

# 1

## 'building blocks

## - first principles'

### setting the scene...

'Genesis' - the word just means beginning. Everyone has their thoughts on this for our existence, from vast and various religious accounts to seemingly high tech scientific theories that bizarrely are increasingly becoming articles of faith. Whatever we think about all this, it will impact our lives, determining much of how we value ourselves, others, the environment, and especially God. The Biblical account of Genesis makes it clear right from the start what real life is built upon...

### read Genesis 1:1-2:3



investigate

- 1) 'ex nihilo' is the tech term for what's going on "in the beginning" (v1), meaning 'out of nothing'. How great does this make the God of the Bible?
- 2) There's a lot of repetitive statements as all creation is laid out in the 6 days or periods of v3-31 (note how the 24hr day isn't listed until day 4). What sticks out?
- 3) What do we share with the animals? What is different? (v24-31)
- 4) What's the "us" all about in v26? (a royal 'we', an indication of others being present in Heaven—Isaiah 6:8 or a hint of 'the Trinity'?)
- 5) What does it mean for humanity to be made in "the image of God"? (v26-30) Some suggest a lead here to the Ancient Near East when Genesis was put together how a conquering king would leave an image of himself so the people would remember who ruled, like we still have a picture of our royal sovereign on our \$. Who are we meant to reflect is in charge?
- 6) Did God get tired? (2:1-3) What kind of "rest" is this?

**also worth a look...** *Ecclesiastes 11:5, Isaiah 45:18, Jeremiah 10:16, John 1:1-3, 5:1-18, Hebrews 1:2, 11:3, Colossians 1:15-17, 2 Peter 3:3-8*

### think and apply



- 7) What sets apart the Christian understanding of the beginning from all the other ideas out there?
- 8) Where does true self esteem come from?
- 9) How do the extreme 'Greenies' get the environment so wrong? How has Genesis been abused?
- 10) How does the whole 'evolution vs creation' debate miss the point of the first creation account?

**\* pray we would know our place in creation**

**\*next wk Genesis 2: 4-25**

\* \* \* Ordinary people following an extraordinary God \* \* \*

# 2

## 'building blocks - living in a material world?'

### setting the scene...

'Why are there 2 accounts of creation in the Bible? Was it a mistake? Was there a debate about which one was better, so they just put them both in? Or is God keen to make sure we get the point, what really matters, bringing out more of what the first account was revealing anyway?'

### read Genesis 2:4-25



- 1) Why do you think the account includes God's personal name ("LORD" like Moses was told in Exodus 3)? The first account just has "God". Any hints with "the breath of life" bit? (v4-7)
- 2) How does this Garden of Eden fit with the first account? (v8-14)
- 3) How is there more revealed about our relationship with the *environment and work*? (v15)
- 4) How is there more revealed about our relationship with *God*? (v15-17)
- 5) How is there more revealed about our relationship with the *opposite sex*– what we used to call *marriage* and it's relationship to *family and friends*? (v18-25)
- 6) Is there any kind of hierarchy here in these relationships? Drawing a simple diagram might help.

**also worth a look...** *Exodus 3:13-15, Jeremiah 32:38,  
Matthew 19:1-6, John 14:23, Acts 1:4-5, Ephesians 5:22-32*

### think and apply



- 7) They say, 'never talk about religion and politics'. We could probably add in their 'sex' too. Why is it so misleading to cut God out of the conversation?
- 8) What about sex? How have God's good plans here differed over the centuries with conventional wisdom, both within and outside the Church? Why are His plans so much better?
- 9) What about politics and the environment? What massive things can Christians bring to the table? Does the 'separation of Church and State' mean Christians should say nothing to the State?
- 10) What advice would you give to a couple about to get married? A teenager desperate to fit in? Someone going for that dream job?

**\* pray we see relationships God's way**

**\*next wk Genesis 3:1-24**

# 3

## 'building blocks - we didn't start the fire?'

### setting the scene...

This world is such a mixed bag. There is so much beauty and awe, so much that is good, times for wonder and celebration and amazement, from a stunning sunset to a warm hug when relationships work well –so much that fits with the picture the 2 accounts of creation gave us. But of course, there is the sad reality any look at the news will give us –floods, droughts, earthquakes, broken relationships, war, despair rather than hope. Before any lasting rebuilding, we need to know why...

### read Genesis 3:1-24



- 1) What is the "serpent" really saying about God? (v1-5) How does the first woman "Eve" reveal she's being loose with the truth too? (compare 2:17)
- 2) How are things immediately changed when the first people disobeyed God? (v6-13) Think about the contrasts with the key relationships God created in chapter 2.
- 3) Is there any hope in what God says to the chief instigator? (v14-15)
- 4) How does God reveal the battle of the sexes will begin –though the first skirmish had already begun in v12? (v16)
- 5) Is global warming explained 1000's of yrs before the 21st century? (v17-19)
- 6) What about the final bit? Any notes of hope amongst the despair, gracious judgment? (v20-24)

### also worth a look... *Exodus 33:20 (12-23),*

*Matthew 9:1-8, Romans 5:12-19, 8:18-25, Revelations 12:9, 20:2-3*

### think and apply



- 7) How are we also still reluctant to face up to our own guilt?
- 8) God is often blamed for all manner of ills in this world. How can we help people think these things through?
- 9) Was God lying when He said we will "surely die" when we sin?
- 10) How does Jesus wonderfully fulfil the hope given in the midst of despair of Genesis 3?

**\* pray we are clear why we and this world are this way**

**\*next wk Genesis 4:1-26**

# 4

## 'building blocks

### - I told you so'

#### setting the scene...

Is sin just a theological construct to lever people into going to Church? Is it just a means of manipulation, messing with people's minds, giving people unnecessary guilt complexes? Many scoff at sin, as if there aren't any real consequences, that we can just get on with what we reckon is good and decent. So much of what God says matters is way too inconvenient or costly to be bothered with anyway. And yet, that's not what we read unravelling in Genesis, and to this day...

#### read Genesis 4:1-26



- 1) Does this chapter begin with any more notes of hope? (v1-2)
- 2) We can't be precisely sure about what the problem was with Cain's "offering". Some suggest it was because it wasn't a 'blood sacrifice' like we know God later commanded the Israelites to bring before they could come near Him. But He also commanded them to bring 'grain offerings'. Either way, what is the essence of Cain's problem revealed by the end of v3-7?
- 3) How does Cain continue the pattern of Adam and Eve in dealing with sin? (v8-16) How is God in contrast thoroughly consistent?
- 4) How does God continue to keep His promises? (v17-22)
- 5) How is humanities severe lack of grace on show with Lamech? (v23-24)
- 6) Why so much a big deal about Adam's line continuing? (v25-26)

**also worth a look...** *Deuteronomy 30:11-20, Psalm 1:1-6,  
John 4:13-14, Romans 6:19-23, Ephesians 2:1-5*

#### think and apply



- 7) *What's going on when we're tempted to go contrary to God's will? Don't we know it won't be worth it in the long run?*
- 8) *Can you share an example of how you have seen families unravel today?*
- 9) *Why are we so hard on others, yet so blind to our own sin?*
- 10) *If we know Jesus, how should this sad picture of sin make us feel towards His saving grace?*

**\* pray for sober judgment in dealing with sin**

**\*next wk Genesis 6:9-22, 8:13-9:1**

# 5

## 'building blocks - no sugar coated God'

### setting the scene...

It's bizarre that God is our creator making us in His image. And yet we want to try and create Him, making Him in our image. We try and put words and ideas in His mouth, often so we can avoid facing up to the hard truth about ourselves and those we love. But just like the bills still are there even when we put the aside and hope they will go away, God still is who He is. He cannot tolerate sin. It has to be dealt with eventually. Conversely, if He holds out hope if we repent, that is wonderfully real too...

### read Genesis 6:9-22, 8:13-9:1



- 1) Was Noah perfect? What does it mean that he was "righteous", "blameless"? (6:9-10)
- 2) Since Adam and Eve first sinned, hasn't the earth always been corrupt? (6:11-13) What's different now that God can no longer even tolerate the status quo? How bad must things have become? See 4:26 and compare 6:2, where "son's of God" now taking "daughters of men" is probably an indication of men not following God and taking wives that followed false human wisdom.
- 3) Does this mean God was giving up on His plan of salvation first hinted in 3:15? (6:14-22)
- 4) How did God show He was faithful, both in judgment and salvation? (8:13-19)
- 5) How does God underline for us that this was a fresh start? (8:17, 9:1 comparing 1:22, 28)
- 6) Why was Noah's sacrifice "pleasing" (like Abel's) to the LORD? (8:20-22)

**also worth a look...** *Numbers 14:18, 2 Chronicles 12:7, Psalm 2:12, Isaiah 10:25, Matthew 18:6, John 3:36, Romans 1:18, 3:1-8, 2 Peter 3:3-9*

### think and apply



- 7) *What sort of God wouldn't get angry at sin?*
- 8) *What do those who complain about God 'letting' bad stuff happen now, who use this as an excuse to ignore His word, fail to realise will happen to them when God does totally eradicate evil?*
- 9) *If God's word of judgment is rock solid, how comforting and reassuring is His word of forgiveness?*
- 10) *What if God didn't restrain evil in this present world? Would it be Hell on earth?*

**\* pray we would accept God as He is**

**\*next wk Genesis 9:18-29**

# 6

## 'building blocks - we need a perfect saviour'

### setting the scene...

After the flood there was such hope with a fresh start as so much of the muck literally was washed away. Noah was very impressive in undertaking the building of the Ark, showing such faith in God in a world that would have ridiculed him every inch of the way. Maybe he was to be this one descendant from Eve God had promised to send to truly undo the mess of this world? But it doesn't take very long at all to realise that there's someone else to come...

### read Genesis 9:18-29



- 1) How does the note of hope continue in v18-19? Remember the fresh start of Genesis 9:1 and the original plan for life in Genesis 1:26-28.
- 2) How does Noah disappoint? Even though he certainly had good reasons to celebrate? (20-23)
- 3) Why is Ham (referred to as Canaan since the Canaanites descended from him) given such a harsh assessment by his father? (v24-27) Bear in mind God's response to Adam and Eve (Genesis 3:7-11)
- 4) Why were his brothers' praised?
- 5) Why does Noah's eventual death not surprise us, despite a hefty innings? (v28-29)
- 6) Should we be surprised that sin still manifests itself, despite some good with Noah's previous exemplary faith in building the Ark and Ham's brother's dignified treatment of their father's indiscretion? (ponder the previous fresh start with Seth' line compared to Cain's and Lamech's obvious sin)

**also worth a look...** *Isaiah 58:7, Proverbs 21:17, John 2:1-11  
1Cor 6:19-20, 2 Cor 5:1-4, Lk 3:23-38, Matt 25:36, Mrk 15:24, Heb 12:1-3*

### think and apply



- 7) *What is need to change this pattern? Who needs to be 'parachuted' in?*
- 8) *How does this incident caution against putting anyone up on a pedestal?*
- 9) *Why will Church always be limited?*
- 10) *How does Jesus enable us to persist though this life's mixed bag?*

**\* pray we would embrace the real saviour**

**\*next wk Genesis 11:1-9**

\* \* \* Ordinary people following an extraordinary God \* \* \*

# 7

## 'building blocks - need God's approval'

### setting the scene...

A Development Application (DA) approved by a local Council is essential before you can actually start building anything significant. Build without it and once the council finds out (a neighbour complains or you go to sell), it will have to be torn down. Such a waste. The Council is there to make sure things are built safely and the needs of those nearby are considered. This end to the first block in Genesis shows us it's the same with our whole lives—such a waste to not let God build...

### read Genesis 11:1-9



- 1) Why were "bricks" and "tar" such break through technologies for the time?
- 2) Any hints of problems with humanity at the time's plans for using this technology? (v1-4) Compare their plan with God's (Genesis 1:26-28, 9:1, 18)
- 3) Why did the LORD have to come down to have a look? (v6) Isn't He 'omniscient', knowing or seeing everything anyway?
- 4) Was the LORD 'insecure' with His concerns in v5-7?
- 5) How was God actually being loving in limiting this evil? (v6-7, similar to how He cast Adam and Eve out of the Garden of Eden so they wouldn't be destroyed by His presence nor eat from the tree of life and thereby stay in a state of sin forever)
- 6) "Babel" could be translated 'Babylon'. Why is this such a potent symbol for rebellion against God that the Bible runs with like in Revelation 14:8, 17:15?

**also worth a look...** *Genesis 12:1-3, Isaiah 13,  
John 14:1-6, Acts 2:1-13, 8:1, 1 Peter 2:4-11, Matthew 7:24-27*

### think and apply



- 7) *Where should our fulfilment come from ultimately?*
- 8) *Who's glory are you seeking in your life? How do our plans give the answer away?*
- 9) *How does society to this day still abuse technology, all knowledge for that matter?*
- 10) *How does Jesus wonderfully undo this mess, ironically making our name great or righteous if we turn to him?*

**\* pray we would build our lives on Jesus**

**\*next wk Revelation 2:1-7**