

INTRODUCTION TO GENESIS

Genesis is the first book of the Bible. It is also the first of the five books of the Law. *Genesis* actually means “beginning,” and it is filled with beginnings: the beginning of the universe, the earth, plant and animal life, and people, families, and nations. Sadly, it is also the beginning of sin.

The first eleven chapters tell the story of creation and how sin came into the world. Adam and Eve were created by God in His own image. But they chose to disobey God, bringing sin, suffering, and even death into the world.

The rest of Genesis is often called the “patriarchal history.” It tells of how God chose Abraham and his descendants to be His people. Genesis also contains all the exciting stories of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and Joseph. The book ends as the Israelites come to live in Egypt.

Who?

Genesis was written by Moses. Of course, Moses was not alive when the earth was created—his writing was inspired by God. That means God told Moses what to write.

When?

Moses, the writer of Genesis, lived during the 1400s BC. The events of Genesis begin with creation—the beginning of time itself—and end with the death of Joseph in 1805 BC.

Why?

Genesis shows that God is the Lord and Creator of all things. He has perfect control over all of His creation. God can use even terrible things to bring about great good—just as He did when Joseph was sold into slavery.

Redemption Thread

Genesis tells us where we came from (God) and how sin came into the world (disobeying God). It also shows us the beginnings of God’s grace. From creation, God had a plan to save His people—first, through His promise to Abraham, and finally through Jesus, His Son.

Stories from Genesis

- » The Creation *Genesis 1:1–2:3*
- » The Temptation and the Fall *Genesis 3:1-7*
- » God Warns Noah *Genesis 6:9-22*
- » The Tower of Babylon *Genesis 11:1-9*
- » Joseph’s Dreams *Genesis 37:1-11*

THE MAIN CHARACTER

Reflect on this Scripture verse to begin your time with God:

“God is light, and there is absolutely no darkness in him. If we say, ‘We have fellowship with him,’ yet we walk in darkness, we are lying and are not practicing the truth”

— 1 JOHN 1:5-6.

Think about your favorite book or movie. A writer often uses the first scene or line to give you insight into the main character. What does the first scene tell you about the main character in that book or movie? How?

With that idea in mind, read [Genesis 1:1](#) and [Psalm 92](#) in your Bible.

A story begins with its author, creation with its Creator. How does [Genesis 1:1](#) help to establish God as the main character of His story?

What does [Psalm 92:4-5](#) tell you about the purpose of the creation account? Is it more about glorifying God or being in awe of what He has made?

The Bible doesn't start with this story so we can be in awe of what God has made; it's there so we can be in awe of God. Take some time to do that today. Focus your mind on God—not what He has done for you or what He has made—but on Him and who He is.

For further study of God's eternal nature, read [John 1:1](#), [Ephesians 1:4](#), and [Colossians 1:15-17](#).

ESSENTIAL DOCTRINE

The Goodness of Creation

In Genesis 1, God repeatedly affirmed that all of His creation was good, even “very good” (1:31). It is good, in God's judgment, because He created it for a purpose that it fulfilled—to reflect and display the good character of the Creator. Therefore, sin and evil should not be seen as a foundational part of the creation but rather as a corruption of it. While the creation has been marred and distorted as a result of sin, it is still good in the hands of God and serves His purpose of proclaiming His glory in the world. God's people should affirm and seek to preserve the goodness of God's creation (2:15).

THE STORY OF
CREATION BEGINS
—AND ENDS—IN OUR
ETERNAL GOD. IT IS
MORE ABOUT HIM
THAN US.

MEMORY VERSE

Genesis 1:1

In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.

The Creation

1 In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.

² Now the earth was formless and empty, darkness covered the surface of the watery depths, and the Spirit of God was hovering over the surface of the waters. ³ Then God said, "Let there be light," and there was light. ⁴ God saw that the light was good, and God separated the light from the darkness. ⁵ God called the light "day," and the darkness he called "night." There was an evening, and there was a morning: one day.

ESSENTIAL QUESTION

Genesis 1–2

Q: Who created everything?

A: God created everything. He created the world and people to bring Him glory.

⁶ Then God said, "Let there be an expanse between the waters, separating water from water." ⁷ So God made the expanse and separated the water under the expanse from the water above the expanse. And it was so. ⁸ God called the expanse "sky." Evening came and then morning: the second day.

⁹ Then God said, "Let the water under the sky be gathered into one place, and let the dry land appear." And it was so. ¹⁰ God called the dry land "earth," and the gathering of the water he called "seas." And God saw that it was good. ¹¹ Then God said, "Let the earth produce vegetation: seed-bearing plants and fruit trees on the earth bearing fruit with seed in it according to their kinds." And it was so. ¹² The earth produced vegetation: seed-bearing plants according to their kinds and trees bearing fruit with seed in it according to their kinds. And God saw that it

was good. ¹³ Evening came and then morning: the third day.

¹⁴ Then God said, "Let there be lights in the expanse of the sky to separate the day from the night. They will serve as signs for seasons and for days and years. ¹⁵ They will be lights in the expanse of the sky to provide light on the earth." And it was so. ¹⁶ God made the two great lights — the greater light to rule over the day and the lesser light to rule over the night — as well as the stars. ¹⁷ God placed them in the expanse of the sky to provide light on the earth, ¹⁸ to rule the day and the night, and to separate light from darkness. And God saw that it was good. ¹⁹ Evening came and then morning: the fourth day.

²⁰ Then God said, "Let the water swarm with living creatures, and let birds fly above the earth across the expanse of the sky." ²¹ So God created the large sea-creatures and every living creature that moves and swarms in the water, according to their kinds. He also created every winged creature according to its kind. And God saw that it was good. ²² God blessed them: "Be fruitful, multiply, and fill the waters of the seas, and let the birds multiply on the earth." ²³ Evening came and then morning: the fifth day.

²⁴ Then God said, "Let the earth produce living creatures according to their kinds: livestock, creatures that crawl, and the wildlife of the earth according to their kinds." And it was so. ²⁵ So God made the wildlife of the earth according to their kinds, the livestock according to their kinds, and all the creatures that crawl on the ground according to their kinds. And God saw that it was good.

²⁶ Then God said, "Let us make man in our image, according to our likeness. They will rule the fish of the sea, the birds of the sky, the livestock, the whole earth, and the creatures that crawl on the earth."

MEMORY VERSE

Genesis 1:27

So God created man in his own image; he created him in the image of God; he created them male and female.

- ²⁷ So God created man in his own image; he created him in the image of God; he created them male and female.

REDEMPTION THREAD

God Created the World

Genesis 1:1-25 The Bible says that Jesus is Lord over all of creation. Everything was created by Him and for Him. The Son has always existed, and He holds everything together.

²⁸ God blessed them, and God said to them, “Be fruitful, multiply, fill the earth, and subdue it. Rule the fish of the sea, the birds of the sky, and every creature that crawls on the earth.”

²⁹ God also said, “Look, I have given you every seed-bearing plant on the surface of the entire earth and every tree whose fruit contains seed. This will be food for you, ³⁰ for all the wildlife of the earth, for every bird of the sky, and for every creature that crawls on the earth — everything having the breath of life in it — I have given every green plant for food.”

MEMORY VERSE

Genesis 1:31

God saw all that he had made, and it was very good indeed. Evening came and then morning: the sixth day.

And it was so. ³¹ God saw all that he had made, and it was very good indeed. Evening came and then morning: the sixth day.

2 So the heavens and the earth and everything in them were completed. ² On the seventh day God had completed his work that he had done, and he rested on the seventh day from all his work that he had done. ³ God blessed the seventh day and declared it holy, for on it he rested from all his work of creation.

Man and Woman in the Garden

⁴ These are the records of the heavens and the earth, concerning their creation. At the time that the LORD God made the earth and the heavens, ⁵ no shrub of the field had yet grown on the land, and no plant of the field had yet sprouted, for the LORD God had not made it rain on

RESPOND

God Created the World

Genesis 1:1-25 In the beginning, there was only God. Then God created the heavens and the earth and everything that fills them. With just a word, He built up mountains and carved out seas. He placed the sun, the moon, and each star in the heavens. At His command, fish filled the seas, birds flew into the air, and animals sprang up to roam the earth. He did all of this just for you. What can you do for God today to show Him how much you love Him?

the land, and there was no man to work the ground. ⁶ But mist would come up from the earth and water all the ground. ⁷ Then the LORD God formed the man out of the dust from the ground and breathed the breath of life into his nostrils, and the man became a living being.

⁸ The LORD God planted a garden in Eden, in the east, and there he placed the man he had formed. ⁹ The LORD God caused to grow out of the ground every tree pleasing in appearance

BEHIND THE STORY

God is the grammatical subject of the first sentence in the Bible—and He continues to be the thematic subject throughout the entire creation account (Gn 1–2). The recurring phrase “then God said” in Genesis 1:1–2:3 serves to establish Him as the primary actor in creation.

In the pagan cultures that surrounded God’s people, the moon and sun were worshiped as gods. That may be why the usual Hebrew words for moon and sun are avoided in the Genesis creation account (see Gn 1:16). It is clear from this account that the sun and moon are not deities to be revered or worshiped, but rather, made to serve God and humanity.

The exact location of Eden, where God planted the first garden, is not known. Four rivers ran through the garden. Two of them, the Tigris and the Euphrates, are in present-day Iraq (Gn 2:8–14).

GOD CREATED YOU!

“Then God said, ‘Let us make man in our image, according to our likeness’”

—GENESIS 1:26.

Take a moment and let these words sink in: You were fashioned in God’s own image. You were made in the image and likeness of the Creator. Your eyes, your hair, your hands, your feet, your laugh, your tears—every part of you is made in the likeness of God.

God, in His infinite creativity, poured over each of us as He formed us, selecting unique abilities and spiritual gifts to prepare us for the work He has called us to do. His thoughtful creation was not for our own good, but for His good and for the world.

THINK ABOUT THESE QUESTIONS, AND JOURNAL YOUR THOUGHTS:

What work is God asking you to do?

What is the thing God created you to be?

What do you need to leave behind to be that unique person God created?

When God made you, He had a purpose. His plan was not to make you be someone else—just you!

ESSENTIAL DOCTRINE

God Is Faithful

God’s faithfulness means He keeps His word and always fulfills His promises (1Co1:9; 2Tm 2:13; 1Pt 4:19). God’s faithfulness is demonstrated in His fulfillment of the promises He made to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. The apostle Paul linked the attribute of “faithful” to God’s coming through on His word: “He who calls you is faithful; he will do it” (1Th 5:24). We reflect God by keeping the promises we make to Him and to others.

**GOD IS A PROMISE
MAKER AND A
PROMISE KEEPER.
ULTIMATELY, HE IS
FAITHFUL TO FULFILL
ALL THAT HE
PROMISES.**

RESPOND

God Created People

Genesis 2 On the sixth day of creation, God made Adam and Eve, the first man and woman. Unlike all the other things He created, Adam and Eve were made in God's own image. That means your eyes, your hair, your skin, your laughter, everything was made in His image. Take a moment to think about how amazing it is that you were made in His image!

and good for food, including the tree of life in the middle of the garden, as well as the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.

¹⁰ A river went out from Eden to water the garden. From there it divided and became the source of four rivers. ¹¹ The name of the first is Pishon, which flows through the entire land of Havilah, where there is gold. ¹² Gold from that land is pure; bdellium and onyx are also there. ¹³ The name of the second river is Gihon, which flows through the entire land of Cush. ¹⁴ The name of the third river is Tigris, which runs east of Assyria. And the fourth river is the Euphrates.

¹⁵ The LORD God took the man and placed him in the garden of Eden to work it and watch over it. ¹⁶ And the LORD God commanded the man, "You are free to eat from any tree of the garden, ¹⁷ but you must not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, for on the day you eat from it, you will certainly die." ¹⁸ Then the LORD God said, "It is not good for the man to be alone. I will make a helper corresponding to him." ¹⁹ The LORD God

REDEMPTION THREAD

God Created People

Genesis 1:26-2:25 God created people in His own image. Adam was like God in some ways, but he was not a perfect representation of God. God sent His Son, Jesus, to show us exactly what God is like (Col 1:15). Jesus is the perfect representation of God because He is God (Heb 1:3).

formed out of the ground every wild animal and every bird of the sky, and brought each to the man to see what he would call it. And whatever the man called a living creature, that was its name. ²⁰ The man gave names to all the livestock, to the birds of the sky, and to every wild animal; but for the man no helper was found corresponding to him. ²¹ So the LORD God caused a deep sleep to come over the man, and he slept. God took one of his ribs and closed the flesh at that place. ²² Then the LORD God made the rib he had taken from the man into a woman and brought her to the man. ²³ And the man said:

This one, at last, is bone of my bone
and flesh of my flesh;
this one will be called "woman,"
for she was taken from man.

²⁴ This is why a man leaves his father and mother and bonds with his wife, and they become one flesh. ²⁵ Both the man and his wife were naked, yet felt no shame.

The Temptation and the Fall

3 Now the serpent was the most cunning of all the wild animals that the LORD God had made. He said to the woman, "Did God really say, 'You can't eat from any tree in the garden?'"

² The woman said to the serpent, "We may eat the fruit from the trees in the garden. ³ But about the fruit of the tree in the middle of the garden, God said, 'You must not eat it or touch it, or you will die.'"

REDEMPTION THREAD

Sin Entered the World

Genesis 3:1-24 Since Adam and Eve, everyone has sinned against God. Our sin separates us from God. God promised that one of Eve's descendants would put an end to sin and death. God sent His Son, Jesus, to live as Adam didn't—perfectly sinless. God the Son came into the world to rescue people from sin and bring them back to God.

⁴ "No! You will not die," the serpent said to the woman. ⁵ "In fact, God knows that when you eat it your eyes will be opened and you will be like God, knowing good and evil." ⁶ The woman saw that the tree was good for food and delightful to look at, and that it was desirable

BROKEN

Have you ever broken something really valuable or lost something that was really important to you? Recall the way you felt when you realized what you had done.

“Now the serpent was the most cunning of all the wild animals that the LORD God had made. He said to the woman, ‘Did God really say, “You can’t eat from any tree in the garden”?’”

— GENESIS 3:1.

With that in mind, read [Genesis 3:1-7](#) in your Bible.

In an instant, sin entered the world. God had set a boundary, and Adam and Eve had chosen to live in opposition to Him.

CONSIDER THESE QUESTIONS:

- Look at Satan’s interaction with Eve in verses 1-4. How did he tempt Eve to further question God’s goodness and the truth of His word? Why do you think questioning these things leads to sin?
- Prior to this, God had been the One who determined what was right and wrong, but Eve took on that role in verse 6. If God is the Author and Main Character of Scripture, why is it wrong to usurp that role?
- Adam and Eve’s sin didn’t just affect them; it affected the entire human race. How do you know this to be true?

Read verse 7. Satan had said that disobeying God would cause Adam and Eve’s eyes to be opened to all wisdom, but instead of power, that knowledge brought fear and shame into their lives. How does choosing to sin against God still do that today?

For further study of the effect of Adam and Eve’s sin on us, read [Romans 5:12-21](#).

ESSENTIAL DOCTRINE

Illumination of Scripture

Because of the vast difference between God’s wisdom and ours, and because of humanity’s sinful state, human beings are incapable, on our own, of fully grasping spiritual truth without being aided by the Holy Spirit through the process of illumination. When it comes to understanding the meaning of God’s Word, Christians do not ultimately rely upon human reason in the process of interpretation; nor do we rely solely upon an institution or body of scholars. Instead, a Christian’s ultimate reliance is upon the work of the Spirit of God who illuminates the Scriptures in the heart and mind (Mt 13:13-15; Mk 8:18).

IN ADAM AND EVE’S
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AS A RESULT, THE
INTIMATE RELATIONSHIP
GOD WANTED TO HAVE
WITH ALL HUMANITY
SEEMED IRRECOVERABLY
DAMAGED.

ESSENTIAL QUESTION

Genesis 3–4

Q: What is sin?

A: Sin is breaking God's law, and it separates people from God.

for obtaining wisdom. So she took some of its fruit and ate it; she also gave some to her husband, who was with her, and he ate it. ⁷ Then the eyes of both of them were opened, and they knew they were naked; so they sewed fig leaves together and made coverings for themselves.

Sin's Consequences

⁸ Then the man and his wife heard the sound of the LORD God walking in the garden at the time of the evening breeze, and they hid from the LORD God among the trees of the garden. ⁹ So the LORD God called out to the man and said to him, "Where are you?"

¹⁰ And he said, "I heard you in the garden, and I was afraid because I was naked, so I hid."

¹¹ Then he asked, "Who told you that you were naked? Did you eat from the tree that I commanded you not to eat from?"

¹² The man replied, "The woman you gave to be with me — she gave me some fruit from the tree, and I ate."

¹³ So the LORD God asked the woman, "What is this you have done?"

And the woman said, "The serpent deceived me, and I ate."

¹⁴ So the LORD God said to the serpent:
Because you have done this,
you are cursed more than any livestock
and more than any wild animal.
You will move on your belly
and eat dust all the days of your life.

¹⁵ I will put hostility between you
and the woman,
and between your offspring
and her offspring.
He will strike your head,
and you will strike his heel.

¹⁶ He said to the woman:
I will intensify your labor pains;
you will bear children with painful
effort.
Your desire will be for your husband,
yet he will rule over you.

¹⁷ And he said to the man, "Because you listened to your wife and ate from the tree about which I commanded you, 'Do not eat from it':

The ground is cursed because of you.

You will eat from it by means of
painful labor
all the days of your life.

¹⁸ It will produce thorns and thistles
for you,
and you will eat the plants of the field.

¹⁹ You will eat bread by the sweat
of your brow

until you return to the ground,
since you were taken from it.

For you are dust,
and you will return to dust."

²⁰ The man named his wife Eve because she was the mother of all the living. ²¹ The LORD God made clothing from skins for the man and his wife, and he clothed them.

²² The LORD God said, "Since the man has become like one of us, knowing good and evil, he must not reach out, take from the tree of life, eat, and live forever." ²³ So the LORD God sent him away from the garden of Eden to work the ground from which he was taken.

²⁴ He drove the man out and stationed the cherubim and the flaming, whirling sword

RESPOND

Sin Entered the World

Genesis 3–4 God placed Adam and Eve in the garden of Eden. He gave them only one rule: do not eat the fruit from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. If they ate it, they would die. But the serpent (who was really Satan) lied and said they would not die. Instead, they would become like God, knowing good and evil.

So Eve ate the fruit and then gave some to Adam. By disobeying God, Adam and Eve brought sin into the world. God still loved Adam and Eve, but their sin had separated them from Him. They could no longer live in the garden.

Think back to the way you felt when you lost or broke something that was important to you. Now, stop to really mourn for what was lost in the garden and the depth of your own sinfulness. Be honest with God and repent of any sin in your life.

east of the garden of Eden to guard the way to the tree of life.

Cain Murders Abel

4 The man was intimate with his wife Eve, and she conceived and gave birth to Cain. She said, "I have had a male child with the LORD's help."² She also gave birth to his brother Abel. Now Abel became a shepherd of flocks, but Cain worked the ground.³ In the course of time Cain presented some of the land's produce as an offering to the LORD.⁴ And Abel also presented an offering — some of the firstborn of his flock and their fat portions. The LORD had regard for Abel and his offering,⁵ but he did not have regard for Cain and his offering. Cain was furious, and he looked despondent.

⁶ Then the LORD said to Cain, "Why are you furious? And why do you look despondent? ⁷If you do what is right, won't you be accepted? But if you do not do what is right, sin is

RESPOND

Cain and Abel

Genesis 4:1-16, 25-26 After Adam and Eve left the garden of Eden, they had a son named Cain and another son named Abel. Both Cain and Abel were sinners because of Adam and Eve's sin. Abel became a shepherd, and Cain worked the ground by growing plants and crops. One day, Cain gave God an offering of some of the produce he grew. Abel gave God some of the firstborn of his flock. God accepted Abel's offering because it was from the best that he had, but He did not accept Cain's offering because it was from Cain's leftovers. When you give to God, do you give your very best? What steps can you put into place to always give God your very best?

REDEMPTION THREAD

Cain and Abel

Genesis 4:1-16, 25-26 God had promised that one of Eve's descendants would put an end to sin and death. Cain was not that descendant. He was sinful like his parents, Adam and Eve. So people kept living and trusting God to keep His promise. At just the right time, God would send His Son to save sinners (Heb 11:13, Gl 4:4).

crouching at the door. Its desire is for you, but you must rule over it."

⁸ Cain said to his brother Abel, "Let's go out to the field." And while they were in the field, Cain attacked his brother Abel and killed him.

⁹ Then the LORD said to Cain, "Where is your brother Abel?"

"I don't know," he replied. "Am I my brother's guardian?"

¹⁰ Then he said, "What have you done? Your brother's blood cries out to me from the ground! ¹¹So now you are cursed, alienated from the ground that opened its mouth to receive your brother's blood you have shed. ¹²If you work the ground, it will never again give you its yield. You will be a restless wanderer on the earth."

¹³ But Cain answered the LORD, "My punishment is too great to bear! ¹⁴Since you are banishing me today from the face of the earth, and I must hide from your presence and become a restless wanderer on the earth, whoever finds me will kill me."

¹⁵ Then the LORD replied to him, "In that case, whoever kills Cain will suffer vengeance seven times over." And he placed a mark on Cain so that whoever found him would not kill him.

¹⁶ Then Cain went out from the LORD's presence and lived in the land of Nod, east of Eden.

The Line of Cain

¹⁷ Cain was intimate with his wife, and she conceived and gave birth to Enoch. Then Cain became the builder of a city, and he named the city Enoch after his son. ¹⁸Irada was born to Enoch, Irada fathered Mehujael, Mehujael fathered Methushael, and Methushael fathered Lamech. ¹⁹Lamech took two wives for himself, one named Adah and the other named Zillah. ²⁰Adah bore Jabal; he was the father of the nomadic herdsmen. ²¹His brother was

OFFER HIM YOUR BEST

“In the course of time Cain presented some of the land’s produce as an offering to the LORD. And Abel also presented an offering — some of the firstborn of his flock and their fat portions. The LORD had regard for Abel and his offering, but he did not have regard for Cain and his offering”

— GENESIS 4:3-5.

God knows every thought and intent of your heart. The story of Cain and Abel is an example of how Abel’s offering demonstrated his faith in God, but Cain’s offering did not.

As Christians, we must understand that every single element of our lives is to demonstrate our faith in Christ. There is not a single part of our lives that is separated from our faith in Christ.

God’s Holy Spirit speaks to your heart and tells you when you have sinned (Jn 16:7-11). When you feel this urging in your heart, do not ignore it. It is God coming after you to bring you to repentance and to bring you back to Him.

Journal a prayer to God, offering to give Him your best. Refer to your prayer whenever you feel God pulling you back to Him.

named Jubal; he was the father of all who play the lyre and the flute.²² Zillah bore Tubal-cain, who made all kinds of bronze and iron tools. Tubal-cain's sister was Naamah.

²³ Lamech said to his wives:
Adah and Zillah, hear my voice;
wives of Lamech, pay attention
to my words.
For I killed a man for wounding me,
a young man for striking me.

²⁴ If Cain is to be avenged
seven times over,
then for Lamech it will be
seventy-seven times!

²⁵ Adam was intimate with his wife again, and she gave birth to a son and named him Seth, for she said, "God has given me another child in place of Abel, since Cain killed him."

²⁶ A son was born to Seth also, and he named him Enosh. At that time people began to call on the name of the LORD.

The Line of Seth

5 This is the document containing the family records of Adam. On the day that God created man, he made him in the likeness of God;² he created them male and female. When they were created, he blessed them and called them mankind.

³ Adam was 130 years old when he fathered a son in his likeness, according to his image, and named him Seth.⁴ Adam lived 800 years after he fathered Seth, and he fathered other sons and daughters.⁵ So Adam's life lasted 930 years; then he died.

⁶ Seth was 105 years old when he fathered Enosh.⁷ Seth lived 807 years after he fathered Enosh, and he fathered other sons and daughters.⁸ So Seth's life lasted 912 years; then he died.

⁹ Enosh was 90 years old when he fathered Kenan.¹⁰ Enosh lived 815 years after he fathered Kenan, and he fathered other sons and daughters.¹¹ So Enosh's life lasted 905 years; then he died.

¹² Kenan was 70 years old when he fathered Mahalalel.¹³ Kenan lived 840 years after he fathered Mahalalel, and he fathered other sons and daughters.¹⁴ So Kenan's life lasted 910 years; then he died.

¹⁵ Mahalalel was 65 years old when he fathered Jared.¹⁶ Mahalalel lived 830 years after he fathered Jared, and he fathered other sons and daughters.¹⁷ So Mahalalel's life lasted 895 years; then he died.

¹⁸ Jared was 162 years old when he fathered Enoch.¹⁹ Jared lived 800 years after he fathered

Enoch, and he fathered other sons and daughters.²⁰ So Jared's life lasted 962 years; then he died.

²¹ Enoch was 65 years old when he fathered Methuselah.²² And after he fathered Methuselah, Enoch walked with God 300 years and fathered other sons and daughters.²³ So Enoch's life lasted 365 years.²⁴ Enoch walked with God; then he was not there because God took him.

²⁵ Methuselah was 187 years old when he fathered Lamech.²⁶ Methuselah lived 782 years after he fathered Lamech, and he fathered other sons and daughters.²⁷ So Methuselah's life lasted 969 years; then he died.

²⁸ Lamech was 182 years old when he fathered a son.²⁹ And he named him Noah, saying, "This one will bring us relief from the agonizing labor of our hands, caused by the ground the LORD has cursed."³⁰ Lamech lived 595 years after he fathered Noah, and he fathered other sons and daughters.³¹ So Lamech's life lasted 777 years; then he died.

³² Noah was 500 years old, and he fathered Shem, Ham, and Japheth.

Sons of God and Daughters of Mankind

6 When mankind began to multiply on the earth and daughters were born to them,² the sons of God saw that the daughters of mankind were beautiful, and they took any they chose as wives for themselves.³ And the LORD said, "My Spirit will not remain with mankind forever, because they are corrupt. Their days will be 120 years."⁴ The Nephilim were on the earth both in those days and afterward, when the sons of God came to the daughters of mankind, who bore children to them. They were the powerful men of old, the famous men.

Judgment Decreed

⁵ When the LORD saw that human wickedness was widespread on the earth and that every inclination of the human mind was nothing but evil all the time,⁶ the LORD regretted that he had made man on the earth, and he was deeply grieved.⁷ Then the LORD said, "I will

ESSENTIAL QUESTION

Genesis 6:5-9:17

Q: Why does sin separate people from God?

A: God is holy and separate from sin.

wipe mankind, whom I created, off the face of the earth, together with the animals, creatures that crawl, and birds of the sky — for I regret that I made them.”⁸ Noah, however, found favor with the LORD.

God Warns Noah

⁹ These are the family records of Noah. Noah was a righteous man, blameless among his contemporaries; Noah walked with God.¹⁰ And Noah fathered three sons: Shem, Ham, and Japheth.

¹¹ Now the earth was corrupt in God's sight, and the earth was filled with wickedness.¹² God saw how corrupt the earth was, for every creature had corrupted its way on the earth.¹³ Then God said to Noah, “I have decided to put an end to every creature, for the earth is filled with wickedness because of them; therefore I am going to destroy them along with the earth.

BEHIND THE STORY



The ark was a large boat that God told Noah to build. God was angry when He saw what the evil people were planning and doing on earth. Only Noah and his family pleased God, so God decided to destroy those who were doing evil. The ark was designed to save Noah's family and representatives of each kind of animal on earth. God gave Noah specific instructions about how the ark would be built: 450 feet long, 75 feet wide, and 45 feet high.

The ark had one door and three floors filled with rooms. It was built of gopher wood, a kind of cypress, and covered with pitch, which is a form of a plant resin. Resin is often referred to as sap, latex, or mucilage. Frankincense and myrrh, the gift given to Jesus when He was a child, are also types of plant resin.

BEHIND THE STORY

Noah was 600 years old when the flood came. He had lived among godless people for centuries, and now, in his old age, God wanted to use him to start things over. At this point, saving himself probably wasn't all that important to Noah. He had lived life already. Why spend 40 days on an ark with a bunch of animals only to step off that boat still a tired 600-years-old? Because until God calls us home, He calls us to obey His commands in faith.

¹⁴ “Make yourself an ark of gopher wood. Make rooms in the ark, and cover it with pitch inside and outside.¹⁵ This is how you are to make it: The ark will be 450 feet long, 75 feet wide, and 45 feet high.¹⁶ You are to make a roof, finishing the sides of the ark to within eighteen inches of the roof. You are to put a door in the side of the ark. Make it with lower, middle, and upper decks.

¹⁷ “Understand that I am bringing a flood — floodwaters on the earth to destroy every creature under heaven with the breath of life in it. Everything on earth will perish.¹⁸ But I will establish my covenant with you, and you will enter the ark with your sons, your wife, and your sons' wives.¹⁹ You are also to bring into the ark two of all the living creatures, male and female, to keep them alive with you.²⁰ Two of everything — from the birds according to their kinds, from the livestock according to their kinds, and from the animals that crawl on the ground according to their kinds — will come to you so that you can keep them alive.²¹ Take with you every kind of food that is eaten; gather it as food for you and for them.”²² And Noah did this. He did everything that God had commanded him.

Entering the Ark

7 Then the LORD said to Noah, “Enter the ark, you and all your household, for I have seen that you alone are righteous before me in this generation.² You are to take with you seven pairs, a male and its female, of all the clean animals, and two of the animals that are not clean, a male and its female,³ and seven pairs, male and female, of the birds of the sky — in order to keep offspring alive throughout the earth.⁴ Seven days from now I will make it rain on the earth forty days and forty nights, and every living thing I have made I will wipe off the face of the earth.”⁵ And Noah did everything that the LORD commanded him.

INTRODUCTION TO MATTHEW

Matthew was once a hated tax collector, but then he met the Son of God. And when Jesus said, “Follow me”, Matthew did—changing his life forever (9:9).

Matthew became one of Jesus’s twelve closest disciples and friends. Traveling with Jesus and the other disciples, Matthew saw many of Jesus’s miracles with his own eyes. His writings give an eyewitness account of Jesus’s life and teachings.

Matthew himself wrote the book of Matthew, and it is the first book of the New Testament. It had been four hundred years since God spoke through the prophet Malachi of the Old Testament. Matthew breaks that silence to tell the story of how God’s greatest promise has come true—how Jesus, the Son of God, really did come to save His people.

Who?

Matthew, one of the twelve disciples of Jesus, wrote this book. His name means “Gift of God,” and he is also called *Levi* in some instances.

When?

The book of Matthew was written sometime between the mid-50s to early 60s AD. This would have been only about twenty years or so after Jesus died and then rose to life again.

Why?

The book of Matthew was written to tell the Jewish people about Jesus—from His birth and ministry all the way to His death and resurrection.

Redemption Thread

Matthew quotes some sixty prophecies of the Old Testament and shows how Jesus fits each of them exactly, proving that Jesus really is the promised Messiah and Savior.

Stories from Matthew

- | | |
|---------------------------------|-------------------------|
| » The Genealogy of Jesus Christ | <i>Matthew 1:1-17</i> |
| » The Nativity of the Christ | <i>Matthew 1:18-25</i> |
| » Wise Men Visit the King | <i>Matthew 2:1-12</i> |
| » The Baptism of Jesus | <i>Matthew 3:13-17</i> |
| » Temptation of Jesus | <i>Matthew 4:1-11</i> |
| » The Sermon on the Mount | <i>Matthew 5-7</i> |
| » The Model Prayer | <i>Matthew 6:9-15</i> |
| » The Transfiguration | <i>Matthew 17:1-13</i> |
| » The Triumphal Entry | <i>Matthew 21:1-10</i> |
| » The Parable of the Talents | <i>Matthew 25:14-30</i> |
| » The Death of Jesus | <i>Matthew 27:45-56</i> |
| » The Great Commission | <i>Matthew 28:16-20</i> |

The Genealogy of Jesus Christ

1 An account of the genealogy of Jesus Christ, the Son of David, the Son of Abraham:

From Abraham to David

- 2** Abraham fathered Isaac,
Isaac fathered Jacob,
Jacob fathered Judah
and his brothers,
- 3** Judah fathered Perez and Zerah
by Tamar,
Perez fathered Hezron,
Hezron fathered Aram,
- 4** Aram fathered Amminadab,
Amminadab fathered Nahshon,
Nahshon fathered Salmon,
- 5** Salmon fathered Boaz by Rahab,
Boaz fathered Obed by Ruth,
Obed fathered Jesse,
- 6** and Jesse fathered King David.

From David to the Babylonian Exile

- David fathered Solomon
by Uriah's wife,
- 7** Solomon fathered Rehoboam,
Rehoboam fathered Abijah,
Abijah fathered Asa,
 - 8** Asa fathered Jehoshaphat,
Jehoshaphat fathered Joram,
Joram fathered Uzziah,
 - 9** Uzziah fathered Jotham,
Jotham fathered Ahaz,
Ahaz fathered Hezekiah,
 - 10** Hezekiah fathered Manasseh,
Manasseh fathered Amon,
Amon fathered Josiah,
 - 11** and Josiah fathered Jeconiah
and his brothers
at the time of the exile
to Babylon.

From the Exile to the Christ

- 12** After the exile to Babylon
Jeconiah fathered Shealtiel,
Shealtiel fathered Zerubbabel,
- 13** Zerubbabel fathered Abiud,
Abiud fathered Eliakim,
Eliakim fathered Azor,
- 14** Azor fathered Zadok,
Zadok fathered Achim,
Achim fathered Eliud,
- 15** Eliud fathered Eleazar,
Eleazar fathered Matthan,
Matthan fathered Jacob,
- 16** and Jacob fathered Joseph the husband
of Mary,
who gave birth to Jesus who is called
the Christ.

17 So all the generations from Abraham to David were fourteen generations; and from David until the exile to Babylon, fourteen generations; and from the exile to Babylon until the Christ, fourteen generations.

REDEMPTION THREAD

From Abraham to Jesus

Matthew 1:1-17; Luke 3:23-38 Jesus came to earth as a baby in Bethlehem. Jesus had earthly parents, Mary and Joseph, but His true Father is God. Through Jesus, God kept His promises to Abraham and David. Jesus saves people from their sin and adopts them into God's family.

The Nativity of the Christ

18 The birth of Jesus Christ came about this way: After his mother Mary had been engaged to Joseph, it was discovered before they came together that she was pregnant from the Holy Spirit. **19** So her husband Joseph, being a righteous man, and not wanting to disgrace her publicly, decided to divorce her secretly.

20 But after he had considered these things, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, "Joseph, son of David, don't be afraid to take Mary as your wife, because what has been conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit.

MEMORY VERSE

Matthew 1:21

"She will give birth to a son, and you are to name him Jesus, because he will save his people from their sins."

21 She will give birth to a son, and you are to name him Jesus, because he will save his people from their sins."

22 Now all this took place to fulfill what was spoken by the Lord through the prophet:

23 See, the virgin will become pregnant and give birth to a son, and they will name him Immanuel, which is translated "God is with us."

THE PERFECT PLAN

Read **Matthew 1:1-17**. As you skim over this genealogy, underline all of the names that are familiar from your study of the Redemption Thread over the past few devotions.

“An account of the genealogy of Jesus Christ, the Son of David, the Son of Abraham: Abraham fathered Isaac, Isaac fathered Jacob, Jacob fathered Judah and his brothers ... and Jacob fathered Joseph the husband of Mary, who gave birth to Jesus who is called the Christ”

—MATTHEW 1:1-2,16.

CONSIDER THESE QUESTIONS:

- Matthew began his Gospel with the declaration that Jesus was a descendant of David and Abraham. Why would this have been significant, particularly to a Jewish audience?
- Many of the names in this genealogy should be familiar from previous Redemption Thread devotions. How do these verses help you understand the importance of Jesus’s birth?
- How does Jesus’s genealogy and all those familiar people help you see that redemption through Christ was always God’s plan?

ESSENTIAL DOCTRINE

Jesus’s Humanity

In addition to being fully divine, the Bible also affirms that Jesus is fully human. Not only does the Old Testament affirm that the Promised One (Messiah) would be a man (Is 7:14, 9:6; Mc 5:3), but the New Testament also affirms that Jesus’s earthly life bore all the marks of being a human. He experienced the circumstances common to living as a human being such as hunger (Mt 4), thirst (Mt 4), weariness (Mt 8:24), pain and sorrow (Jn 11; the crucifixion).

JESUS HAS ALWAYS
BEEN GOD’S PLAN
FOR BRINGING HIS
CHILDREN BACK INTO
A RELATIONSHIP
WITH HIMSELF.

RESPOND

From Abraham to Jesus

Matthew 1:1-17; Luke 3:23-38

All of the things we've studied in the Old Testament were leading up to this moment. The plan of redemption God created before the foundation of the world culminated in the birth of Jesus.

Consider all the ways you see God at work throughout the Old Testament to lead to the moment of Jesus's birth. Thank God for His sovereignty, commitment, and faithfulness to bring His plan of redemption to pass.

God's perfect plan unfolded over thousands of years. Think about your life. How have you seen God's faithfulness? His hand at work in your life? His plan unfolding over the years? Record your prayerful response in your journal.

²⁴ When Joseph woke up, he did as the Lord's angel had commanded him. He married her ²⁵ but did not have sexual relations with her until she gave birth to a son. And he named him Jesus.

Wise Men Visit the King

2 After Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of King Herod, wise men from the east arrived in Jerusalem, ² saying, "Where is he who has been born king of the

BEHIND THE STORY

Though God's plan was in place long before He created humanity, He didn't reveal it all at once. But we can see God's promises pointing to Jesus hundreds of years before His birth.

ESSENTIAL QUESTION

From Abraham to Jesus

Q: God's plan of redemption was fulfilled by who?

A: Your Savior, Jesus!

Jews? For we saw his star at its rising and have come to worship him."

³ When King Herod heard this, he was deeply disturbed, and all Jerusalem with him. ⁴ So he assembled all the chief priests and scribes of the people and asked them where the Christ would be born.

⁵ "In Bethlehem of Judea," they told him, "because this is what was written by the prophet:

⁶ **And you, Bethlehem, in the land of Judah, are by no means least among the rulers of Judah:**

Because out of you will come a ruler who will shepherd my people Israel."

⁷ Then Herod secretly summoned the wise men and asked them the exact time the star appeared. ⁸ He sent them to Bethlehem and said, "Go and search carefully for the child. When you find him, report back to me so that I too can go and worship him."

⁹ After hearing the king, they went on their way. And there it was — the star they had seen at its rising. It led them until it came and stopped above the place where the child was.

¹⁰ When they saw the star, they were overwhelmed with joy. ¹¹ Entering the house, they saw the child with Mary his mother, and falling to their knees, they worshiped him. Then they opened their treasures and presented him with gifts: gold, frankincense, and myrrh.

¹² And being warned in a dream not to go back

REDEMPTION THREAD

The Wise Men Visited Jesus

Matthew 2:1-21 The wise men came to worship Jesus as King. Jesus is the King who will rule forever, as God promised to King David in 2 Samuel 7. Jesus is the true King who is worthy of all our worship.

BEHIND THE STORY

These wise men traveled many months or even years after they recognized God's announcement in the heavens. From their story we learn:

- Jesus's birth had a worldwide impact. People from hundreds of miles away had been invited to see God's Son.
- Jesus was a gift from God to the whole world. Though Jesus was born a Jew, He came for all of humanity.
- Jesus's birth brought joy even to non-Israeliites. Those who realized His identity as Messiah celebrated God's perfect plan!

to Herod, they returned to their own country by another route.

The Flight into Egypt

¹³ After they were gone, an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream, saying, "Get up! Take the child and his mother, flee to Egypt, and stay there until I tell you. For Herod is about to search for the child to kill him."¹⁴ So he got up, took the child and his mother during the night, and escaped to Egypt.¹⁵ He stayed there until Herod's death, so that what was spoken by the Lord through the prophet might be fulfilled: **Out of Egypt I called my Son.**

ESSENTIAL QUESTION

The Wise Men Visited Jesus

Q: Why did the wise men visit Jesus?

A: The wise men came to worship Jesus as King.

The Massacre of the Innocents

¹⁶ Then Herod, when he realized that he had been outwitted by the wise men, flew into a rage. He gave orders to massacre all the boys in and around Bethlehem who were two years old and under, in keeping with the time he had learned from the wise men.¹⁷ Then what was spoken through Jeremiah the prophet was fulfilled:

**¹⁸ A voice was heard in Ramah,
weeping, and great mourning,
Rachel weeping for her children;
and she refused to be consoled,
because they are no more.**

The Return to Nazareth

¹⁹ After Herod died, an angel of the Lord appeared in a dream to Joseph in Egypt,²⁰ saying, "Get up, take the child and his mother, and go to the land of Israel, because those who intended to kill the child are dead."²¹ So he got up, took the child and his mother, and entered the land of Israel.²² But when he heard that Archelaus was ruling over Judea in place of his father Herod, he was afraid to go there. And being warned in a dream, he withdrew to the region of Galilee.²³ Then he went and settled

RESPOND

The Wise Men Visited Jesus

Matthew 2:1-21

Take a few moments to simply worship the Lord.

Ponder the good news of a Savior born for you and thank God for the amazing gift of His Son.

The news of the Messiah is meant to be shared with the world. How will you make the good news of the Messiah known to those around you? Turn to the names you have recorded in your journal and ask God for opportunities to share the good news with those people.

Mull over what you've learned today. How do these truths challenge or change the way you worship? Record three ideas in your journal.

For further study, read how Anna and Simeon worshipped the baby Jesus in Luke 2:25-38.

WORTHY OF WORSHIP

The shepherds weren't the only people to hear about and respond to the Messiah's birth. Read [Matthew 2:1-12](#) in your Bible. As you read, underline the words that describe how the various people in the story responded to the news of Jesus's birth.

"After hearing the king, they went on their way. And there it was—the star they had seen at its rising. It led them until it came and stopped above the place where the child was. When they saw the star, overwhelmed with joy"

—MATTHEW 2:9-10.

THOUGHTFULLY ANSWER THESE QUESTIONS:

- Look at verse 2:3 and compare it with the words you underlined. How did Herod respond to the news that the King of the Jews had been born? Why?
- How did Herod's response to Jesus's birth contrast with the wise men's response?
- Examine verse 11. The wise men responded to the Messiah with worship. What does that teach you about how you should respond to Jesus?
- The wise men were not Jews, yet they sought to worship the Messiah. What does this teach you about the scope of God's plan of redemption?

ESSENTIAL DOCTRINE

Sinlessness of Jesus

While the Bible affirms the full humanity of Jesus, it also affirms that Jesus was completely sinless throughout His earthly life (2 Cor 5:21; Heb 7:26; 1 Pet 2:22). Nevertheless, because Jesus was fully human, He experienced real temptation of sin, as seen during His trials in the wilderness (Matt 4). Yet even though His trials and temptations were real and similar to the rest of humanity's, Hebrews 4:15 confirms that Jesus did not sin.

**GOD'S REDEMPTIVE
PLAN IS COMPLETELY
FULFILLED IN
HIS SON, THE
MESSIAH, JESUS
CHRIST. THAT'S CAUSE
FOR WORSHIP!**

REDEMPTION THREAD

Jesus Was Baptized

Matthew 3:1-6, 13-17; Mark 1:9-11; Luke 3:21-22 Jesus never sinned, but He obeyed God and was baptized like sinners are baptized. Baptism reminds us of Jesus's death and resurrection. It reminds us that when we trust in Jesus, we turn from sin and start a new life—a life lived for Jesus.

in a town called Nazareth to fulfill what was spoken through the prophets, that he would be called a Nazarene.

The Herald of the Christ

3 In those days John the Baptist came, preaching in the wilderness of Judea ² and saying, "Repent, because the kingdom of heaven has come near!" ³ For he is the one spoken of through the prophet Isaiah, who said:

**A voice of one crying out
in the wilderness:**

**Prepare the way for the Lord;
make his paths straight!**

⁴ Now John had a camel-hair garment with a leather belt around his waist, and his food was locusts and wild honey. ⁵ Then people from Jerusalem, all Judea, and all the vicinity of the Jordan were going out to him, ⁶ and they were baptized by him in the Jordan River, confessing their sins.

⁷ When he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees coming to his baptism, he said to them, "Brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the coming wrath? ⁸ Therefore produce fruit consistent with repentance. ⁹ And don't presume to say to yourselves, 'We have Abraham as our father.' For I tell you that God is able to raise up children for Abraham from these stones. ¹⁰ The ax is already at the root of the trees. Therefore, every tree that doesn't produce good fruit will be cut down and thrown into the fire.

¹¹ "I baptize you with water for repentance, but the one who is coming after me is more powerful than I. I am not worthy to remove his sandals. He himself will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire. ¹² His winnowing shovel is in his hand, and he will clear his threshing floor and gather his wheat into the barn. But the chaff he will burn with fire that never goes out."

BEHIND THE STORY



Galilee is located in the Northern part of Palestine, west of the Sea of Galilee. In Jesus's time, Herod Antipas was the governor. Jesus spent much of His earthly ministry in Galilee and worked many miracles in the area. **Matthew 3:13, 4:23; Luke 2:39-40.**

The Baptism of Jesus

¹³ Then Jesus came from Galilee to John at the Jordan, to be baptized by him. ¹⁴ But John tried to stop him, saying, "I need to be baptized by you, and yet you come to me?"

¹⁵ Jesus answered him, "Allow it for now, because this is the way for us to fulfill all righteousness." Then John allowed him to be baptized.

¹⁶ When Jesus was baptized, he went up immediately from the water. The heavens suddenly opened for him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and coming down on him. ¹⁷ And a voice from heaven said: "This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well-pleased."

ESSENTIAL QUESTION

Jesus Was Baptized

Q: Why was Jesus baptized?

A: Jesus was baptized to show the people that He was willing to obey God.

BEHIND THE STORY



God the Father's words at Jesus's baptism quoted excerpts of Psalm 2:7 and Isaiah 42:1. Both verses were considered to be messianic prophecies by the Jews, so the Father's intent was clear. Jesus was the Messiah and His mission was sanctioned and approved by God.

The Temptation of Jesus

4 Then Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil. ² After he had fasted forty days and forty nights, he was hungry. ³ Then the tempter approached him and said, "If you are the Son of God, tell these stones to become bread."

RESPOND

Jesus Was Baptized

Matthew 3:1-6, 13-17; Mark 1:9-11; Luke 3:21-22; John 1:19-34

In Jesus's baptism, we see Jesus's obedience, as well as the Father's pleasure in His Son and affirmation of Jesus as the Messiah.

Jesus was baptized as an act of obedience to the Father. What steps will you take this week to live in obedience to God?

Baptism is an act of obedience and a symbol of your new way of life in Christ. If you are a Christian but have never been baptized, talk with your parents or pastor about taking this important step.

For further study, read Mark 1:9-11 and Luke 3:21-22.

⁴ He answered, "It is written: **Man must not live on bread alone but on every word that comes from the mouth of God.**"

⁵ Then the devil took him to the holy city, had him stand on the pinnacle of the temple, ⁶ and said to him, "If you are the Son of God, throw yourself down. For it is written:

He will give his angels orders concerning you, and they will support you with their hands so that you will not strike your foot against a stone."

⁷ Jesus told him, "It is also written: **Do not test the Lord your God.**"

⁸ Again, the devil took him to a very high mountain and showed him all the kingdoms of the world and their splendor. ⁹ And he said to him, "I will give you all these things if you will fall down and worship me."

MEMORY VERSE

Matthew 4:10

"Then Jesus told him, Go away, Satan! For it is written: Worship the Lord your God, and serve only him."

¹⁰ Then Jesus told him, "Go away, Satan! For it is written: **Worship the Lord your God, and serve only him.**"

¹¹ Then the devil left him, and angels came and began to serve him.

Ministry in Galilee

¹² When he heard that John had been arrested, he withdrew into Galilee. ¹³ He left Nazareth and went to live in Capernaum by the sea, in the region of Zebulun and Naphtali. ¹⁴ This was to fulfill what was spoken through the prophet Isaiah:

¹⁵ **Land of Zebulun and land of Naphtali, along the road by the sea, beyond the Jordan, Galilee of the Gentiles.**

¹⁶ **The people who live in darkness have seen a great light, and for those living in the land of the shadow of death, a light has dawned.**

¹⁷ From then on Jesus began to preach, "Repent, because the kingdom of heaven has come near."

THE BEGINNING

John the Baptist wanted the Jews to realize that they weren't granted a relationship with God because they had been born into His chosen nation. Instead, John called them to repentance from sin. Baptism symbolized their willingness to turn from that sin and publicly identified them as God's faithful followers. Read [Matthew 3:13-17](#) in your Bible.

"When Jesus was baptized, he went up immediately from the water. The heavens suddenly opened for him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and coming down on him. And a voice from heaven said: 'This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well-pleased'"

—MATTHEW 3:16-17.

ASK YOURSELF:

- Consider John's question to Jesus and Jesus's response in verses 14-15. John recognized that Jesus didn't need baptism, but Jesus wanted to live in obedience to His Father. How was submitting to baptism part of His obedience?
- This passage also reveals that Jesus's baptism was a part of God's greater plan. In your Bible, highlight all the things that reveal that Jesus's baptism pleased the Father.
- Jesus's baptism ushered in His earthly ministry. How did God the Father's words at Jesus's baptism signify His affirmation of what Jesus was about to do?

ESSENTIAL DOCTRINE

Baptism

Christian baptism is the immersion of a believer in water in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. It is an act of obedience symbolizing the believer's faith in a crucified, buried, and risen Savior, the believer's death to sin, the burial of the old life, and the resurrection to walk in newness of life in Christ Jesus. It is a testimony to the believer's faith in the final resurrection of the dead. Being a church ordinance, it is prerequisite to the privileges of church membership and to the Lord's Supper.

GOD AFFIRMED
JESUS THROUGH HIS
BAPTISM. JESUS'S
ACT OF OBEDIENCE
PREPARED THE WAY
FOR HIS PUBLIC
MINISTRY TO BEGIN.

THE TEST

Despite God's persistent pursuit of them, Israel had disobeyed God repeatedly, following after idols and their own desires. But now, Jesus, God in the flesh, was living among them—and He would prove Himself to be the obedient Son Israel never could be. Read [Matthew 4:1-11](#) in your Bible.

“Then Jesus was led by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil”

—MATTHEW 4:1.

THINK THROUGH THESE QUESTIONS:

- The devil didn't lead Jesus to the wilderness to be tempted; the Spirit did. Why was it important to God's plan of redemption for Jesus to face temptation and prove Himself obedient?
- Jesus relied on the Spirit's strength and the truth of God's Word to overcome the devil's temptation. What does that teach you about how to handle any temptation you face?
- The devil tempted Jesus to rely on His own strength rather than God's, to seek earthly power rather than submission to God's plan, and to dictate to God how His plan would be fulfilled. How have you seen the devil tempt believers with these same things today?

ESSENTIAL DOCTRINE

God Is One in Three Persons

While the Bible affirms the full humanity of Jesus, it also affirms that Jesus was completely sinless throughout His earthly life (2Co 5:21; Heb 7:26; Jms 5:6; 1Pt 2:22). Nevertheless, because Jesus was fully human, He experienced real temptation of sin, as seen during His trials in the wilderness (Mt 4). Yet even though His trials and temptations were real and similar to the rest of humanity's, Hebrews 4:15 confirms that Jesus did not sin.

**EVEN IN TEMPTATION,
JESUS REMAINED
FAITHFUL TO GOD'S
PLAN. HE SHOWED
HIMSELF TO BE THE
PERFECTLY OBEDIENT
SON ISRAEL NEVER
COULD BE.**

REDEMPTION THREAD

Jesus Was Tempted

Matthew 4:1-11; Luke 4:1-13; Mark 1:12-13
Jesus was tempted, but He trusted God and never sinned. Jesus is perfect and righteous. A perfect sacrifice was required to take away sin. Jesus was that perfect sacrifice. He died on the cross to free us from sin and to give us the power to say no to temptation.

The First Disciples

¹⁸ As he was walking along the Sea of Galilee, he saw two brothers, Simon (who is called Peter), and his brother Andrew. They were casting a net into the sea — for they were fishermen. ¹⁹ “Follow me,” he told them, “and I will make you fish for people.” ²⁰ Immediately they left their nets and followed him.

²¹ Going on from there, he saw two other brothers, James the son of Zebedee, and his brother John. They were in a boat with Zebedee their father, preparing their nets, and he called them. ²² Immediately they left the boat and their father and followed him.

Teaching, Preaching, and Healing

²³ Now Jesus began to go all over Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, preaching the good news of the kingdom, and healing every disease and sickness among the people. ²⁴ Then the news about him spread throughout Syria. So they brought to him all those who were afflicted, those suffering from various diseases and intense pains, the demon-possessed, the epileptics, and the paralytics. And he healed them. ²⁵ Large crowds followed him from Galilee, the Decapolis, Jerusalem, Judea, and beyond the Jordan.

ESSENTIAL QUESTION

Jesus Was Tempted

Q: How did Jesus deal with temptation?

A: Jesus used the words of God to beat temptation and the Devil.

RESPOND

Jesus Was Tempted

Matthew 4:1-11; Luke 4:1-13; Mark 1:12-13
In their own strength and effort, Israel could never be completely obedient to God. Neither can we. Thankfully, because of Jesus’s absolute obedience to the Father and complete submission to God’s plan of redemption, we can enjoy the benefits of a right relationship with God. Sincerely thank Jesus for all He has done on your behalf.

Jesus understood that God’s plan was best. In your journal, list the situations in your life in which it would be easier to trust your own strength, follow the ways of the world, or promote your own idea of what’s best rather than submit to God. Pray over these situations one by one, asking God to give you wisdom to walk in obedience in them.

For further study about withstanding temptation, read 1 Corinthians 10:13; Galatians 5:16; Ephesians 6:10-18; and Hebrews 2:18 and 4:15-16.

THE SERMON ON THE MOUNT

5 When he saw the crowds, he went up on the mountain, and after he sat down, his disciples came to him. ² Then he began to teach them, saying:

The Beatitudes

- ³ “Blessed are the poor in spirit, for the kingdom of heaven is theirs.
- ⁴ Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted.
- ⁵ Blessed are the humble, for they will inherit the earth.
- ⁶ Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled.
- ⁷ Blessed are the merciful, for they will be shown mercy.
- ⁸ Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God.
- ⁹ Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called sons of God.
- ¹⁰ Blessed are those who are persecuted because of righteousness, for the kingdom of heaven is theirs.

¹¹ “You are blessed when they insult you and persecute you and falsely say every kind of evil

against you because of me.¹² Be glad and rejoice, because your reward is great in heaven. For that is how they persecuted the prophets who were before you.

MEMORY VERSE

Matthew 5:16

"In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father in heaven."

Believers Are Salt and Light

¹³ "You are the salt of the earth. But if the salt should lose its taste, how can it be made salty? It's no longer good for anything but to be thrown out and trampled under people's feet.

¹⁴ "You are the light of the world. A city situated on a hill cannot be hidden. ¹⁵ No one lights a lamp and puts it under a basket, but rather on a lampstand, and it gives light for all who are in the house. ¹⁶ In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father in heaven.

Christ Fulfills the Law

¹⁷ "Don't think that I came to abolish the Law or the Prophets. I did not come to abolish but to fulfill. ¹⁸ For truly I tell you, until heaven and earth pass away, not the smallest letter or one stroke of a letter will pass away from the law until all things are accomplished. ¹⁹ Therefore, whoever breaks one of the least of these commands and teaches others to do the same will be called least in the kingdom of heaven. But whoever does and teaches these commands will be called great in the kingdom of heaven. ²⁰ For I tell you, unless your righteousness surpasses that of the scribes and Pharisees, you will never get into the kingdom of heaven.

Murder Begins in the Heart

²¹ "You have heard that it was said to our ancestors, **Do not murder**, and whoever murders will be subject to judgment. ²² But I tell you, everyone who is angry with his brother or sister will be subject to judgment. Whoever insults his brother or sister, will be subject to the court. Whoever says, 'You fool!' will be subject to hellfire. ²³ So if you are offering your

gift on the altar, and there you remember that your brother or sister has something against you, ²⁴ leave your gift there in front of the altar. First go and be reconciled with your brother or sister, and then come and offer your gift. ²⁵ Reach a settlement quickly with your adversary while you're on the way with him to the court, or your adversary will hand you over to the judge, and the judge to the officer, and you will be thrown into prison. ²⁶ Truly I tell you, you will never get out of there until you have paid the last penny.

Adultery Begins in the Heart

²⁷ "You have heard that it was said, **Do not commit adultery**. ²⁸ But I tell you, everyone who looks at a woman lustfully has already committed adultery with her in his heart. ²⁹ If your right eye causes you to sin, gouge it out and throw it away. For it is better that you lose one of the parts of your body than for your whole body to be thrown into hell. ³⁰ And if your right hand causes you to sin, cut it off and throw it away. For it is better that you lose one of the parts of your body than for your whole body to go into hell.

Divorce Practices Censured

³¹ "It was also said, **Whoever divorces his wife must give her a written notice of divorce**. ³² But I tell you, everyone who divorces his wife, except in a case of sexual immorality, causes her to commit adultery. And whoever marries a divorced woman commits adultery.

Tell the Truth

³³ "Again, you have heard that it was said to our ancestors, **You must not break your oath, but you must keep your oaths to the Lord**. ³⁴ But I tell you, don't take an oath at all: either by heaven, because it is God's throne; ³⁵ or by the earth, because it is his footstool; or by Jerusalem, because it is the city of the great King. ³⁶ Do not swear by your head, because you cannot make a single hair white or black. ³⁷ But let your 'yes' mean 'yes,' and your 'no' mean 'no.' Anything more than this is from the evil one.

Go the Second Mile

³⁸ "You have heard that it was said, **An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth**. ³⁹ But I tell you, don't resist an evildoer. On the contrary, if anyone slaps you on your right cheek, turn the other to him also. ⁴⁰ As for the one who wants to sue you and take away your shirt, let him have your coat as well. ⁴¹ And if anyone forces