

The Greatest Story Ever Told  
SESSION 3: THE LAW  
From Moses to David  
Campus Fellowship Fall Retreat 2022 - Matt Heerema  
Session 3 - 30-35 minutes

## INTRO: ON GENESIS

Those of you who are familiar with the Bible, have you ever given any thought to the context into which Genesis was written? When we are trying to understand the Bible, some of the first things we need to establish are the questions: “who wrote it”, “when”, “to whom”, and “why”.

Do we have Genesis because God just needed us to have an understanding of where the world came from? If so, why does he only give us a single chapter whose details don't quite fit with... I dunno... physics?

Who wrote Genesis? (Moses.) When did he write it? (During the Exodus.) To whom did he write it? (The Israelites.) Why did he write it? (...)

- The details it DOES give on creation,
  - God created
  - From nothing
  - In seven days (are they literal 24 periods? I think that's outside the scope of what Genesis is trying to do.)
- The details it does not.
  - Exact physical processes of creation (He spoke!)
  - Why there is light, separate from the dark, prior to the sun moon and stars being created, and how that works.
  - How plants were created and grew prior to the sun nourishing them.
- None of this is my point for today, but what I want to say clearly is that **MOSES WROTE GENESIS TO THE ISRAELITES DURING THE EXODUS FOR A SPECIFIC REASON.**
- As a reminder of God's deeds, and as an explanation of God's requirements
- Genesis and Exodus as a covenant prologue.
  - Not taking queues from ancient near eastern religions. Moses telling what really happened that gave rise to all the other myths.
  - But rather using the structures of ancient near eastern politics, notably a rescue and fealty treaty between a greater king and a lesser king.

## CONTEXT: SLAVERY IN EGYPT

### Exodus 1:6-14 (CSB)

6 Joseph and all his brothers and all that generation eventually died. 7 But the Israelites were fruitful, increased rapidly, multiplied, and became extremely numerous so that the land was filled with them. 8 A new king, who did not know about Joseph, came to power in Egypt. 9 He said to his people, “Look, the

Israelite people are more numerous and powerful than we are. 10 Come, let's deal shrewdly with them; otherwise they will multiply further, and when war breaks out, they will join our enemies, fight against us, and leave the country." 11 So the Egyptians assigned taskmasters over the Israelites to oppress them with forced labor. They built Pithom and Rameses as supply cities for Pharaoh. 12 But the more they oppressed them, the more they multiplied and spread so that the Egyptians came to dread the Israelites. 13 They worked the Israelites ruthlessly 14 and made their lives bitter with difficult labor in brick and mortar and in all kinds of fieldwork. They ruthlessly imposed all this work on them.

## **GOD'S DEAL WITH MOSES AND ISRAEL**

### **Exodus 19:4-6 (CSB)**

4 'You have seen what I did to the Egyptians and how I carried you on eagles 'wings and brought you to myself. 5 Now if you will carefully listen to me and keep my covenant, you will be my own possession out of all the peoples, although the whole earth is mine, 6 and you will be my kingdom of priests and my holy nation. 'These are the words that you are to say to the Israelites."

Blessing for obedience & Curse for disobedience - Deuteronomy 28.

### **Deuteronomy 30:1-4 (CSB)**

1 "When all these things happen to you—the blessings and curses I have set before you—and you come to your senses while you are in all the nations where the Lord your God has driven you, 2 and you and your children return to the Lord your God and obey him with all your heart and all your soul by doing everything I am commanding you today, 3 then he will restore your fortunes, have compassion on you, and gather you again from all the peoples where the Lord your God has scattered you. 4 Even if your exiles are at the farthest horizon, he will gather you and bring you back from there.

### **Prologue:**

"I rescued you from the Egyptians."

### **Grants (Promises)**

- God with them in the tabernacle
- A name: Israel, Holy nation!
- A place: Canaan - Land specified
- A people: Jews
- A king: God as king over a kingdom of priests!
- Global Impact: Kingdom of Priests (God speaking to all the nations through Israel)

### **Obligations:**

Obedience to the law!

### **Consequences:**

Curse and exile

[Show Adam/Noah chart]

Back to the chart!

Out of the children of Abraham, God narrows down the family lineage through

## HOW DOES THAT GO?

Judges does not paint a pretty picture.

### **Judges 2:10–12 (CSB)**

10 That whole generation was also gathered to their ancestors. After them another generation rose up who did not know the Lord or the works he had done for Israel. 11 The Israelites did what was evil in the Lord's sight. They worshiped the Baals 12 and abandoned the Lord, the God of their ancestors, who had brought them out of Egypt. They followed other gods from the surrounding peoples and bowed down to them. They angered the Lord,

But STILL God did not abandon them!

### **Judges 2:16–19 (CSB)**

16 The Lord raised up judges, who saved them from the power of their marauders, 17 but they did not listen to their judges. Instead, they prostituted themselves with other gods, bowing down to them. They quickly turned from the way of their ancestors, who had walked in obedience to the Lord's commands. They did not do as their ancestors did. 18 Whenever the Lord raised up a judge for the Israelites, the Lord was with him and saved the people from the power of their enemies while the judge was still alive. The Lord was moved to pity whenever they groaned because of those who were oppressing and afflicting them. 19 Whenever the judge died, the Israelites would act even more corruptly than their ancestors, following other gods to serve them and bow in worship to them. They did not turn from their evil practices or their obstinate ways.

## CONTEXT OF THE COVENANT:

### **Judges 21:25 (CSB)**

25 In those days there was no king in Israel; everyone did whatever seemed right to him.

- In the days of the last Judge, a prophet named samuel...
- Eventually they demand a king, just like all the other nations, who will keep them safe.

### **1 Samuel 8:6–20 (CSB)**

6 When they said, "Give us a king to judge us," Samuel considered their demand wrong, so he prayed to the Lord. 7 But the Lord told him, "Listen to the people and everything they say to you. They have not rejected you; they have rejected me as their king. 8 They are doing the same

thing to you that they have done to me, since the day I brought them out of Egypt until this day, abandoning me and worshiping other gods. 9 Listen to them, but solemnly warn them and tell them about the customary rights of the king who will reign over them.” 10 Samuel told all the Lord’s words to the people who were asking him for a king. 11 He said, “These are the rights of the king who will reign over you: He will take your sons and put them to his use in his chariots, on his horses, or running in front of his chariots. 12 He can appoint them for his use as commanders of thousands or commanders of fifties, to plow his ground and reap his harvest, or to make his weapons of war and the equipment for his chariots. 13 He can take your daughters to become perfumers, cooks, and bakers. 14 He can take your best fields, vineyards, and olive orchards and give them to his servants. 15 He can take a tenth of your grain and your vineyards and give them to his officials and servants. 16 He can take your male servants, your female servants, your best cattle, and your donkeys and use them for his work. 17 He can take a tenth of your flocks, and you yourselves can become his servants. 18 When that day comes, you will cry out because of the king you’ve chosen for yourselves, but the Lord won’t answer you on that day.” 19 The people refused to listen to Samuel. “No!” they said. “We must have a king over us. 20 Then we’ll be like all the other nations: our king will judge us, go out before us, and fight our battles.”

They appoint an impressive man named Saul as king. And things go well for a few years, but then Saul gets full of himself, and oversteps his boundaries as King, performing Priestly duties that were not his to do, and God rejects him, and instead appoints David as King.

## **GOD’S COVENANT WITH DAVID, THE PROMISE OF A KING AND A KINGDOM**

### **2 Samuel 7:8–16 (CSB)**

8 “So now this is what you are to say to my servant David: ‘This is what the Lord of Armies says: I took you from the pasture, from tending the flock, to be ruler over my people Israel. 9 I have been with you wherever you have gone, and I have destroyed all your enemies before you. I will make a great name for you like that of the greatest on the earth. 10 I will designate a place for my people Israel and plant them, so that they may live there and not be disturbed again. Evildoers will not continue to oppress them as they have done 11 ever since the day I ordered judges to be over my people Israel. I will give you rest from all your enemies.’ “The Lord declares to you: The Lord himself will make **a house for you**. 12 When your time comes and you rest with your ancestors, I will raise up after you **your descendant**, who will come from your body, and I will establish **his kingdom**. 13 He is the one who will build a house for my name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever. 14 I will be his father, and he will be my son. When he does wrong, I will discipline him with a rod of men and blows from mortals. 15 But my faithful love will never leave him as it did when I removed it from Saul, whom I removed from before you. 16 **Your house and kingdom will endure before me forever, and your throne will be established forever.’ ”**

### **2 Samuel 7:19 (CSB)**

19 What you have done so far was a little thing to you, Lord God, for you have also spoken about your servant's house in the distant future. And **this is a revelation for mankind**, Lord God.

### **Prologue:**

2 Samuel 7:8-9

"I took you from the pastures and have been with you this whole time..."

### **Grants (Promises)**

- A God (The God will be with them) - "I will be your shield"
- A name: I will make your name great
- A place: Canaan - Land specified
- A people: Jews
- A king: Promised coming anointed son of David, eternal throne!
- Global impact: "This is a revelation for all mankind"

### **Obligations:**

NONE, one sided promise "I will do this."

As subset of the Mosaic law, obedience to it.

### **Consequences:**

2 Sam 7:14 - Discipline him with blows from mortals...

But Jesus didn't sin...

Our sin was placed on him (imputation) - 2 Corinthians 5:21

### **2 Corinthians 5:20-21 (CSB)**

20 Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, since God is making his appeal through us. We plead on Christ's behalf, "Be reconciled to God." 21 He made the one who did not know sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.

## **WHAT THE LAW TEACHES US**

- Heaven must be earned
- There must be payment for sin
- To be with God, you must be sinless
- But every inclination of our heart is toward evil from our youth
- We continually fall into a pattern of rebellion.

## **HOW'D THAT GO FOR THEM?**

The prophets (the rest of the OT!) are written to continually call back consistently law-breaking Israel to the covenant. One way to describe the prophets is "Covenant enforcers." God, in His deep, rich,

mercy, rather than wiping the law breaking nation out, continually calls for their repentance. Continually pointing out their failure to thrive as they could! As kings and queens under God, ruling and caring for and enjoying a land filled with fruit and abundance. But because of our sin, and our continual demand to be the ones declaring good and evil, rather than heeding the creator's declaration, we operate outside our design. We continually give ourselves to other "gods", and suffer the consequences of shame and destruction as we fight each other for dominance in our greed and lust.

The prophets spend hundreds of years warning Israel to turn back before its too late. Before God's "grace period" of warning runs out and they finally lose the benefits of the covenant: the kingdom, health, prosperity, and protection.

They warn Israel right up until, and even as the fore-warned invading armies crush the kingdom, taking people away into captivity.

## **WHAT DO WE LEARN ABOUT GOD?**

- His laws are good! Protecting the weak and vulnerable, caring for the land, honoring the honorable, providing for all his creation, plants, animals, children, parents, grandparents. Strangers AND loved ones, foreigners AND citizens, believers AND unbelievers.
- His laws are a blessing "be like me!"
- His patience is vast, giving warning after warning, and withholding the full consequences of sin for a long time
- But it does not last forever. He is a righteous God, and injustice will be punished.
- But his mercy is unfathomable, providing rescue for the repentant, and protecting his people, ultimately even in his rebellion!
- He keeps his promises: He upholds his side of the bargain, and comes through even in our faithlessness.

## **WHAT DO WE LEARN ABOUT OURSELVES HERE?**

- That even with God's black-and-white, written down requirements (the answer key!) we still rebel. We want to be the ones determining right and wrong. No one can tell me what to do!
- We cannot claim ignorance about God's ways as a valid excuse because even when we know God's ways the problem still remains.
- Even under God's perfect political system, with a benevolent king, we still rebel and desire to be king for ourselves.
- Every human king is fallible, and we will never be able to appoint a perfect human ruler who will finally rescue us from all our problems, despite their promises to the contrary.
- From Abraham: God's promise to be with us and be our God and our protection is not enough for us.
- From Adam and Noah: God providing perfect paradise for us to enjoy and cultivate, with only one no, among a billion yeses, is not enough for us.

We have a problem that we cannot overcome on our own. God's covenants are designed to bless his creation *and* to deal with the fundamental problem of our sinfulness, our self-centeredness, our pride, our greed, our faithlessness.

Time and time again, generation after generation, century after century, epoch after epoch we have proved our inability, our unwillingness to follow our creator wholeheartedly on our own.

We need help.

Good thing the story is not done.

Jeremiah 31:31-34 (CSB)

31 "Look, the days are coming"—this is the Lord's declaration—"when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah. 32 This one will not be like the covenant I made with their ancestors on the day I took them by the hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt—my covenant that they broke even though I am their master"—the Lord's declaration. 33 "Instead, this is the covenant I will make with the house of Israel after those days"—the Lord's declaration. "I will put my teaching within them and write it on their hearts. I will be their God, and they will be my people. 34 No longer will one teach his neighbor or his brother, saying, 'Know the Lord,' for they will all know me, from the least to the greatest of them"—this is the Lord's declaration. "For I will forgive their iniquity and never again remember their sin.

This evening we'll look at God's establishment of the New Covenant. How He worked through His son Jesus to finally deal with our sin problem after all, how he clears our guilt and shame by forgiving our sin, and how he gives us power to walk in his ways through the Holy Spirit.