Who Am I?

Unlocking and Understanding the Mystery of Christ

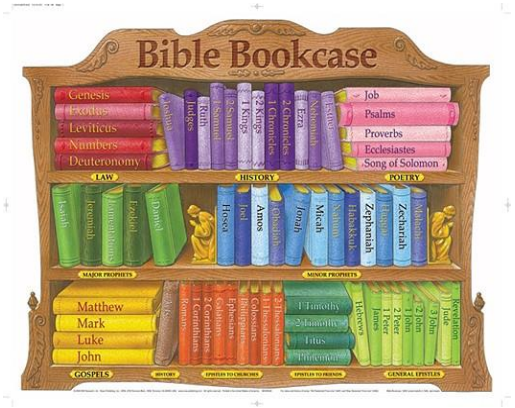
Week One **Day One**

In the Beginning… Genesis

"In reading this, then, you will be able to understand my insight into the mystery of Christ, which was not made known to people in other generations as it has now been revealed by the Spirit to God's holy apostles and prophets. This mystery is that through the Gospel the Gentiles are heirs together with Israel, members together of one body, and sharers together in the promise in Christ Jesus." (Ephesians 3:4-6)

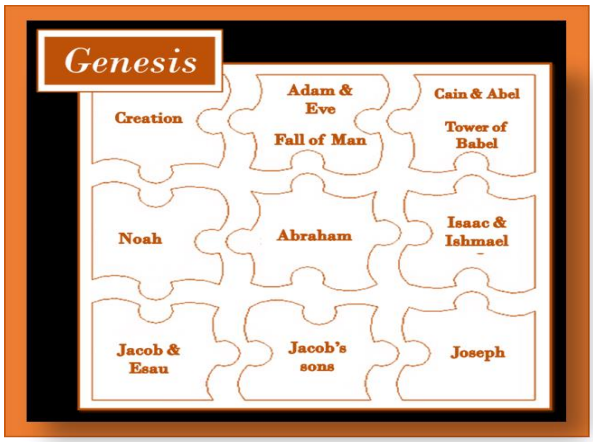
This particular passage is one that partially defines my ministry. What struck me in this passage is that people in other generations did not have what we have to understand the mystery of Jesus Christ. We have Scripture as a whole to teach us and guide us into deeper revelation of our God. We have the written accounts of eye witnesses of Jesus walking this earth. We have the Holy Spirit in us to help us understand and recall those same written accounts. These first five lessons are among my favorites because this is how the mystery has been unfolding in my mind, thus helping me understand the deeper things of Jesus. I was in Sunday school all my life learning the stories of the Bible. When I finally read the Bible completely and studied it for my ministry classes, it was as though all the puzzle pieces that I had learned over the years were finally showing up as a whole and complete picture. Through these lessons, you will see how those pieces of the Old Testament stories fit together to prepare the world for Jesus' birth. Through this first lesson, you will see how the book of Genesis is filled with many beginnings, and each beginning is an important piece to the final story.

The Bible is made up of 66 individual books. It was when I was able to visualize the titles of these books as though they were in a bookshelf that I was able to grasp how the bible as a whole was made up. Of this picture, the top two shelves are reserved for the books of the Old Testament, and the lower is for the books of the New Testament. Learn: 5, 12, 5, 5, 12



5 books of Law, 12 books of History, 5 books of Poetry, 5 Major Prophets, and 12 Minor Prophets

The first five books, known as the Law or as the Pentateuch, begins with Genesis. There are many stories in Genesis that you will probably recognize at least portions of, but for the sake of time and space I am pulling out five pieces of the puzzle for you to study.



1. **The Beginning**
2. **The Beginning of Sin**
3. **The Beginning of the Hebrew People**
4. **The Beginning of the Nation of Israel**
5. **The Beginning of Living for God's Promise**

THE BEGINNING

DIGGING DEEPER: Genesis 1-4

SEARCHING THE SCRIPTURE: Genesis 1:1-2, 26; John 1:1-3

Genesis 1:1 In the beginning God _____ the heavens and the earth.

V. 2 Now the earth was formless and empty, darkness was over the surface of the deep, and the _____ was hovering over the waters.

Genesis 1:26 Then God said, "Let _____ make man in _____ image, in Our likeness, and the let them rule over…

John 1:-2 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was _____ God, and the Word _____ God. He was with God in the _____.

V.3 Through Him all things were made; without Him nothing was made that has been made.

This beginning portion seems to be a new revelation to many people. God, Jesus, and the Holy Spirit were there in the very beginning. The Hebrew word for God in this Scripture is "Elohim" which is the plural for God. We know God to be One God in Three Persons called the Trinity. It is a hard concept to grasp, but that is what Scripture teaches.

THE BEGINNING OF SIN

The next puzzle piece of Genesis I want to focus on is THE BEGINNING OF SIN. Understanding this piece of the puzzle will provide perspective in understanding the rest of the Holy Scriptures. It's called the FALL OF MAN.

DIGGING DEEPER: Romans 5:12-21; Genesis 2:4-25; 3

SEARCHING THE SCRIPTURE: Romans 5:12, 19; Genesis 2:9, 22; 3:1, 2-3, 5, 12-13, 14, 15, 22-23

Romans 5:12 Therefore, just as sin entered the world through one man, and death through sin, and in this way death came to all men, because all sinned-

V. 19 For just as through the disobedience of the one man the many were made sinners, so also through the obedience of the one man the many will be made righteous.

(Disobedience=Adam, Obedience=Jesus)

Genesis 2:9 In the middle of the garden were the tree _____ and the tree of the _____

V.22 …But for Adam no suitable helper was found. The LORD God made a woman from the rib he had taken out of the man, and he brought her to the man

3:1 Now the _____ was more crafty than any of the wild animals the LORD God had made.

V.2-3; What did the Serpent do to the words of God? _____

_____

V. 5 Satan tempts Eve with a lie; "your eyes will be _____and you will be _____ God.

V. 12-13 Adam blamed _____ The woman [Eve] blamed _____

V. 14 So the LORD God said to the serpent, "Because you have done this, _____are you above all the livestock and all the wild animals!

V. 15 "I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your _____and hers; He will _____ your head, and you will _____ His heel.
*(The first prophecy of Christ)

V. 16-19 God brings a curse on the ground and pain in the body. What was going to happen was immediate death, but He chose the curse instead. In essence… Adam had separated himself and all mankind

after him from God. Man was destined to live forever, but now he was banished from the perfect presence of God and was now unable to eat from the Tree of Life. V. 22-23.

V.22-23 "The man has now become like one of Us, knowing good and evil. He must not be allowed to reach out his hand and take also from the _____and eat, and live forever." So the LORD God _____him from the Garden of Eden to work the ground from which he had been taken.

God gave Adam and Eve a command not to eat from one specific tree. He wanted OBEDIENCE. They had everything else but that one tree. Adam would not have understood death because it hadn't entered the world yet; thus he would not have fully understood the consequences of DISOBEDIENCE. God desired Adam and Eve to take His word on the matter… it is called FAITH. FAITH AND OBEDIENCE are what God still desires of us today: FAITH when we read His Word but don't quite understand, and a heart of OBEDIENCE because we love Him. Now, because of sin in this world God needed to prepare a way of salvation to bring His people back to Him.

THE BEGINNING OF THE HEBREW PEOPLE

DIGGING DEEPER: Genesis 5-26; Romans 4; Galatians 3

SEARCHING THE SCRIPTURE: Galatians 3:6-9; 14; Genesis 12:1-3; 15:4-6; 17:1-8

Galatians 3:6-9 Consider Abraham: "He believed God, and it was credited to him as righteousness." Understand then, that those who believe are children of Abraham. The Scripture foresaw that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, and announced the gospel in advance to Abraham: "All nations will be blessed through you." So those who have faith are blessed along with Abraham, the man of faith.

V. 14 He redeemed us in order that the blessing given to Abraham might come to the Gentiles through Christ Jesus, so that by faith we might receive the promise of the Spirit.

Abram, later to be called Abraham, became the Patriarch of the family chosen by God to bring salvation to His people. The people were separated through Adam. They then rebelled over and over to bring judgment upon themselves, first in the time of Noah and the building of the ark and then the building of the tower of Babel. God's wrath came in the flood and again in the confusion of language. This brings us to the calling of the beginning of a people belonging to God.

Genesis 12:1-3 The LORD had said to Abram, "_____ your country, your people and your father's household and _____ to the land I will show you.

I will make you into a great nation and I will bless you; I will make your name great, and you will be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you, and whoever curses you I will curse; and all peoples on earth will be blessed through you.

V 15:4-6 Then the word of the LORD came to him: "This man will not be your heir, but a son coming from your own body will be your heir. He took him outside and said, "Look up at the heavens and count the stars –if indeed you can count them." Then He said to him, "So shall your offspring be."

Abram _____ the LORD, and he credited it to him as _____.

Abraham takes things into his own hands then God intervened by cutting covenant with him.

V. 17:1-2 When Abram was ninety-nine years old, the LORD appeared to him and said, "I am God Almighty, walk before me and be _____. I will confirm my covenant between Me and you and will greatly _____ your numbers."

V. 3-5 Abram fell facedown, and God said to him, "As for Me, this is my covenant with you: You will be the father of many nations. No longer will you be called Abram; your name will be Abraham, for I have made you a father of many nations.

V. 6-7 I will make you very fruitful; I will make nations of you, and kings will come from you. I will establish my covenant as an everlasting _____ between Me and you for the generations to come, to be your God and the God of your descendants after you.

Through the Scriptures, we are able to follow important parts of Abraham's life. He has his promised son, Isaac, who in turn has twins named Esau and Jacob. Esau, the oldest, sold his birthright inheritance to his brother Jacob for a bowl of stew. When they grew older and their father, Isaac, was old and could not see anymore, Jacob deceived him for the covenant blessing passed down from Abraham. Deception divided this family, and Jacob flees to his Uncle Laban's territory where he meets his beautiful Rachel. Upon agreement to work for her, deception came to Jacob as he was tricked into marrying Rachel's sister, Leah. He eventually gets to marry Rachel and then the kids started to come.

Throughout the lives of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob were opportunities to display FAITH in God and OBEDIENCE to His call. At this point in the Scriptures, Jacob has his kids and obeys God's call to move back home to the land of Canaan. After wrestling with God, Jacob surrenders to Him and the next portion is where Jacob gains his new name.

THE BEGINNING OF THE NATION OF ISRAEL

DIGGING DEEPER: Genesis 27-36

SEARCHING THE SCRIPTURE: Genesis 35:9-13; 23-26

Genesis 35:9-10 After Jacob returned from Paddan Aram, God appeared to him again and blessed him. God said to him, "Your name is _____, but you will no longer be called Jacob; your name will be _____. So He named him Israel.

V. 11-13 And God said to him, "I am God Almighty; be fruitful and increase in number. A _____ and a community of nations will come from you, and kings will come from your body. The land I gave to Abraham and Isaac I also give to you, and I will give this land to your descendants after you." The God went up from him at the place where He had talked with him.

V. 23-26 Jacob had twelve sons: The sons of _____: Reuben the firstborn of Jacob, Simeon, Levi, Judah, Issachar and Zebulun.

The sons of_____: Joseph and Benjamin.

The sons of Rachel's maidservant_____: Dan and Naphtali.

The sons of Leah's maidservant _____: Gad and Asher.

These were the sons of Jacob, who were born to him in Paddan Aram.

The twelve sons of Jacob, became the twelve tribes of Israel. God turned the people He called into a nation, just as He promised. Joseph, one of Jacob's favorite sons, was taken from him and was left as dead. It is important to understand that God's ways are not our ways. Joseph didn't die but instead was sold into slavery. He eventually ended up in Egypt serving as Pharaoh's right-hand person. As one with so much power, he was able to save his people. What the world intended for evil, God turned for the good.

THE BEGINNING OF LIVING FOR GOD'S PROMISE

DIGGING DEEPER: Genesis 37-50

SEARCHING THE SCRIPTURE: Genesis 42:3-8; 47:27: 48:5; 50:24

V. 3 How many of Joseph's brothers went down to buy grain from Egypt?_____

V. 4 Which brother stayed home?_____

V. 7 Did Joseph recognize his brothers?_____ **Did they recognize him?**_____

Joseph wanted to see his little brother and father again. He had the brothers bring the clan back to Egypt to save them from the famine. When Pharaoh heard of this he was pleased and gave them the best of the land to settle in. Jacob passed on the blessings to his sons as God had determined before his death. Then, after many years went by, as Joseph was about to pass, he reassures his brothers of a promise given so long ago.

Genesis 47:27 Now the Israelites settled in Egypt in the region of Goshen. They acquired _____ **there and were fruitful and** _____ **greatly in number.**

Genesis 48:5 What are the names of Joseph's two sons that took the place of Joseph in the family inheritance?

_____

Genesis 50:24 Then Joseph said to his brothers, "I am about to die. But God will surely come to your aid and take you up _____**of this land to the land He promised on** _____ **to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob."**

The nation of Israel was now living for the promise of God to take them back to the land that was promised to them. Little did they know at that time how long that would be, but God did keep His promise. In the next lesson on Exodus you will find out just how long the people of Israel, living in the land of Goshen, had to wait. While they waited, they were expected to have FAITH and OBEDIENCE to the LORD God Almighty.

I am here to remind you that we are in that similar wait. God has given us a promise of coming again, but often times, it seems too hard. Instead of holding on to the truth of Scripture and walking in FAITH and OBEDIENCE, we begin to do things our own way. Looking back over the lesson, it is hard to understand how even from the **beginning** of time God was (and is) three persons. It's hard to understand that just because of the DISOBEDIENCE of Adam sin had its **beginning**. It's hard to understand that God called the **beginning** of His people through one man, Abraham, and created the **beginning** of a nation belonging to Him, though another man, Jacob (Israel). It's

hard to understand how a band of brothers that meant to harm one of their own, not only were saved by the one they hurt, but also were able to take hold of the inheritance God intended for them. They had favor for the time and were encouraged from the **beginning** of Joseph's death to live for God's promise. In our wait, we were encouraged from the beginning of Jesus' death to live for God's promise of His return. I know I don't understand a lot, but I also know I have chosen to take what I have learned and read and accept it by FAITH. I have then chosen to live by it in OBEDIENCE. That is my desire for all of you, as well. I want you to grow in FAITH, and through that faith, become more and more OBEDIENT to God. "Consequently, faith comes from hearing the message, and the message is heard through the word of Christ." (Romans 10:17) It all started **In the Beginning.**

It really is amazing how the puzzle pieces fit together. If you read and don't quite understand a piece of the puzzle, no worries. Finish the big picture and the pieces will fall into place. What I have just given you is A LOT of information. But now, you have a brief description of what the picture looks like as you search out the individual pieces. I pray God's blessings on you, and I pray that God's revelation of this mystery is given to you so you may grow to understand on a whole new level the power of our God. Amen