for God. When God finally gave instructions to leave the ark, Noah obeyed. His toes touched dry ground for the first time in over a year. God remembered Noah. He was faithful, or trustworthy, doing exactly what He said He would do.

### ASK 🔞

- 1. Did God forget about Noah? No. Noah stayed on God's mind.
- 2. What is a covenant? A promise. An agreement.
- 3. How did God keep His promise to Noah? God caused the water to dry up.
- 4. How did Noah know that the earth was
- drying out? He sent a raven, then a dove three times. The dove brought a branch the second time, then did not return the third time.

### DISCUSS S



- 1. Have you ever felt lonely? Have you have felt like no one is thinking about you? How comforting is it to know that God always keeps you in His mind if you belong to Him?
- 2. How have you or your parents seen God's faithful love in your lives (Ps 107)? What does this show about the kind of person God is (Deut 7:9)? How do you respond (Deut 6:5)?

### Noah obeyed God and worshiped Him • Genesis 8:18-22

#### READ |



Genesis 8:18-22

### **EXPLAIN ②**

#### The truth of Genesis 8:18-22

Since God is so faithful, what should our hearts and lives be like? Noah shows us. First, Noah responded to God's faithful love by trusting and obeying God's instructions. Noah sent out a raven once and a dove three times (8:8-12), and by the end Noah knew the earth was dry. Even so, Noah did not get out of the ark until God told him to (8:13-14). Second, when he finally left the ark, Noah continued to worship Yahweh. Yahweh is God's name that emphasizes His faithful love, and it is used in these verses instead of "God" to emphasize God's faithful relationship with Noah and Noah's response of worship. Noah worshiped by offering a burnt offering, which is an animal totally burned on an altar in order to show total commitment to God. This showed Noah's devotion to God in faith and love, and it also showed that Noah knew he needed to be cleansed from sin by the blood of a sacrifice. Noah shows us that since God is so kind and faithful, we should trust Him to save us, love Him from the heart, and follow His instructions.

### ASK 🔞

- 1. Did Noah impatiently rush out of the ark? No. Noah waited until God said to get out.
- 2. When Noah and his family got off the ark, what did Noah do? Noah worshiped God by burning an offering of
- 3. What did God think of Noah's offering? He was pleased.
- 4. What did God promise? God promised that He would never again send a flood to cover the entire earth.

#### DISCUSS S

thanks to God.



- 1. The following traits show a heart that is not trusting God's faithfulness: anger, impatience, anxiety, greed, and demanding to be in control. Confess any of these ways you have not trusted the faithful God this week.
- 2. Are you in love with God because of His faithfulness? What are some opportunities you have today to express your love for Him in your attitude, words, and actions?

### DAY 3

God blessed Noah and his sons ● Genesis 9:1-17

#### READ



Genesis 9:1-17

### EXPLAIN **②**

#### The truth of Genesis 9:1-17

How incredible is this blessing from God! After nearly destroying the whole world with a flood, God gives people and every living thing another chance—an even better one, blessed, protected, and secure. God renewed His original creation. It was like a second creation. God's "wind" passed over the water (8:1), which is the same word for Spirit in Genesis 1:2. God then renewed His original commands to man to be

fruitful and multiply (cf. 1:28) and rule over creation (cf. 1:28). God also provided all the plants as food, just as in the beginning, but now he also added meat too. He also gave laws to protect human life and even respect animal life. The renewed land, the commands to multiply and rule, the gift of food, and the protection of life are all blessings from God. The story ends with one final blessing, God's promise to never flood the whole earth again. He gave the sign of the rainbow as a reminder of His promise. May the beauty of the rainbow always awaken us to thank God for His blessings.

### ASK 🔞

- 1. What did God do after judging the earth with a flood? He blessed Noah and every living thing.
- 2. How many blessings can you remember? A renewed land, a new opportunity to be fruitful and multiply to serve God, food (plants and animals), protection of life, and a promise never to destroy the earth with a flood again.
- 3. What law did God give to protect human life? If any man or animal killed someone, he or it was to be put to death.
- 4. What sign has God given that He will not destroy the earth with a flood again? The rainbow.

### **DISCUSS** S



- 1. List some specific ways God has blessed your home. Make sure to include how certain rules or commands are also blessings.
- 2. Did the new start God gave to the world solve the problem of sin? What is the source of sin (Gen 8:21)? Has God provided a solution to our hearts' natural leaning toward evil (2 Cor 5:17)?

### DAY 4

God displays His majestic power in nature ● Psalm 29:1-11

#### READ I



Psalm 29:1-11

### EXPLAIN **②**

The truth of Psalm 29:1-11

Do you like storms? What do you think or feel during a storm? David felt God's power and thought about God's glory—God's greatness put on display. His holiness shown for all to see. David begins by calling everyone to praise God for His glory and power, and to realize that God is worth all our devotion because of how stunningly holy He is. Storms a just a small picture of how great and powerful God is. The wind and the rain, the banging thunder and fiery lightning all of it is designed to cause us to worship God. But the storm also reminds David of the one greatest storm ever, the flood. The word for "flood" in verse 10 is only used here and in Genesis 6-8. The little storms we experience are just a reminder of the power and glory God showed when He sent the worldwide flood. So when you are in a storm, worship God for His righteous wrath and power. Also, respond with love, since a God so powerful to rule over the storms is also powerful enough to bless and strengthen His people.

### ASK 🔞



- 1. What does Psalm 29 describe to show God's power and glory?
  - It describes a huge storm.
- 2. What does God use to control powerful storms? His voice. He is so powerful He only needs to give the command, and nature responds.
- 3. What does God's control over storms we see remind
  - It reminds us of His complete control over the flood.
- 4. Is there anything God does not control? No. His power over the flood shows us that He is in control over every aspect of our lives.

### DISCUSS 🦃



- 1. Nature is powerful, but it responds to God's word. Do you respond to God's word? If someone heard the way you respond to your parents, what would they say is controlling your life?
- 2. Does God's glory captivate your attention? What are things that have distracted your attention away from God this week? How has this affected the joy and peace in your life?

### READ |

1 Peter 3:18-22

### **EXPLAIN ©**

The truth of 1 Peter 3:18-22

Peter uses the story of the flood as a picture of salvation through Jesus. In the days of Noah, God was patient with a sinful world while Noah called people to repent. God provided the ark as a way for anyone who repents to be saved, but only eight people trusted God enough to get on that ark. Much later, when Jesus was on earth, God was patient with sinful people as Jesus called them to repent. God provided Jesus as a Savior, and anyone who repents and trusts in Him is saved. Believers pledge their commitment to Christ through baptism, which is like the salvation that Noah and his family experienced. Noah had to commit himself to God's plan by getting on that ark, just as believers are baptized as a "pledge of a good conscience" to Christ (3:21). This pledge or appeal to Christ is an agreement to enter the ark of safety, the Lord Jesus, by faith in His death and resurrection (cf. Rom 10:9-10; Heb 9:14: 10:22). All who entrust themselves to Him will be rescued from death just like Noah was rescued from the flood.

### ASK 🔞

- 1. What does Peter compare salvation to? He compares it to Noah and his family being saved on the ark.
- 2. How is Noah's salvation from the flood like baptism?
  - Noah got on the ark as an act of faith in God to save Him from the water, and baptism is going into water as an act of faith in Jesus to save from sin and ultimate death.
- 3. In what way does baptism save you? The act of going under water does not save. What saves is the commitment to Jesus you are expressing by your baptism (a pledge or appeal toward God).

### DISCUSS S



- 1. If Jesus returned today, would you be like the people on the ark or like the people caught in the flood?
- 2. Have you been baptized? If so, why? If not, why not?

### **NEXT WEEK**

God judges the nations at Babel

Genesis 11:1-9



### SHARE THE BIBLE LESSON WEEK 7

### God judges the nations at Babel

Genesis 11:1-9





### DAY 1

The people had a sinful plan • Genesis 11:1-4

#### READ



Genesis 11:1-4

### EXPLAIN (9)



#### The truth of Genesis 11:1-4

Did the flood fix the sin problem? No, for the story of the tower of Babel shows that sin is rooted in every human heart. At the tower of Babel, mankind rebelled against God in three ways. First, they rebelled by trying to control God or relate to God on their terms and not on His terms. They did this by wanting a tower reaching into heaven. This sort of tower probably had a shrine on top, as if it were a house of a god or way for a god to come down to bless people on earth. But God cannot be controlled or manipulated to give people what they want. He does not come to man on their terms, but instead requires humans to submit to His terms. Second, the people sinned by being proud. They wanted to make a name for themselves instead of honoring God's name. Third, they decided to stay together in one place in direct opposition to God's command to spread out and fill the earth (9:1). Thus they sinned in their attitudes and actions, and for their three sins they deserved to be punished.

### ASK



- 1. What had God told Noah and his family to
  - Spread out over the earth.
- 2. Did the people obey? No. Many of them settled in one place.
- 3. What did they do? They built a tower to reach to heaven and make a name for themselves.
- 4. What were the three ways they sinned? They (1) transgressed their God-given boundaries, (2) boasted in themselves instead of in God, and (3) disobeyed God's command.

#### DISCUSS S



- 1. What are some common things you say or ways you behave at home, at church, or at school? Do these show a desire to bring honor to God or to yourself?
- 2. You probably never built a huge tower, but have you tried to control God? Do you ever pray, go to church, read your Bible, or behave nicely, to try to get God to give you what you want?

### God defeated the people's sinful plan • Genesis 11:5-9

### READ |

Genesis 11:5-9

### **EXPLAIN ©**

The truth of Genesis 11:5-9

If it weren't so tragic, it would be funny how easily God defeated mankind's best effort at rebellion. He first "came down to see" the tower, as if their tower were so puny God had to stoop to see it! Next, the words and ideas of verses 5-9 match those in verses 1-4, showing how at each step God ruined the people's plan. First, the people said, "Come, let us," and God responded with "Come, let us" (11:3, 7). Second, they made bricks, but God confused them—the Hebrew for "confuse" has almost identical letters as "make bricks" but all mixed up (11:3, 7). Third, the people spoke to "one another" but God made the unable to understand "one another" (11:3, 7). Fourth, the people settled together "there," but God drove them out from "there" (11:2, 8). Fifth, "the whole earth" spoke the same language, but God confused the language of "the whole earth" (11:1, 9). Sixth, the people sought a name for themselves for honor, so God gave them one for dishonor—"Babel," which means confusion. God undoes every effort of those who stand against Him.

### ASK 🔞

- 1. Was God impressed with the people's big tower? Not at all. It was not impressive to God.
- 2. Did any of the people's plans succeed? No. God undid their plans at every step.
- 3. What happened to their language? It was confused so they could not communicate with each other.
- 4. What did the people do when they could not communicate? The people scattered over the whole earth.

#### DISCUSS S



- 1. Have you ever done something even though you knew it was wrong? Why did you still choose to do it? Did it turn out well for you?
- 2. How does your strength, speed, intelligence, or skills compare to the greatness of God? So should you brag about yourself or about God (Jer 9:23-24).

DAY 3

The LORD will judge the wicked ● Psalm 7:1-17

READ I



Psalm 7:1-17

### EXPLAIN **(9)**

The truth of Psalm 7:1-17

The story of the tower of Babel can be terrifying, since it shows us what to expect if we oppose God. But it is also comforting to those who put their trust in God. It shows that in the end the wicked will not overcome the righteous. It is this truth that motivates David's prayer in Psalm 7. David's enemies are against him, but he knows that he has acted with integrity and

honor. So he finds comfort in knowing that God will judge the wicked. God's judgment is certain, because He is the judge who sits on the throne. His judgment is full of wrath, because He is a righteous God. His judgment is just, because He gives anyone a chance to repent, but in the end He causes the wicked to be punished by the same trouble they planned for others. This is a terrible reality for those who hate Him and refuse to repent. But to those who trust and love Him, it is a reason to rejoice. Instead of worrying or seeking revenge, we can be at peace and do good, leaving vengeance to God (Rom 12:19-21).

**DAY 3 CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE** 

### ASK 🔞

- 1. What did David do when people were trying to harm
  - David prayed for God to defend him and judge the unrepentant.
- 2. Why wasn't David afraid of God's judgment? David knew he was innocent in this case, even though he was not sinless.
- 3. Why is God's judgment so just (so fair)? God uses wicked people's own plans against them.
- 4. Why can the righteous have confidence in God? Because God is righteous and will judge righteously.

### DISCUSS 🦃



- 1. Is there any sin in your life that you have not repented of yet? Repent before God judges as Psalm 7 says He will.
- 2. Are there any people in your life who wrongly seek to harm you or other innocent people? How have you responded? In fear? In revenge? How does Psalm 7 teach you to respond?

### DAY 4

A believer's confidence is in the righteous God ● Psalm 11:1-7

#### READ



Psalm 11:1-7

### **EXPLAIN 1**

#### The truth of Psalm 11:1-7

As in Psalm 7, in Psalm 11 David finds comfort knowing that God is a righteous judge. David has taken refuge in God, but there are those who want him to doubt God, telling him to flee as a bird until it comes to its mountain of safety. This seems like good advance, since it seems like the wicked are just about to attack and destroy the righteous. There seems to be no hope, because the very foundations of society are wicked through and through, undermining the law and order that restrain evil. But David will not flee because he knows there is no other refuge besides God. He trusts God, because God knows exactly what is going on. He watches and examines, and nothing fools Him. He knows who are righteous, and He shows love to them. He also knows who are wicked. He hates them and will burn them up. Because God undoes every scheme of the wicked, we should fear Him and not people. And we can love and trust Him, because He does what is right and will not let the wrong win in the end.

### ASK 🔞



- 1. What does a bird do when it is in danger? It flees, flying aimlessly back and forth until it arrives at its place of refuge.
- 2. Where is the LORD? He is in His holy temple. He is on His throne which is in heaven.
- 3. If God is in heaven, what does He see? Everything. The wicked cannot hide, and the righteous will not be forgotten.
- 4. What is the greatest reward for loving God and His righteousness? Seeing God's face (Ps 11:7).

### **DISCUSS**



- 1. What is society like today? List some ways that people praise wickedness and hate righteousness. Use Psalm 11 to help you pray about these things.
- 2. Do you love God only for what He can do for you, or do you love Him for who He is in Himself-for His perfect righteousness? Is seeing His face you greatest desire?

### READ |



Matthew 25:31-46

### EXPLAIN **②**



The truth of Matthew 25:31-46

Judgment at the Tower of Babel was nothing compared to the final judgment to come. In the Olivet Discourse, Jesus gives the most severe and sobering warning of judgment. After the Tribulation, Jesus will judge the nations. He will divide them into two groups, the saved (righteous) and the unsaved (wicked). The saved are those who have received the righteousness of Jesus through repentance and faith. The wicked are those who have spurned the perfect righteousness of Jesus, refusing to acknowledge Him as Lord of their life. They rejected Christ and His people. They are condemned for their works, because their works show that they do not trust or love Jesus. By failing to serve Christ's people, they failed to serve Christ, proving that they did not belong to Him and had no faith in Him. Jesus will judge all the nations on that day. Believers will reign with God forever, while the faithless will suffer with the devil in hell forever.

### ASK 🔞



- 1. When will Jesus judge the nations? When He comes to sit on His glorious throne after the Great Tribulation.
- 2. Who are the sheep and the goats? The sheep are believers. The goats are unbelievers. There are only two groups.
- 3. Why are the righteous allowed to inherit the kingdom? God prepared it for them. Their good deeds do not earn it, but they show that they have loved and trusted Jesus.
- 4. How long do the reward and punishment last? Both are eternal—eternal punishment or eternal life.

#### **DISCUSS**



- 1. How do you treat other believers, especially the most needy ones? What does this show about your faith and love for Jesus?
- 2. What are some practical ways you can love the least of Christ's people this week?

### **NEXT WEEK**

God makes a promise to Abram

Genesis 11:27-12:9





Abram belonged to a chosen family ● Genesis 11:27–32

### READ

Genesis 11:27-32

### **EXPLAIN ②**

The truth of Genesis 11:27-32

The earth had been flooded and the line of the Messiah preserved, but the problem of sin continued. So God chose to call and bless one family that the Messiah would be born from. He chose someone from the line of Shem, the son of Noah who was especially devoted to God (9:26). This choice connects back to God's promises to Noah and Adam, but it also has two problems. The first problem is idolatry. God chose the family of Terah. Terah lived in Ur, then in Haran, two cities that were centers of moon worship. Terah himself was an idol worshiper (Josh 24:2). Terah did not worship God like his ancestor Shem had. How would God overcome the idolatry in this family and bring the Messiah through them? Besides the idolatry, there was another problem: no children. God chose Terah's son Abram, but Abram's wife was barren. unable to have children. So the story that begins here gives hope by connecting back to God's promise of a Savior, but it also sets up problems that only a great God can solve.

### ASK 🔞

- 1. Did the flood solve the problem of sin? No. The Tower of Babel shows that sin is still around because it comes from the human heart.
- 2. What family line was Terah from? From the line of Shem, the faithful line connecting back to Adam.
- 3. What was the problem with Terah?

  Terah lived in idolatrous cities and
  worshiped idols. God would need to get
  Abram away from that.
- 4. What was the problem with S? She could not have children.

### **DISCUSS**



- 1. Did God choose Abram because of anything Abram had done? What does this show you about God's plan of salvation?
- 2. Have you ever felt like there were too many problems for God's promises to come true? How does it compare to the problems in this story?.

#### God called Abram • Genesis 12:1-3

### READ

Genesis 12:1-3

### EXPLAIN (9)

#### The truth of Genesis 12:1-3

Isn't God's blessing to Abram amazing? Abram was not anything special; he came from an idolatrous family and he had a barren wife. Yet God chose to bless him and the whole world through him. God promised seven blessings, showing that His promises to Abram were full and perfect. First, God promised to make Abram a great nation, even though his wife could not have children. Second, God promised to bless him personally. Third, God promised to make his name great. At Babel the people tried to make their own name great, and they ended up with a dishonorable name. But if Abram would honor God, God would give Abram an honorable name—Abraham, the "father of many" (17:5). Fourth, God promised to make him a blessing to others. Fifth, God promised to bless those who bless him, and sixth, to curse those who curse him. Seventh, God promised to bless all the families of the earth through him. Adam's sin harmed all humanity, but God was going to undo the curse completely. Hundreds of years after Abram, one of Abram's descendants was Jesus, the Savior of the whole world.

### ASK 🔞

- 1. What did God do to Abram? God blessed him.
- 2. Did God bless Abram because of something special about Abram? No. Abram came from an idolatrous family and had a barren wife.
- 3. What kind of name did God promise to Abram? A great name—an honorable name.
- 4. Would God bless only Abram's family? No. God promised to bless all the families of the earth through him—through Abram's descendant Jesus.

#### DISCUSS (



- 1. Do you honor your own name by bragging and doing what you want, or do you honor God's name by praising and obeying Him? What is the result of each of these (Matt 16:25)?
- 2. List as many blessings as you can that are available to you through Jesus, the descendant of Abram (Matt 5:1-12; Eph 1:1-14; Rev 19:9; 20:6; 22:7, 14). Thank God for these.

DAY 3

God led Abram to a promised land • Genesis 12:4–9

#### READ 📖



Genesis 12:4-9

### **EXPLAIN ②**

#### The truth of Genesis 12:4-9

God promised amazing blessings to Abram, but Abram had to receive them by **faith**. Abram had to trust God alone because God's blessings are all part of a personal relationship with God. Relationship is clear in the name used for God here: LORD, or Yahweh, is the name of God that emphasizes His covenant relationship with His people (12:1). By calling Abram to leave his home, God was calling him to leave the

idols behind and instead follow God's guidance alone. Abram was already 75 years old, and he did not even know where God would lead him. But he walked by faith, not by sight. The pattern of his journey was prayer, then progress, prayer, then progress. Twice he stopped to build an altar and worship the LORD. The first altar was at Shechem, right in the middle of the land God was going to give him. In response to Abram's faith, God promised this land to Abram and his descendants, adding the land as one more blessing to the seven already given. Abram's example shows that God loves to help and bless those who are committed to Him (Heb 11:6).

### ASK 🔞

- 1. How did Abram receive God's blessings? By faith. By believing what God said and trusting God alone.
- 2. How can you tell that Abram believed? He followed God's instructions, even when it was hard and he didn't know where he was going.
- 3. What did Abram do during his journey? He stopped several times to worship God.
- 4. What happened when Abram arrived in the land of Canaan?
  - God promised Abram that Canaan would belong to his children.

### **DISCUSS** 🦼



- 1. Abram received the promises by faith. How can you also be blessed along with Abram (Gal 3:9)? Does the way you live show that you are trusting God alone?
- 2. Are there any idols you still need to get rid of? Anyone or anything you are trusting or living for more than God? Anything you want so much that you sin to have it?.

### DAY 4

Abram obeyed God's call by faith • Hebrews 11:8-10

#### READ |



Hebrews 11:1-12

### EXPLAIN **(9)**



Abram received God's blessings by faith, but what is faith? Faith is (1) confidence that the promises we hope for our true, (2) certainty that things we cannot see are real, (3) belief that God exists, and (4) belief that God rewards those who seek Him. This is the kind of faith Abram had. He was sure about the things God promised. When God called Abram, he immediately obeyed. He left his homeland, friends, and pagan beliefs. God promised the land to Abram, and Abram walked in the land God had promised him. But Abram never owned the land or settled down in it. He realized that there was an even better home than any land on this earth. He looked forward to his heavenly home, knowing that the physical land God promised him was just a taste of heaven to come. In this way Abram believed what he could not see. He had confidence that God was faithful to keep His promises, so Abram waited, watched, and lived by faith.

### ASK ?



- 1. What is faith?
  - Confident assurance of things hoped for, conviction of things not seen, belief that God exists and rewards those who seek Him.
- 2. How did Abram show his faith? Abram immediately obeyed God's command.
- 3. Did Abraham, Isaac, or Jacob permanently settle in the promised land? No.
- 4. What city was Abram looking forward to? Heaven.

### DISCUSS 🦃



- 1. What things are most real to you? What motivates you, occupies your thoughts, and influences your decisions the most? Fix your mind on things above (Col 3:1-4).
- 2. Describe a decision you or someone you know has made by faith in God's promises. How has God proven to be faithful?

#### READ |

Galatians 3:5-22

#### **EXPLAIN ©**

The truth of Galatians 3:5-18

We are constantly tempted to think that we have to do something to earn God's blessings. In Paul's time, the Jews misapplied the law given through Moses and acted like you had to keep that law in order to earn God's favor. But Paul explained that the blessings were promised before the law, and Abraham received the promises not by keeping the law, but by believing God. That's it—just believe what God says. When the law came through Moses, it was never intended to be the way of salvation. Rather, it was designed to reveal the lack of faith in people's hearts and drive us to put our hope in Christ alone. Since the law was never meant to change God's promises to Abraham, we can share in God's promises to Abraham by responding the same way he did—by faith. Believe God's promises, and put your trust in the promised seed of Abraham, which is Jesus. Then, go on living in dependence on God's grace, not by your own strength, and He will continue to accomplish His work in you.

## ASK 🔞



- 1. What came first, God's promises to Abraham or God's law through Moses? God's promises to Abraham.
- 2. Are God's promises something we must earn by good behavior? No. They come through faith.
- 3. Who is Abraham's individual seed? Jesus. Every promise to Abraham is fulfilled in Jesus.
- 4. How can you be saved and experience God's blessing? By living by faith—trusting and depending on God.

#### **DISCUSS**



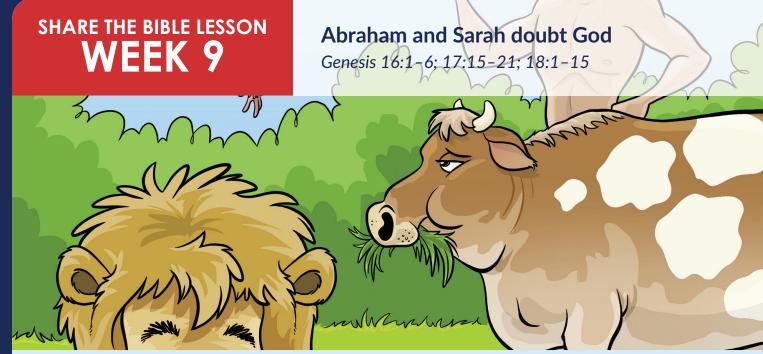
- 1. LHow do you sometimes act as if you must earn God's blessing? Do you treat God's commands as a checklist that will get you what you want, or do you follow God's commands because you trust Him?
- 2. Do you do what is right because you have to or because you want to? Pray for a heart that loves and trusts God from the inside out.

## **NEXT WEEK**

**Abraham and Sarah** doubt God

Genesis 16:1-6; 17:15-21; 18:1-15





Abraham and Sarah were impatient ● Genesis 16:1–6

### READ 🛄

Genesis 16:1-6

### EXPLAIN (1)

The truth of Genesis 16:1-6

What happens when we get impatient about God's promises? God had promised that Abraham would have a son of his own. Abraham believed God, and God counted Abraham's faith as righteousness (15:6). But ten years passed and Abraham still had no son. So Sarah offered her maid, Hagar, to Abraham to have a child for her. This was not unusual in that time. It was legal for a maid to have children for her mistress. But Abraham acted without seeking God's perspective. This was not so much a lack of faith as impatience (Rom 4:19-21), since Abraham was still confident that God would give him a son and God had not yet specified that the son would come through Sarah. But through impatience, Abraham tried to make God's promise happen in a human, worldly way. What was the result? Abraham and Sarah's sin created conflict in their marriage, conflict in their home, and conflict between Ishmael's descendants and Isaac's descendants that continues even today in the Middle East. In the same way, our impatience can never cancel God's promises, but it can create a lot of unnecessary pain along the way.

### **ASK**



- 1. How long had Abraham waited since God had promised a son? 10 years.
- 2. What did Sarah tell Abraham to do? Have a son with her maid Hagar.
- 3. What happened in Abraham's family when Hagar became pregnant? Hagar and Sarah were mean to each other.
- 4. What other pain came because of Abraham and Sarah's impatience? Ishmael's descendants have been and continue to be enemies of Isaac's descendants.

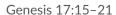
### **DISCUSS**



- 1. Have you ever had to wait a long time for a special present or a fun vacation? What was the waiting like? What are some promises from God that you are still waiting for?
- 2. What sorts of things do you get impatient about? How do you act when you are impatient? Does your impatience make things better or worse?

#### God strengthened Abraham's faith ● Genesis 17:15-21

#### READ |



### **EXPLAIN ©**

#### The truth of Genesis 17:15-21

God's promises can be so incredible that they are hard to believe. Yet God is kind, and He patiently strengthens our faith. God strengthened Abram's faith by making a covenant with him (17:2). A covenant is an agreement or promise. Then God named Abram "Abraham," which means "father of many" (17:5). God also named Sarai "Sarah," which means "princess," because kings would come from her. But how could this happen? Abraham was 100 and Sarah was 90! Abraham thought it would be better to stick with the son he had, Ishmael, rather than hope for a new son. Fortunately, Abraham sought God's input this time. God rejected Abraham's plan, but He still kindly blessed Ishmael, since He had promised to bless Abraham's descendants (12:2). But God named the chosen son Isaac, which means "he laughs." Later, when Isaac was born, this name would remind Abraham how he had laughed at God's plan at first. Finally, after hearing God's response, Abraham believed. He showed his faith by obeying God's command about circumcision (17:23). God was causing Abraham's faith to grow, little by little.

## ASK 🔞



- 1. Would Abraham's son come from Sarah or from somebody else? From Sarah.
- 2. What do Abraham, Sarah, and Isaac mean? Father of Many, Princess, and He Laughs.
- 3. How old were Abraham and Sarah? Abraham was 100 and Sarah was 90.
- 4. Did Abraham believe? At first Abraham wanted God to pick Ishmael, but then he trusted God about Isaac.

#### DISCUSS S



- 1. God promises that if you honor your father and your mother, it will "go well with you" (Eph 6:2-3). What do your attitude and actions show about your faith in that promise? How has God helped you believe that promise more and more?
- 2. Do you ever struggle to believe God's promises about the future (such as salvation and heaven)? In prayer, confess your doubt and ask for His help, since He is patient and faithful.

# DAY 3

God strengthened Sarah's faith ● Genesis 18:1–15

#### READ I



Genesis 18:1-15

### **EXPLAIN ©**

#### The truth of Genesis 18:1-15

Abraham and Sarah had grown in faith. They realized that their plans with Hagar and Ishmael were wrong, and they stopped questioning God about Ishmael (17:21–22). To continue strengthening their growing faith, God revealed more details: the child would be born within one year. God often reveals new details only after teaching us to believe what He has already told us. Thankfully, God does not wait for us to be perfect. Sarah still laughed at the idea of having a child when she was so old. She still needed to grow in faith. In response, God stated the main point He was teaching them (and us) all along: "Is anything too difficult for the LORD?" (18:14). The answer is no: nothing is too difficult for God. He is *omnipotent*: He is able to do just as He pleases (Ps 115:3). Do you believe that? Will you live according to God's promises in the Bible, or will you cause great pain by trying to find life, joy, and peace your own way?

**DAY 3 CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE** 

- 1. Where was Abraham staying when the LORD appeared to him? At the Oaks of Mamre (also called Hebron).
- 2. What new detail did God promise about the son to be born? He would be born in one year.
- 3. What did Sarah do? Sarah laughed because she felt too old to have a son.
- 4. How did God respond? God strengthened her faith by reminding her that nothing is too difficult for the LORD.

### **DISCUSS** 🦼



- 1. Is your family facing any challenges that seem too hard to overcome? Since God is able to do just as He pleases, what are some ways your family can trust Him this week?
- 2. What else happened at the Oaks of Mamre (Gen 13:18; 2 Sam 2:1-4)? How was David's coronation there part of God's promise to Sarah (Gen 17:16))? Praise God for arranging history to keep His promises.

# DAY 4

Salvation comes by divine power • Romans 4:16-25

#### READ 📖



Romans 4:16-25

#### EXPLAIN **(9)**

#### The truth of Romans 4:16-25

What does God value most in a person? The story of Abraham is proof that what God wants from all of us is faith. Abraham was counted as a righteous person by God, not because he was sinless, but because he believed. His faith was not always strong. His faith needed to be strengthened over time. But in the end Abraham put his faith in a strong God, and God grew his faith and proved his faithfulness. From a human perspective, God's promise of a child was impossible, but Abraham believed anyway. His belief in God gave great glory to God. It honored God by treating God as faithful and powerful to keep His promises. Abraham's faith is also a great blessing to us. It shows us that we can be counted righteous the same way Abraham was. We can be counted righteous by faith, not by our efforts to keep the law. We are counted righteous when we trust in Jesus, who has already made us right in God's eyes by dying in our place and rising from the dead. So put your trust in Him.

### ASK 🔞



- 1. Why did God consider Abraham a righteous person? Because Abraham trusted God even when the promise seemed impossible.
- 2. Was Abraham saved by how strong his faith was or by the person he put his faith in? Abraham was saved because of the one he believed in—a strong and faithful God.
- 3. What promise do you need to believe in order to be saved? Believe that Jesus died and rose again in order to count us righteous.

### DISCUSS 🦃



- 1. Have you ever made a promise that you didn't keep? Aren't you glad that God doesn't do that?
- 2. Do you act like you are saved by your good efforts? Do you try to make yourself look like a good Christian? When you do well, are you proud? When you sin, do you despair, stay away from God, or try to earn forgiveness by working harder?

#### READ |

John 8:48-59

#### EXPLAIN **②**

The truth of John 8:48-59

Abraham believed that God would give him a son, but he believed something much more than that. Abraham believed in the Messiah, the Savior. He knew that God had promised a Savior right after Adam and Eve sinned (Gen 3:15). He also knew that God had promised to bless all nations through him (12:2). He knew that this blessing would happen through one of his descendants in particular, a great king who would defeat all his enemies and bring blessing to the whole earth (Gen 22:17b-18). So what did Abraham believe? He believed in the Savior who would be one of his own descendants. Abraham saw in Isaac the beginning of God's salvation for the world, and he looked forward with joy to the day when Jesus would come and bring salvation. So as great as Abraham was, he is nothing compared to Jesus. Jesus is the point of it all. He is the one the Father glorifies, and that is the way it should be, because Jesus is actually God. He is the one who has always existed, even before Abraham was born.

## ASK 🔞



- 1. Why were Jesus and the Jews talking about Abraham?
  - The Jews asked if Jesus was greater than Abraham.
- 2. How did Abraham see Jesus' day? Abraham saw in Isaac that God was keeping His promise to send a Savior one day.
- 3. Who existed first, Jesus or Abraham? Jesus did, even though Jesus was born about 2,000 years after Abraham.
- 4. What does that show us about Jesus? He is God.

#### DISCUSS S



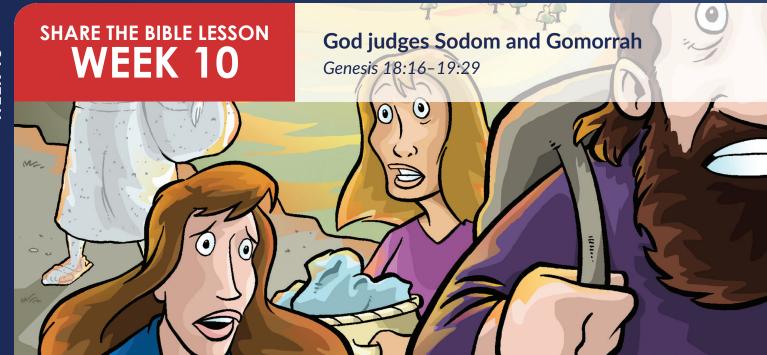
- 1. Abraham found joy by believing in the promised Savior. What do you put your faith in? Do your attitudes and actions show that you are trying to find salvation (peace and joy) in something besides Jesus?
- 2. The Jews hated it that Jesus "pretended" to be someone great (John 8:53). Does it make you happy to see how great Jesus is, even when His glory overshadows your own?

## **NEXT WEEK**

**God judges Sodom** and Gomorrah

Genesis 18:16-19:29





God taught Abraham justice ● Genesis 18:16-33

#### READ



Genesis 18:16-33

### EXPLAIN (9)



The truth of Genesis 18:16-33

God chose to include Sodom and Gomorrah in Abraham's story so that Abraham could teach his children to be just, or fair, as God is just. First, being just involves investigating carefully and not judging too quickly. God even illustrates the principle of requiring two witnesses by sending the two angels to investigate (cf. Deut 19:15). Second, being just means punishing the guilty but sparing the innocent. God allowed Abraham to come near and question Him to confirm that He is indeed the "judge of all the earth" who deals justly. He punishes the wicked and spares the righteous. The wicked are those who are evil and do not obey God's law, while the righteous are those who are blameless and obey God's law. Third, justice includes mercy. Even if only ten righteous men lived in the cities below, God would spare entire cities. God's patience, fairness, and mercy show that He is perfectly just, and His plan for Abraham shows that He wants His people to be just too.

#### ASK 🔞



- 1. What cities did God see were full of sin? Sodom and Gomorrah.
- 2. How did God feel about their sin? He was very angry with them.
- 3. Why did God allow Abraham to question Him? God let Abraham question Him in order to show what it means to be a just judge.
- 4. How is God just? He judges carefully, punishes the wicked but not the innocent, and is merciful.



- 1. Do people love justice today? Describe some ways that people today treat the wrong as if it were right, and the right as if it were wrong.
- 2. Do you love righteousness and hate sin no matter what? Or are you ok with sin so long as you can avoid bad consequences? Do you only pursue righteousness when it benefits you?

#### The cities deserved punishment • Genesis 19:1-11

#### READ |



Genesis 19:1-11

#### **EXPLAIN ©**

#### The truth of Genesis 19:1-11

Despite his poor choice to live in a wicked place, Lot still practiced righteousness (2 Pet 2:7). He showed great hospitality and wanted to protect his guests. He was wrong not to protect his daughters, showing the influence of the wicked culture he foolishly chose to live in. Still, he put his life on the line to protect the visitors from the Sodomites. The Sodomites wanted to abuse the strangers for their own wicked pleasure. The angels should have been safe to spend the night in the town square just inside the city gate, but the men of Sodom were thoroughly corrupt. Every male, young or old, participated in this evil. They violated not only hospitality, but also God's design for marriage. Even after the angels rescued Lot and blinded the mob, the wicked men would not give up their desire to sin until they were thoroughly exhausted. The verdict was clear: Sodom, and its neighboring cities, deserved to be destroyed. There were not even 10 righteous people in Sodom. God was just to destroy them with fire.

## ASK 😯

- 1. Why did Lot make a poor choice by deciding to live in Sodom?
  - Sodom was a city full of evil men who disobeyed God.
- 2. How did Lot treat the two visitors well? He took them into his home, fed them well, and protected them.
- 3. Did the Sodomites treat the visitors well? No. They wanted to hurt the angels.
- 4. Were there even 10 righteous in Sodom? No.

#### DISCUSS S



- 1. Have you ever joined yourself to a group of people you knew loved wrong things? Did you find yourself in a difficult situation? Was your behavior influenced by theirs?
- 2. Why do people work so hard to do wicked things (Jas 4:1-2)?

# DAY 3

God saved Lot and destroyed the cities • Genesis 19:12-29

#### READ I



Genesis 19:12-19

### **EXPLAIN ©**

#### The truth of Genesis 19:12-19

God was kind enough to rescue Lot, but Lot still experienced great pain because of his compromise. Lot is still called a righteous man (2 Pet 2:7), but he was not the unwavering man of faith that Abraham was. Lot was willing to let his own daughters be abused and killed, and when he tried to warn his sons-in-law, they thought he was joking. They were not used to Lot speaking so urgently about

righteousness. Lot also delayed instead of following God's instructions immediately. Lot was saved only because God, in His compassion, sent the angels to force him to leave. After leaving, Lot still wavered, complaining that the escape was too difficult. Again God was merciful and allowed Lot to escape to Zoar. Lot survived, but he lost all his possessions, his home, and his wife, and his daughters were wicked and faithless. God is merciful in His justice, but His justice is still perfectly just. The cities burned with fire from heaven. As Abraham watched Sodom's smoke from Hebron, he learned that God is a compassionate judge but still punishes sin with severe wrath.

- 1. What happened to Sodom and Gomorrah? God destroyed the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah nothing in them remained alive.
- 2. Did Lot die too? No. God was merciful and saved him.
- 3. Did Lot suffer? Yes. Lot lost everything because of his choice to live in Sodom.
- 4. What did Abraham learn about God? God is a merciful judge, but He still hates and punishes those who do evil.

### DISCUSS 🦃



- 1. Some say that God hates sin but loves the sinner. If that were true, would God kill the sinners as at Sodom? What does the Bible say about God's view of evildoers (Ps 5:5)?
- 2. Some act like they can live however they want so long as they are "saved." Even though Lot was saved, was his sin worth it? What is the way to truly enjoy life (Ps 15)?

# DAY 4

The Lord knows how to rescue the godly • 2 Peter 2:4-10a

#### READ



2 Peter 2:4-10a

### EXPLAIN **(9)**

The truth of 2 Peter 2:4-10a

Sodom and Gomorrah is a lesson about how much God hates sin. God is a just judge. When certain fallen angels married women (Gen 6:1-4; Jude 6), God did not spare them. He threw them into a prison where they are waiting for their final sentence and destruction in hell. When the world loved wickedness in Noah's day, God drowned the whole world besides Noah and his family. When Sodom and Gomorrah sinned without restraint, God made those cities a pile of ashes, sparing none but Lot and his daughters. These examples are a severe warning but also an encouragement. They are a warning to flee sin because God does not tolerate evil. God is pure and holy and clean, so he hates anything wicked. But these examples are also an encouragement: in the midst of judgment, God knows how to save the righteous. If you are willing to turn to Him, He will rescue you from the wicked world and from His own wrath.

### ASK 🔞



- 1. Did God spare the angels, the people in Noah's day, or Sodom and Gomorrah?
  - No. He imprisoned the angels and killed the others.
- 2. What does this show about God's attitude toward sin?
  - God hates sin and all kinds of wickedness.
- 3. What happened to Noah and Lot? God rescued them.
- 4. What does this show about how God treats the righteous?

He loves and protects them.

### **DISCUSS**



- 1. Are there ever times you sin because you think there won't be any consequences or the consequences won't be that bad? Does God agree with your perspective on sin?
- 2. Are you ever afraid of wicked people, or of the wickedness in your own heart? How can you be encouraged by what Peter said today?

#### Jesus will one day punish with eternal fire ● Jude 5-7

#### READ |



Jude 1-7

#### **EXPLAIN ©**

The truth of Jude 5-7

Like Peter did, Jude uses Sodom and Gomorrah as a warning against false teachers. False teachers have turned away from God and do not believe God, so Jude reminds of how God destroyed the Israelites who turned away from God in unbelief (Num 14). False teachers pervert God's standards and usurp God's authority, so Jude then reminds of how God punished the fallen angels, who abused their own position to try to corrupt the human race. Finally, false teachers behave immorally, so Jude reminds of how God burned up the people in Sodom and Gomorrah for their sexual immorality. The fire that burned these cities was only a preview of the fire that lasts forever in hell. This should cause anyone to be very afraid of saying that something is God's word when it is not. We should be very afraid of twisting faith in God into something that is only for our own pleasure. Instead, we should value Jesus above all and gladly let Him rule over us as our Master and Lord. We should keep ourselves in His love (Jude 21).

## ASK 🔞



- 1. Who was Jude warning about? Jude was warning against false teachers.
- 2. Does God tolerate people who turn against Him? No. He destroys the wicked.
- 3. So what should we do? Let Jesus control our lives as our Master and Lord, and keep ourselves in the love of God.

#### DISCUSS S



- 1. Do you know anyone who has used their religious influence for themselves and not for God? Have you done this? What were the consequences?
- 2. After seeing how much God hates sin and punishes sinners, do you think you take your own sin seriously enough? What do you do to stay close to God and safe in His love?

## **NEXT WEEK**

God sends baby Isaac

Genesis 21:1-14





Abraham and Sarah received Isaac by faith ● Genesis 21:1-7

### READ

Genesis 21:1-7

### EXPLAIN **②**

The truth of Genesis 21:1-7

What does Isaac's birth show us about God? It shows God is faithful (Deut 7:9), since He kept His promise. It shows that He is sovereign (Dan 2:21), controlling even the time when things will happen. He is also omnipotent, powerful to do what is humanly impossible (Jer 32:27). He is also good, bringing great joy into Abraham and Sarah's lives. Abraham and Sarah responded well. Abraham gave honor to God as the giver by obediently naming his son Isaac (cf. 17:21). Abraham also obeyed by circumcising Isaac on the eighth day, performing a special surgery that was the sign of God's covenant (cf. 17:12). Sarah responded by faith by giving God the credit as the source of her joy. In fact, the name Isaac means "he laughs." Before, God had given this name when Abraham laughed in doubt. But now Abraham and Sarah laughed with joy in God's blessing. They willingly admitted they had been wrong to laugh at God's promises before, and in their humility they rejoiced and believed the rest of God's promise too-blessing would come through Isaac to all people (21:6; 12:2-3).

### ASK



- 1. What does Isaac mean? He laughs.
- 2. Why was Isaac's birth a miracle? Sarah was too old to have a baby.
- 3. What does this show us about God? Go is faithful, sovereign, omnipotent, and good.
- 4. What did Abraham and Sarah do after Isaac was born? They rejoiced and obeyed God by naming the baby Isaac and circumcising him.

#### DISCUSS 🦃



- 1. Sing Great is Thy Faithfulness together as a family.
- 2. Spend some time praying and praising God for His faithfulness, sovereign control, unlimited power, and goodness. Also thank Him for giving us so many wonderful gifts (Jas 1:17).

#### Abraham sent Ishmael away by faith • Genesis 21:8-14

#### READ |



### **EXPLAIN ©**

#### The truth of Gen 21:8-14

At first it seems harsh to drive away Hagar and Ishmael over a little teasing. Was Abraham giving in to his wife's unreasonable demands again? No, this time was different. First, Abraham sought God's counsel first, something he didn't do when Hagar ran away before. Second, Ishmael and Hagar represented human efforts to secure God's promise (Gal 4:22-31). When Abraham sent them away in spite of his love for Ishmael, he demonstrated his trust in God to fulfill the promise. Third, when Ishmael mocked Isaac, and when Hagar despised Sarah (16:4), they made themselves enemies of the *covenant*, <u>God's promise</u>. There is no blessing apart from the blessing through Abraham, for those who curse the line of Abraham will be cursed (12:2-3). Hagar and Ishmael brought their own punishment upon themselves. Fourth, Abraham only sent Ishmael away once he knew God would care for his son. God did just that by preserving Ishmael's life and making him strong (21:19-20). So today enemies of the covenant may still enjoy blessing because of those who do believe, but lasting blessing comes only by faith in the greatest descendant of Abraham, Jesus Christ,

## ASK 😱

- 1. How did Ishmael treat Isaac? He made fun of Isaac.
- 2. What did Abraham do to Ishmael and
  - He sent them into the wilderness.
- 3. Why did God tell him to do this? So that Abraham would trust in God's promise, not in his own efforts, and to punish those who cursed the line of Christ.
- 4. Why was God kind to Hagar and Ishmael? For the sake of Abraham, who genuinely loved his son Ishmael.

### **DISCUSS** 🦃



- 1. Is it harsh when Jesus says He is the only way to come to the Father (John 14:6)?
- 2. What will happen to those who reject Jesus, Abraham's descendant (John 3:36; Rev 20:11-15)?

# DAY 3

Sarah was able to have a child by faith ● Hebrews 11:11-12

#### READ I



Hebrews 11:11-12

### **EXPLAIN ©**

#### The truth of Hebrews 11:11-12

Did Sarah have faith? Genesis shows how much she struggled to believe, but Hebrews fills out the picture, and we see that even when we do not believe at first. even when we struggle to believe along the way, we can nevertheless cling to God in faith. After all, when Sarah wrongly gave Hagar to Abraham to have son, even this showed that she still believed in a promised

son. She was impatient and not allowing God to act in His way, but there was still faith in her heart. Sarah's faith shows us what faith looks like. It is trusting that God is faithful to keep His promises, even when the thing He has promised is humanly impossible. Faith is not based on circumstances. It is not even based on our own confidence or conviction. Rather, it is solely and solidly rooted in who God is and what God has said. And what is the result of faith? The impossible happens. From a barren old lady and a man as good as dead came offspring as numerous as the stars-and the Savior of the world.

- 1. What is faith? It is trusting that God is faithful to keep His promises.
- 2. Does faith depend on circumstances or our own confidence? No.
- 3. What does faith depend on? Faith depends on who God is and what God has
- 4. How did Sarah grow in her faith? She learned to trust God's methods and to wait for God's timing.

### DISCUSS 🦃

- 1. Have you even known the right thing to do, but it seemed too hard or embarrassing? How did you respond? How does a heart of faith respond in a time like that?
- 2. Do you ever doubt your own faith in God? Rather than try to put your faith in your own experience of faith, put your faith in the unchanging nature of God and in His unchanging Word.

# DAY 4

Ishmael and Isaac portray two ways • Galatians 4:21-27

#### READ |



Galatians 4:21-27

### EXPLAIN **(9)**

The truth of Galatians 4:21-27

If you were Abraham, would you have sent Hagar and Ishmael into the wilderness? In Galatians, Paul explains the spiritual reality behind that decision and shows us how the same principle applies today. God told Abraham to send Ishmael away because Ishmael was Abraham's human attempt to get the promise. But God wanted Abraham to live by faith in His promise, vividly illustrated in the miracle child Isaac. So we also are to live by faith in God's promise, not by the efforts of our own flesh. If you have put your faith in Jesus, then you are a spiritual child of Abraham, a child of God's promise. So do not try to earn your way into God's favor, like a slave doing what he must only because he has to. Realize that you are free, and "drive out the slave and her son"—that is, drive out your efforts to live according to the flesh and instead live by faith in God's promise. Remember that Jesus has already earned God's favor toward you, and go on living a holy life by faith in what God will keep doing in you.

### ASK 🔞



- 1. Why did Paul use the story of Abraham's family? To illustrate the difference between human effort (law) and faith in God's promise (grace).
- 2. What do Hagar and Sarah and their sons represent? Hagar and Ishmael represent the flesh (human effort), and Sarah and Isaac represent promise (divine effort).
- 3. What does it mean for you to "drive out the slave and her son"? Live by faith in God's promises and do not go back to trying to earn righteousness (Gal 5:4-5).



- 1. Imagine two people who faithfully read their Bibles and go to church. Explain how one may do so by the flesh while the other does so by faith in God's promise. What is the difference in the spirit in which they perform the same activities?
- 2. Why does a slave do what he does? Why does a free person do what he does?

#### READ I



Galatians 4:28-5:1

#### **EXPLAIN ©**

#### The truth of Galatians 4:28-5:1

When Isaac was born, there was great joy. Laughs of doubt turned into laughs of deep joy. Not only did Abraham and Sarah have their very own son, but this son was confirmation that the rest of God's promise would come true too. And about 2,000 years later, that is exactly what happened. Another miracle baby was born, although this time it was an even greater miracle, since He was born to a virgin and was God become man. He was another child of the promise, a promise made at the beginning of the world (Gen 3:15). And He brings joy far greater than the laughter in Isaac's family. He brings the joy of salvation—sins forgiven, wickedness ended, and the kingdom of the Messiah begun. Jesus brings the joy of God's grace towards sinners, the joy of peace between God and men. Have you received that joy by putting your faith in Jesus Christ?

### ASK 🔞



- 1. How is Jesus' birth the same as Isaac's birth? Both were promised, both were miracles, and both brought great joy.
- 2. How was Jesus' birth greater than Isaac's? Jesus was promised from the beginning and the miracle and joy of Jesus' birth were greater.
- 3. What joy does Jesus bring? He brings the joy of God's favor toward sinners, of peace with God, and of the Messiah's kingdom.

#### DISCUSS S



- 1. Do you remember when one of your siblings was born? Was it a joyful event?
- 2. Is your life a life of joy? Does your joy depend on the things that happen in your life, or does your joy flow from your relationship to God through Jesus?

### **NEXT WEEK**

God tests Abraham

Genesis 22:1-19



# SHARE THE BIBLE LESSON **WEEK 12**



Genesis 22:1-19





# DAY 1

God told Abraham to sacrifice Isaac 

■ Genesis 22:1-2

#### READ

Genesis 22:1-2

### EXPLAIN (1)

The truth of Genesis 22:1-2

What are you willing to give up for God? To prove that Abraham's faith was real, God asked him to kill his son Isaac as a burnt offering. Later. God would reveal how much He hates human sacrifice (Lev 18:21; Deut 12:31), so God never desired Isaac to be killed. This was a test of Abraham's faith. This test was very hard for two reasons. First, Abraham loved Isaac very much, which is emphasized by the words "your son, your only son, whom you love." God wanted to see if Abraham loved God more than the one thing on earth he loved most. This is because God is a *jealous* God: He does not share His glory with anyone or anything. Second, God had promised in Genesis 12 that Abraham would become a great nation, and He promised that this nation would come through Isaac. Abraham had to choose between taking Isaac and the entire promise into his own hands or giving both Isaac and the promise up to God's control. Would Abraham worship God by loving and trusting Him more than anything?

## ASK 🔞



- 1. What did God ask Abraham to do to Isaac? Kill him as a burnt offering to God.
- 2. Why did God ask Abraham to do this? To see if Abraham loved Isaac or God more.
- 3. What else was God testing? To see if Abraham trusted God about the promise or tried to take control himself.
- 4. How do we know Abraham loved Isaac. verv much? God described Isaac as "your son," "your only son," and the one "whom you love."



- 1. What are some of the people or things you love the most on earth? Do you love God more? Would you still love God if He took these people or things away from you?
- 2. What is the key mark of a Christian (Matt 22:37; Rom 13:9)? How much of your love does God want (Matt 19:16-23; 1 John 4:20-21)?

### Abraham obeyed God and trusted Him • Genesis 22:3-10

#### READ |



Genesis 22:3-10

### **EXPLAIN ©**

#### The truth of Genesis 22:3-10

How quickly do you obey? Abraham did not doubt, argue, or delay, as he had at other times when he was growing in his faith (17:18). Faith produces this kind of obedience, and it is wrong for anyone to say that he has faith when he does not make a habit of obeying God (Jas 2:14-26). Abraham believed that both he and Isaac would return to the servants, he believed that God would provide the lamb, and he believed that if he killed Isaac God would raise him from the dead (Heb 11:17-19). Abraham had no doubt that God would find a way to make a great nation from Isaac. Because of Isaac's age and his question (Gen 22:7), it seems likely that Isaac was aware of what was going on, and he could have resisted as Abraham began to prepare him for death. Yet he submitted, giving a preview of the willing submission of Jesus (Isa 53:7), just as Abraham is a picture of God's willing sacrifice of His only Son (John 3:16).

## ASK 😯



- 1. What was Abraham's obedience like? It was immediate and complete.
- 2. Why did Abraham obey so well? Abraham believed that God would keep His promise somehow.
- 3. How are Abraham and Isaac a picture of God the Father and God the Son? Abraham was willing to sacrifice his son, and Isaac was willing to die. The Father actually did sacrifice His Son, and the Son actually did die.

#### DISCUSS S



- 1. When your parents give you instructions, do you obey immediately, completely, and with a good attitude? If not, what does this show about your faith in God (Eph 6:1-2)?
- 2. What would it be like to sacrifice your own child, or to let your father sacrifice you? Take time to praise and thank the Father and Son for their incredible sacrifice.

# DAY 3

God provided a substitute sacrifice ● Genesis 22:11-19

#### READ



Genesis 22:11-19

### EXPLAIN **(9)**

#### The truth of Genesis 22:11-19

When Abraham lifted his knife to kill his beloved son, his faith was fully proved. God already knew his faith, because God knows all things and knows the heart. So when God says, "now I know" (22:12), He means that He has proved this by actual experience. Once Abraham proved this, the angel of the LORD stopped him. He spared Isaac and provided a substitute to take Isaac's place. This story ends up being much

bigger than Abraham's faith, since verse 14 says, "It is said to this day, 'In the mount of the LORD it will be provided." In fact, this mountain, Mount Moriah (22:2) is the same place Solomon later built the temple (2 Chr 3:1), where sacrifices were regularly offered. This mountain is also very close to where Jesus was crucified. Just as God provided a substitute for Isaac, so God provides salvation by means of a substitute sacrifice, killing an animal or person in the place of another. All the Old Testament sacrifices look forward to Jesus, the Lamb of God, who is the perfect substitute sacrifice for sinners (1 Pet 1:18-19; 2 Cor 5:21).

- 1. Did Abraham trust God and pass the test? How? Yes. He was obedient to God.
- 2. How did God provide for Abraham? He spared Isaac and provided a ram as a substitute.
- 3. Where did this happen? On Mount Moriah, where the temple was later built.
- 4. What do the ram in this story and the temple sacrifices look forward to? Jesus, the substitute sacrifice who died in our place.

#### DISCUSS 🦃



- 1. Did Isaac deserve to be killed? Do you deserve to die (Rom 3:23)?
- 2. Why does there have to be a substitute sacrifice to take your place (Lev 17:11; Heb 9:22)?

# DAY 4

Abraham offered up Isaac by faith • Hebrews 11:17-19

#### READ |



Hebrews 11:1-19

#### **EXPLAIN 1**

#### The truth of Hebrews 11:17-19

Abraham shows us what faith looks like. He was confident in his hope in God's promise, and He was certain about it even though He could not see what was going to happen (11:1). Though the thought of sacrificing Isaac must have grieved Abraham, he remained steadfast in his faith, trusting God to fulfill his promise through Isaac. Abraham believed that if God allowed him to carry out the command to sacrifice Isaac, then God would raise Isaac from the dead in order to keep His promise. Abraham's obedience demonstrated his faith, and God provided a substitute. Abraham demonstrated the five pillars of faith: (1) willing to let go of this world, (2) being patient for God to work, (3) trusting in God's power to do the impossible, (4) looking forward in hope to God's eternal promise, and (5) and producing obedience. That might seem like an unachievable standard, but don't forget how long it took for Abraham's faith to grow to this point. Trust God like Abraham did, and let God do His work in you.

### ASK 🔞



- 1. Did Abraham believe Isaac was the son of promise? Yes. He believed a great nation would come from Isaac's children.
- 2. Did Abraham think God could keep the promise even if he sacrificed Isaac? Yes. He believed God could raise Isaac from the dead (Heb 11:19).
- 3. How did Abraham show his faith? He obeyed completely and trusted God to make the promise happen.

### **DISCUSS**



- 1. Of the five characteristics of Abraham's faith, which one do you most need to grow in?
- 2. Can you or your parents think of a time when you or they trusted God and saw God's blessing as a result?

#### READ |

John 1:19-37

### **EXPLAIN 1**

The truth of John 1:29

Abraham believed God would provide the lamb, and God did. In fact, God has provided the ultimate lamb, Jesus Christ the Lamb of God. One day as John the Baptist was baptizing in the Jordan River, Jesus came. When John saw Jesus, he immediately exclaimed, "Behold, the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!" Throughout Israel's history, God had revealed that sin could only be removed by a blood sacrifice (Lev 17:11). He also made it clear that none of those sacrifices were sufficient to permanently remove sin (Isa 1:11). So the coming Messiah would be "a lamb led to slaughter" (Isa 53:7). He would be the ultimate sacrifice for the sin of the world. His death is now enough for all people without distinction (1 John 2:2). It is enough to cover the sins of everyone (John 3:16; 1 Tim 2:6), but only those who have faith like Abraham did will be saved (Matt 7:13-14).

## ASK 🔞



- 1. What did John call Jesus? The Lamb of God.
- 2. Why is Jesus the Lamb of God? He died as a substitute sacrifice for the sins of the world.
- 3. For whom did Jesus die? His sacrifice for sin offers salvation to all human beings without distinction, but its effect is only for those who receive Christ.

#### **DISCUSS**



- 1. Do you have sin? How serious is your sin? Is it bad enough that someone needs to die for it? What does this show about how bad sin really is?
- 2. Do you feel guilty that Jesus had to die for your sin, or do accept His sacrifice by faith and live with joy in what He has done?

## **NEXT WEEK**

**God chooses Jacob** over Esau

Genesis 25:21-34; 27:1-28:5





God chose Jacob before his birth ● Genesis 25:21-24

### READ



Genesis 25:1-7

### EXPLAIN (1)

The truth of Genesis 25:1-7

Even though there were twins in Rebekah's womb, God chose only one of them to carry on the *covenant*, or <u>special promise</u>, He had made to Abraham. Even though the custom was for the older son to become the family leader, God chose the younger son. This was not based on anything Jacob had done better than Esau, since they had not even been born yet. Also, God did not just look into the future and see that Jacob would believe and Esau would not. Instead, God's choice of Jacob depended only God's own sovereign plan (Rom 9:11-13). This shows that salvation ultimately depends not on human effort or human decision but on the will of God (John 1:13). Even though it is hard to understand, God is the one who chooses which people He will save (Rom 9:15–18), and He makes this decision even before birth (Eph 1:4). This choice is called election.

### ASK 🔞



- 1. What were the names of Isaac and Rebekah's twin boys? Jacob and Esau.
- 2. Who was born first? Esau.
- 3. Which child normally received the blessing, the older or the younger? The older.
- 4. Which child did God choose to bless over the other one? God chose Jacob, the younger son.



- 1. Do you consider yourself to be saved? If so, do you ever act like you are saved because you act better or made a better decision than other people?
- 2. Do you ever act like you are better than other people because you are saved? Explain how God's choice of Jacob should make us humble and grateful to be saved.

The family was divided over God's plan • Genesis 25:25-34; 27:1-24

#### READ |

Genesis 25:25-34; 27:1-24

### **EXPLAIN ©**

The truth of Genesis 25:25-34; 27:1-24

God chose Jacob, but there was still fighting in the family over God's plan. As the leader of the family, Isaac should have led according to God's choice of Jacob. Instead, he liked Esau better. Rebekah clung to God's promise to bless the younger son, but she did so by lying and not submitting to her husband. Esau did not care about God's covenant blessing. He sold his birthright, his special role as the firstborn, for a bowl of stew. Because Esau despised the covenant, he lost the salvation that comes through the covenant (Heb 12:16-17). Jacob, on the other hand, valued the covenant. He pursued what was truly valuable, even though he did this by taking advantage of his brother and by lying to his father (25:29-34). Each member of the family contributed to its division—a father leading in the wrong direction, a mother at odds with the father, a godless son, and a deceptive son. Could God still bring blessing through such a messed up family?

## ASK 🔞

- 1. How did Isaac sin? He chose Esau even though God chose Jacob.
- 2. How did Rebekah sin? She agreed with God's choice but lied and undermined her husband to make it happen.
- 3. How did Esau sin? Esau did not care about God's covenant.
- 4. How did Jacob sin? Jacob cared about God's covenant, but he lied and took advantage of Esau to get it.

#### **DISCUSS**



- 1. Do you think God will give the covenant blessing to anyone in this family? If so, to whom? If not, why not?
- 2. Is it ok to sin even for a good reason? What do you think will happen to Jacob because of his lies?.

## DAY 3

God overcame sin to bless Jacob • Genesis 27:25-33; 28:4

### READ |



### EXPLAIN **②**

The truth of Genesis 27:25-33; 28:4

Would you have blessed Jacob after all his lies? God did. God is faithful to His covenant, and He is even able to use sinful actions to accomplish His plan (50:20). He used Jacob's lies to cause Isaac to give Jacob the blessing. The blessing was a prayer for good things. asking God to give Jacob prosperity and leadership over his brothers. The blessing repeated God's promise

to Abraham, showing that Jacob was the one to carry on the blessing God promised to Abraham (12:3). When Isaac finally realized that he had blessed Jacob instead of Esau, Isaac trembled violently. He realized his own plan had been shattered, but he also realized what he had almost done. He had almost violated God's plan for the covenant. Only God's control over Jacob and Rebekah's lies stopped Isaac from making a huge mistake. After 77 years of resisting, Isaac finally accepted God's plan (27:33: 28:3-4; cf. Heb 11:20). This story shows that our sin and failure cannot stop God from keeping His promise or blessing His people.

## ASK 😯

- 1. Who did Isaac think he was blessing?
- 2. Who was Isaac really blessing? Jacob.
- 3. What did Isaac do when he realized what had happened?

He trembled in fear and confirmed that Jacob was the one God intended to bless.

### **DISCUSS** 🤝



- 1. When you sin, can God still save you, bless you, and even use you to bless others? Remember to depend on His grace and not on your own worthiness.
- 2. When you sin, how guickly do you come back to God? Do you feel like you have to stay away for awhile, or do you remember His love and quickly come back to Him?

# DAY 4

The family suffered because of their sin • Genesis 27:34-28:5

#### READ 📖



Genesis 27:34-28:5

#### EXPLAIN **(9)**

The truth of Genesis 27:34-28:5

Since God blessed anyway, did that mean the sins of Jacob's family didn't matter? Not at all. Even though God uses sin to accomplish His good plan, sin is never good. Each member of the family suffered in a way that fit their sin. Esau despised the birthright, so he lost the blessing. Isaac failed to lead his family, so he suffered a divided home. His own wife deceived him, Jacob deceived him, Esau was determined to kill Jacob, and Jacob was gone. Rebekah secretly schemed for Jacob's sake, so she had to send Jacob away. She never saw her beloved son for the rest of her life, nor did she get to see and enjoy her many grandchildren. Even though Jacob carried on the Abrahamic covenant, he suffered terribly for his lies. First, he had to flee far from his family because Esau wanted to kill him. Then, Jacob got a taste of his own medicine. His uncle Laban lied and cheated him many times (31:41), and Jacob's own sons deceived him (37:33). When Jacob was old, he said his life had been short and bitter (47:9).

### ASK 🔞



- 1. Why is it never wise to sin? Because sin offends God and has painful consequences.
- 2. How did Rebekah suffer because of her sin? She never saw Jacob for the rest of her life and never met her many grandchildren.
- 3. How did Jacob suffer for his lies? Jacob was deceived by his uncle and later by his own sons.

### DISCUSS 🦃



- 1. Was God fair to each person in this story? How does this story show that "whatever one sows, that will he also reap" (Gal 6:7-8)? When you suffer for your sin, do you admit that God is fair (Ps 51:4)?
- 2. List some of the consequences of sin in your own family. If you have not already, confess these sins and pray for grace to overcome them.

#### READ 📖



Romans 9:1-18

#### **EXPLAIN ©**

The truth of Romans 9:6-18

When God chose Jacob and not Esau, He taught us an important lesson about salvation. He taught that salvation ultimately depends on God's gracious choice. It does not depend on who your parents are. This was important to Paul, because Paul knew that God had made His promises to Israel, but he also saw that most of Israel had rejected Jesus. How could this be? Did God's promises fail? Not at all. All along, only some of Abraham's descendants were part of God's promise. God chose some and rejected others. He chose Jacob and rejected Esau before they even had a chance to do good or bad. Does this mean God's way of salvation is unfair? No, for at least two reasons. First, as Jacob and Esau illustrate, the people God chooses go on to respond in faith and are rightly saved because of their faith. But the people God does not choose refuse to turn to God in faith, and so they are rightly condemned for their unbelief. Second, God is fair because no one deserves salvation. His choice to show mercy to anyone at all is an undeserved gift.

## ASK 🔞



- 1. Was there anything good in Jacob that made God choose him?
  - No. Jacob was characterized by sin and deceit.
- 2. Are all physical Israelites heirs of the promise? No. God chooses those who will become heirs of the promise.
- 3. Is God unfair in His election? No. All men deserve death, no one deserves to be saved, and everyone who believes is saved.

#### DISCUSS S



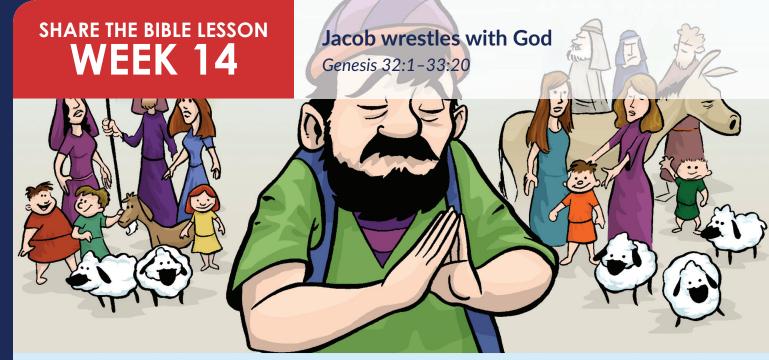
- 1. Does God's way still seem unfair to you? It will probably always seem unfair until we value God and His ways more than ourselves and our way of thinking.
- 2. Does God's choice mean we can do nothing but wait and hope that we are chosen? Do not forget the other side of this truth, that the offer of salvation is for everyone (Rom 10:9, 13).

### **NEXT WEEK**

Jacob wrestles with God

Genesis 32:1-33:20





Jacob continued to cling to himself • Genesis 32:1-21

### READ 🛄

Genesis 32:1-21

### EXPLAIN (1)

The truth of Genesis 32:1-12

Jacob had grown up a lot during his time with Laban, but he still had progress to make in his faith. His prayer shows how much he had grown. First, he prayed by faith in God's character as Yahweh, the covenant God who proved His love and faithfulness by His past actions. Second, he repeated God's promises back to God, showing that he prayed by faith in God's word and with a desire for God's will to be done. Third, he confessed that he deserved none of God's kindness. Fourth, he presented his request that he and his family be saved from Esau. Despite all this, Jacob was still not ready to call God his own God (32:9). Jacob had not yet given God complete control of his life, and he still relied on himself and his own resources to try to appease his angry brother. When we see Jacob's imperfect growth, and when we realize that we are not so different, we can be thankful that God is a very patient teacher.

### ASK 🔞



- 1. Why was Jacob afraid to see his brother Esau?
  - Jacob was afraid Esau would kill him and his family.
- 2. How did Jacob pray? Jacob remembered God's faithfulness, depended on God's promises, admitted his unworthiness, and asked God for help.
- 3. How can we tell Jacob's faith still needed to grow?
  - Jacob did not call God his own God, and he still relied on his own resources.



- 1. Are you a Christian because you have desired and decided to worship God as your own God, or do you live like a Christian just because that's what your parents believe?.
- 2. List some ways you depend on yourself and not on God. How can you change?

#### Jacob finally clung to God • Genesis 32:22–32

#### READ |



Genesis 32:22-32

### **EXPLAIN ②**

The truth of Genesis 32:22-32

While Jacob was alone, a man came and wrestled against him all night. Hosea 12:3-4 shows that this man was both God and the angel of the LORD, but Jacob did not know that yet. The man dislocated Jacob's hip, which is the center of power in wrestling. In doing so, God finally broke Jacob's self-reliance. Jacob then did what he should have been doing his whole life: he clung to God to receive the blessing. Before blessing him, the man first asked Jacob his name. The last time someone had asked him that, Jacob had lied (27:32). But now Jacob finally realized and admitted that he really was what his name means—a deceiver. After Jacob's confession, the man renamed him Israel, which means "he struggles with God." By renaming him, the man declared Jacob to be a changed man. Through this wrestling match God taught Jacob and us that we need to totally submit and surrender to God. We must cling to God by faith in order to receive His favor (Deut 4:4). Until we do that, God will graciously fight against us until we cling to Him for salvation.

## ASK 🔞



- 1. When Jacob wrestled with God, did Jacob let go?
  - No. Jacob kept holding on to God.
- 2. What did the man do to Jacob's hip? The man dislocated Jacob's hip (33:25), illustrating that God finally broke Jacob's self reliance.
- 3. What do we learn from Jacob wrestling with God?
  - We must cling to God by faith to receive His favor. Otherwise, God will graciously fight against us until we do cling to Him.

#### **DISCUSS**



- 1. How to you cling to something? How does that help you understand what it means to have faith in God?
- 2. Are you thankful for the painful things God sends into your life? Do you remember that it is all worth it if it leads you closer to God (Heb 12:5-11)?

## DAY 3

Jacob worshiped God as his own God • Genesis 33:1-20

#### READ |



Genesis 33:1-20

### EXPLAIN **(9)**

The truth of Genesis 33:1-20

God was true to His promise to bring Jacob safely back into the land of Canaan. God had caused a change in Esau's heart, so that instead of killing Jacob, Esau ran to Jacob, embraced him, and wept with him. After Esau left, Jacob traveled slowly until he came to Shechem in Canaan, the land God had promised to Jacob and his descendants. Here Jacob built an altar called El-Elohe-Israel, "Mighty God is the God of Israel." Since Jacob's

new name was "Israel," he was now referring to God as his own God. He was finally worshiping God as his own God. When Moses wrote this story down, the Israelites were about to reenter Canaan, so God's promise about the land was very meaningful to them. Like Jacob, they too needed to cling to God and depend upon Him for all their needs. We need to do the same thing too. We must cling to God and His promises, not to our own cleverness or strength, for God has provided a way for us to enter our heavenly home through Jesus Christ (Heb 11:16; 13:14-15).

- 1. Did God keep His promise to Jacob? Yes. He brought Jacob safely back into the land and changed Esau's heart.
- 2. After that, what was different in the way Jacob worshiped God? Jacob worshiped God as his own God.
- 3. How did this encourage the Israelites in Moses' day who were about to enter the same land? It encouraged them to cling to God like Jacob, and to trust that He would bring them safely into the land.

#### DISCUSS 🦃



- 1. What does it mean to worship God? How would you describe the way a person acts if he does something like working or exercising "religiously"? Also, see Deut 30:20a.
- 2. What is the difference between a person who behaves like a Christian because of what others believe and a person who lives like a Christian because God is truly His God?

# DAY 4

God has chosen some to believe • Romans 9:6-18

#### READ



Romans 9:1-18

#### EXPLAIN **(9)**

#### The truth of Romans 9:6-18

Have you learned something about worship from the story of Jacob? Jacob shows that worship is clinging to God and making Him your very own God. This is also what Psalm 31 is about. David worshiped God by clinging to Him. He clung to God as his refuge, his strong rock, his mountain fortress, his shelter, his protection. He entrusted his life to God and depended on God for grace, salvation, and redemption. David also worshiped God by making God his own God. David chose God alone and would have nothing to do with idols that try to draw our hearts away from the true God (31:6). He also said, "You are my God" (31:14), and he let God be in control over the course of his life (31:15). He worshiped God not just by trusting Him, but also by finding joy in Him (31:7). He praised God for His sympathy (31:7), His great goodness (31:19), and His faithful love (31:21). He loved God and encouraged everyone else to love Him too (31:23). Is God the one you cling to? Have you made Him your very own God?

### ASK



- 1. What words did David use to describe God as his protector?
  - Refuge, rock, fortress, shelter.
- 2. Was there any room in David's heart for a god besides the true God? No. He trusted God and hated idolatry.
- 3. What feelings were part of David's worship of God? Trust, joy, love, hope, courage.



- 1. What is your "escape" or "refuge" when you are in any kind of trouble or unhappy in any way? This may reveal idols that you are clinging to and worshiping in the place of God.
- 2. How do you feel about God? If you do not have genuine affection for God and love the way He is, then have you really taken Him to be your very own God?

#### READ |



John 4:1-26

### EXPLAIN **②**

The truth of John 4:11-15

God chose Jacob to continue the promised line, but Jacob was definitely not the Messiah. We can imitate Jacob's faith in some ways, but we can only worship and be saved by Jesus. This is the lesson Jesus taught the Samaritan woman. He offered her "living water", a phrase that symbolizes eternal life. The woman thought Jesus' water came from an ordinary well, and she wondered how Jesus could be greater than "our father Jacob" (4:12). What she didn't understand yet was that the water Jesus spoke of didn't come from any well. It came from Jesus Himself. He was able to freely offer this water because He had this living water within Himself, something Jacob never had. The living water Jesus offered wasn't for her dry mouth to drink, but for her parched soul that was desperately in need. So while stories of men like Jacob teach us many things, they also teach us that neither Jacob nor any other man compares to Jesus. He is so much better, so much greater, and worthy of our total trust, love, and obedience.

### ASK 🔞



- 1. Where did Jesus meet the Samaritan woman? By Jacob's well in Samaria.
- 2. Why is Jesus greater than Jacob? Jacob provided a well with physical water, but Jesus provides living water.
- 3. What is "living water"? Eternal life, the salvation provided through Jesus.

#### DISCUSS S



- 1. In what other ways is Jesus greater than Jacob? (Hint: no deceit v. deceiver; gave His life for a new covenant v. cheating to get the blessing; etc.)
- 2. Does Jesus hold first place in your heart? Is He your greatest hero? Have you come to Him for living water?

## **NEXT WEEK**

God preserves Joseph

Genesis 37:1-16





Joseph's brothers hated him ● Genesis 37:1-11

## READ 🛄

Genesis 37:1-11

### EXPLAIN (1)

The truth of Genesis 37:1-11

Cain and Abel, Jacob and Esau, and now Joseph and his brothers! Why are all these chosen families so messed up? The Bible does not try to hide their sin. Instead, it shows God's providence, the way He causes all the details to work together to accomplish His plan. God even works through people's failures and sins. He used Joseph's failures. Joseph did well to believe the dreams God sent. He had faith that his brothers did not have. But Joseph was immature and not very wise in tattling on his brothers, talking about his dreams, or flaunting Jacob's favoritism. God also used Jacob's failures. Jacob's favoritism divided Joseph and his brothers just like favoritism had divided Jacob and Esau. God also used the sinful attitude of Joseph's brothers. They were jealous not just about Jacob's favoritism, but also about the plan God showed through Joseph's dreams. They did not want little Joseph to be in charge. Yet the two dreams confirmed that God's plan was certain (cf. 41:32). Despite all the problems in this family, God would use this to do exactly what He had planned (15:13)

### ASK 🔞



- 1. What did Joseph tell Jacob about his brothers?
  - Joseph told Jacob that his brothers were doing a bad job with the sheep.
- 2. What did Jacob give Joseph? Jacob gave Joseph a fancy coat. This showed that Jacob treated Joseph as the firstborn.
- 3. What did Joseph tell his brothers that made them hate him even more? Joseph told them two dreams in which he ruled over them.
- 4. Would all this family trouble stop God's plan? No. God is able to use even evil to accomplish His plan.

### **DISCUSS**



- 1. Why does God often choose the younger, the smaller, and the weaker by human standards (Deut 7:7; 1 Cor 1:26-31)?
- 2. Do you know people that God is using in great ways? Does this make you jealous? Does God have the right to choose some over others (Rom 9:14-19)?

#### Joseph's brothers sold him into slavery • Genesis 37:12-28

#### READ |



Genesis 37:12-28

### **EXPLAIN ©**

The truth of Genesis 37:12-28

Is anything really just an accident? In this story, God uses many seemingly chance events to accomplish His will. (1) Jacob happened to send Joseph to check on his brothers at Shechem. (2) His brothers had traveled north to Dothan, a place that happened to be near the major trading route (unlike Shechem). (3) A man happened to find Joseph wandering in the field, and happened to have overheard the brothers say they were going to Dothan. (4) Joseph happened to be wearing his fancy robe, provoking his brothers hatred. (5) The brothers happened to be in a position where they could see Joseph coming at a distance and plan to harm him. (6) Reuben happened to think of a plan to throw Joseph into a pit and to come back later to rescue him. (7) Judah happened to have the idea that they should sell Joseph. (8) Judah had this idea and the brothers sold Joseph while Reuben happened to be away. None of these "coincidences" just happened. God had planned it all in order to save many people (50:20) and preserve the line of the Messiah.

## ASK 🔞



- 1. Did Joseph find his brothers at Shechem? No. They had moved to Dothan.
- 2. How did Joseph know where to find them? A man happened to be in the field who knew and told Joseph.
- 3. What did Joseph's brothers do to him? First they threw him in a pit. Then they sold him to traders who took him to Egypt.
- 4. How was God working in this story? God used Joseph to save many people, including the line of the Messiah.

#### **DISCUSS**



- 1. When something happens that upsets you, how can remembering God's providence help you respond in the right way?
- 2. When something turns out well for you, who should you give the credit?

# DAY 3

Joseph's family fell apart • Genesis 37:29-36

#### READ |



Genesis 37:29-36

### EXPLAIN **(9)**

The truth of Genesis 37:29-36

Even though God uses evil to make His good plan happen, evil is still evil. When we sin, it still hurts. As a result of his sin, Reuben was sad. He tore his clothes, but he felt more sorrow for himself than for Joseph or his father, so he was not really repentant. The brothers plunged deeper into sin by using goat's blood and Joseph's robe to deceive Jacob. Their sin created a very unhappy family. Jacob would not stop grieving. As for Joseph, he became a slave, separated from his family for what to him appeared to be forever. But God was using all this to accomplish His plan. God's providence always works for our ultimate good, if we belong to Him. Since He saved Jacob's family and the line of the Messiah by controlling everything that happened, including sin and "coincidences," we can trust that God will use all things to work together for the good of those who love Him. At the same time, we should not use this as an excuse to sin. Sin always hurts, but doing what is right leads to great joy (Ps 1, 15).

- 1. How did Joseph's brothers deceive Jacob? They tore Joseph's coat and stained it with goat's blood.
- 2. Where is God in this story? He is in control of things behind the scenes (this is His
- 3. How did sin harm the family? Jacob was always sad, Joseph was gone, and the brothers stayed in their sin.

### **DISCUSS** S



- 1. Is God's ability to use evil for good an excuse to sin (Rom 6:1)? Why shouldn't we go on sinning (Rom 6:2-18)?
- 2. Describe some of the effects of sin on your family. Confess, but also thank God for His ability to turn evil into good.

# DAY 4

God is providentially in control of all things • Romans 8:28–29

#### READ |



Romans 8:18-39

#### EXPLAIN **(9)**

The truth of Romans 8:28-29

These verses are about God's providence. Providence is how God arranges the natural events in this world to accomplish His purpose, just like He did in the story of Joseph. Because of God's providence, every difficulty we face gives us three opportunities. First, we have an opportunity to glorify God by trusting that He is working all things together for good. When we trust Him, we can also glorify him by obeying Him even in the middle of a difficult situation. Second, we have an opportunity to grow to be like Christ. Sometimes we think the "good" God is accomplishing has to feel good to us right now. But the real good God is accomplishing is undoing the stain of sin in our hearts so that we become more and more like Jesus—more and more like the people God made us to be. Third, trouble is an opportunity to serve others. Joseph's captivity and slavery would give him a huge opportunity to save thousands of lives. If we love God's glory, desire to be like Christ, and focus on serving others, then our troubles turn into great opportunities full of blessing.

### ASK 🔞



- 1. What is "providence"? Providence is how God arranges natural events in this world to accomplish His purpose.
- 2. What three opportunities do we have in every difficult situation? We have an opportunity to glorify God, grow to be more like Christ, and serve others.
- 3. How does Romans 8:29 explain Romans 8:28? It shows us that "good" is about becoming like Jesus, even if it hurts a lot.

### **DISCUSS** 🦃



- 1. Describe different hardships in your family that God has used for good.
- 2. Think of a current difficulty in your life. How can you respond in a way that glorifies God? In what way does God want you to grow through this to be more like Jesus? How can you serve others in the middle of this trouble?

Jesus was rejected by Israel • Acts 7:1-16, 51-52

#### READ |

Acts 7:1-16, 51-52

#### **EXPLAIN ©**

The truth of Acts 7:1-16, 51-52

Why did Stephen tell the story of Joseph and his brothers? Didn't all the Jews listening to him already know all that? Stephen told this story to condemn the Jews who rejected Jesus. He went through Israel's early history and showed how they had a habit of rejecting the ones God sent to save them. Just as Joseph's brothers rejected him because of envy, so too the Jews rejected Jesus out of envy (Mark 15:10). This was shocking to Stephen's audience, since they did not think that the Messiah could suffer. But like Joseph, and just as Isaiah had predicted (Isa 53), the Messiah would save through suffering. The Jews listening to Stephen were being just like their ancestors. Actually, they were much worse. It was bad to mistreat Joseph, since God used Joseph to save the line of the Messiah. But it was worse to kill Jesus. since Jesus is Himself the Messiah. Joseph was a faithful man, but Jesus is the only perfectly Righteous One. Sadly, many people today continue to reject Jesus. Do you give Him the honor He alone deserves?

## ASK 🔞

- 1. How was Joseph like Jesus? God used Joseph to save many, just as Jesus saves in a much greater way.
- 2. How was Jesus treated like Joseph? The Jews rejected and mistreated Jesus like their ancestors rejected and mistreated Joseph.
- 3. How did both Joseph and Jesus save through their suffering? Joseph was in a position to save because of his captivity and slavery. Jesus saved through His suffering and death.

#### DISCUSS S



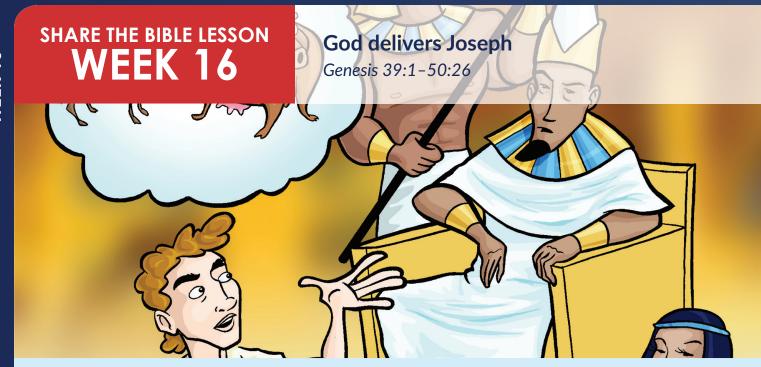
- 1. Spend some time praying and praising Jesus for His perfect righteousness, His suffering, and the salvation He provides.
- 2. Did Joseph's brothers always reject Joseph (Gen 50:18)? Will Israel always reject Jesus (Rom 11:25-36)?

### **NEXT WEEK**

God delivers Joseph

Genesis 39:1-50:26





God gave Joseph success as a slave and prisoner • Genesis 39:1-23

#### READ 🛄



Genesis 39:1-23

### EXPLAIN (1)

The truth of Genesis 39:1-23

God's presence makes all the difference. Even though God brought suffering into Joseph's life, God also was with Him all along the way. After Joseph was sold to Potiphar, we are told three times in a row that the LORD was with him and made him prosper (39:1-3). Potiphar recognized the LORD's presence in Joseph's life, promoting him to authority over all except his most private matters. Joseph recognized God's presence in his life, so when Potiphar's wife tempted him, Joseph stayed loyal to God instead. As a result, Joseph was falsely imprisoned, and at this point it might seem that obedience is not always worth it. But again the LORD was with Joseph, showing him "steadfast love." God's steadfast love is the love and loyalty God shows on the basis of His covenant. God is loyal to His people even in hard times (Ps 23:4). As a result, even though Joseph was in prison, he was again entrusted with everything. God does not promise easy times to His people, but He does stay with them and give true success to those who stay loyal to Him.

### **ASK**



- 1. Did Joseph do well as Potiphar's slave and as a prisoner? Yes. In both cases Joseph was entrusted with great responsibility.
- 2. Why did Joseph have such great success?
  - Because God was with Him.
- 3. Why did Joseph say no to temptation? Because he did not want to sin against God.
- 4. Did Joseph deserve to be thrown into prison? No, but God was using this trial to do something even greater.

### DISCUSS 🦃



- 1. Do you value God's presence in your life? How can you experience His presence in your life (Ps 15; Jas 4:8)?
- 2. Have you given in to temptation recently? Was God on your mind when this happened?

#### God put Joseph in charge of all Egypt • Genesis 40:1-41:57

#### READ |

Genesis 40:1-41:57

### **EXPLAIN ②**

The truth of Genesis 40:1-41:57

In this part of the story, Joseph does two things: he waits and he honors God. First, Joseph waited. Joseph was seventeen when he was sold, and by the time he became Pharaoh's chief officer he was thirty. That means he was a slave or a prisoner for thirteen years. Thirteen years of being faithful, yet being mistreated and forgotten in return. His imprisonment should have ended after interpreting the dreams of the baker and cupbearer, but he had to wait two more years because the cupbearer forgot about him. God often uses long periods of waiting to prepare those He intends to use, just as Abraham waited twenty-five years for Isaac and Jacob struggled for twenty years with Laban. Yet when God is ready, He can also make things happen fast. Jacob went from prisoner to Egypt's second-in-command in one day. Second, when things went well, Joseph gave God the credit. Joseph admitted that he had no ability to interpret the dreams himself. Instead, he caused God to be honored. In the end, God used Joseph to save the lives of countless Egyptians and of many other nations.

## ASK 🔞



- 1. How long did Joseph wait as a slave and a prisoner? Thirteen years.
- 2. How long did it take for Joseph to go from prisoner to second-in-command? 1 day.
- 3. How did Joseph know what all the dreams meant? God showed him.
- 4. What did Joseph do with his new position? He worked diligently and wisely and saved thousands of lives.

#### DISCUSS 🤙



- 1. Make a list of how your family can trust in God's providence this week.
- 2. Discuss why trusting in God's providence gives us courage to act.

## DAY 3

God reconciled Joseph's broken family • Genesis 42:1-45:15

#### READ |



Genesis 42:1-45:15

### EXPLAIN **②**

Before saving his family from starvation, God used Joseph to heal the divisions in his family. This healing came through repentance and forgiveness. Before, when Joseph's brothers had sold him, they had been deceitful, jealous, and disloyal. Joseph tested them in each of these three areas to see if their hearts had changed. First, he put their money in their sacks to see if they would return it (42:25). They did, proving their integrity (43:18-22). Second, Joseph showed

favoritism to Benjamin (43:34). Rather than getting jealous, the brothers enjoyed Joseph's hospitality without resentment. Third, Joseph put his silver cup in Benjamin's sack (44:1-2). Judah responded with such loyalty that Joseph wept (45:1-2). Then when Joseph revealed himself, the brothers were terrified. All this showed that they had truly *repented*. They <u>recognized</u> their sin, were sorrowful over their sin, rejected their sin, and did the opposite of their sin. In response, Joseph *forgave* them, <u>letting go of the blame and not</u> holding their sin against them. Through repentance and forgiveness, the family finally had peace after 22 years.

**DAY 3 CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE** 

by forgiving them.

- 1. How did God use Joseph to heal the divisions in his By testing his brothers to see if they had repented, and
- 2. How did Joseph test his brothers? Integrity: putting money back in their sacks. Jealousy: showing favoritism to Benjamin. Loyalty: threatening Benjamin.
- 3. How did Joseph's brothers respond? They proved their integrity, contentment, and loyalty.

#### DISCUSS S



- 1. When the brothers repented, did they just stop the sin they were doing, or did they also start doing the opposite of their sin? What sin do you need to repent of? What is the opposite of that sin?
- 2. When Joseph forgave, did he still hold onto their sin as a way to threaten or control them? When you forgive, do you promise not to bring up the other person's sin again to use it against them?

# DAY 4

God blessed Jacob's family ● Genesis 45:16-50:26

#### READ |



Genesis 45:16-50:26

### **EXPLAIN 1**

#### The truth of Genesis 45:16-50:26

Do you see how God was blessing His people, even through conflict, slavery, and famine? God blessed his chosen family in four ways. First, we saw last time that God blessed them by resolving family conflict and bringing peace. Second, God blessed them by saving their lives. Because of Joseph, they did not starve to death during the famine. Third, God blessed them by providing a safe place for them to grow. The family lived in Goshen, a place that was isolated from the wickedness and idolatry rampant in Egypt and especially in Canaan. During the next 400 years, they grew in safety from 68 men to over 600,000 men (46:8-27; Num 1:46). Fourth, God ensured future blessing. God made sure the line of the Messiah would continue. Jacob saw all this blessing. His sin had made his life short and painful (47:9), but because of God's kindness he also knew that he lacked nothing (48:15). He looked forward to the Savior by giving his fourth son, Judah, the firstborn's blessing of leadership (even though Joseph got the firstborn's double portion). The hoped for Messiah would come from Judah (49:10).

### ASK



- 1. Can you remember one of the four ways God blessed his chosen family? Family peace, saved from starvation, a place to grow in spiritual safety, and future hope of return to the land and of the Messiah.
- 2. Why did Joseph forgive his brothers? Joseph saw that God had used all their sins against him for great good.
- 3. Why do you think Judah received the leadership role of the firstborn? Judah had demonstrated sacrificial love for Benjamin. His descendant, Jesus, would give his life in sacrificial love for sinners.



- 1. Can you think of any blessings your family has enjoyed that came as a result of hardship in your family?
- 2. What do you learn about God from this story? Praise Him for His goodness, and thank Him for His good gifts in your life.

#### READ 📖

Romans 5:1-11

### **EXPLAIN ©**

#### The truth of Romans 5:1-11

Last week we saw how Jesus and Joseph were both rejected by the people they were sent to save, and how both of them saved through what they suffered. But Jesus and Joseph have even more in common. First, just as Joseph brought peace in his family, so Jesus brings a much greater peace. By His own suffering and death, Jesus makes peace by justifying sinners, making sinners right before God. Through faith in Jesus, we can come to God in peace, because God no longer has any accusation against us. Jesus turns people who used to be enemies of God into friends of God. Second. just as Joseph saved his family's lives, so Jesus saves in a much greater way. He saves from God's wrath. He saves us from the eternal punishment we deserve for our sins. We know that we will be saved from hell because of what God has already done. God already took the initiative to make peace with us, even at the cost of His own Son, Since He has done that, we can be sure that He will finish our salvation.

## ASK 🔞

- 1. What two blessings did Joseph and Jesus both bring?
  - They both brought peace and salvation.
- 2. How does Jesus give us peace? We were enemies of God, but because Jesus makes us righteous by His death, we can be friends of God.
- 3. How does Jesus save us? Jesus saves us from God's wrath in the future. Because He rose from the dead, He is able to save us to the very end.

#### DISCUSS S



- 1. Do you feel peace between yourself and God? Is it because of something you have done, or is it because you trust in what Jesus has done?
- 2. Joseph forgave his brothers after they repented, and to be forgiven by God we also must repent. Have you had a change of heart away from sin and toward God?

## **NEXT WEEK**

God prepares Israel for deliverance

Exodus 1:1-2:25

