

God, Jesus Christ and the Church

Listed Scriptures

Jn 4:24; Ps 33:6-9; Heb 11:3; Ps 10:14; Isa 66:2; Phil 4:6-7; Jn 8:12, 19:34-36; Gal 3:27; Heb 7:2-3; Ez 43:2; Isa 51:3; Jer 31:12; Eph 5:25-32; 1 Pet 3:20-21

Lesson Aim

To have a more in-depth understanding of God, Jesus Christ and the church through the book of Genesis

Memory Verse

"For whatever things were written before were written for our learning, that we through the patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope." (Rom 15:4)

Bible Reading For This Week (for students and teachers)

Genesis 31-40

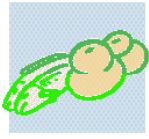
B I B L E B A C K G R O U N D



Although Genesis is about the beginning, it also contains many prefigurations concerning the coming of Jesus Christ as well as the establishment of the church. When Genesis is studied carefully, it can give us a more complete picture of God, Jesus Christ and the church. This makes sense since God already had His plan of salvation laid out from the beginning of time. As human beings, we do not know exactly what the future will be like. But when it concerns the heavenly kingdom, God has given us all we need to know in the Bible. We can begin that study from the very first book.



How important is God to you on a scale of one to ten (with ten being the most important)? How important is the church to you on the same scale? Do the numbers surprise you? Although many of us might place God higher, the church, in fact, should be just as important. Genesis gives us a good picture of our relationship with God and His church. Let's take a look and see whether our perspective changes.



Part 1
The God of Genesis

A . The Creator

It was God who created all creatures and human beings. That is why He is known as the Lord of the heavens and the earth. When we really think about the first several chapters of Genesis, we can only feel amazed at how wonderfully God has prepared everything. Many people have tried to use their own theories to explain how the world came into existence, but all of them are just theories, without real proof. Even if scientists could explain everything down to the first atom, we would have to draw the line somewhere and admit that something greater than any of us must have created the first particle. That being is God Himself. Therefore, all people should praise and worship Him (Jn 4:24).

B . The Almighty

The Lord is an omniscient God who knows all and sees all. He is also able to create something out of nothing. It is difficult for us to understand how He can be everywhere and know everything all at once, but this is only because we have limited knowledge and wisdom. There are many mysteries and things of God that we cannot explain using our own understanding. That is why God is the Almighty and nothing in the world can compare to Him (Gen 18:14, 21:2-5; Ps 33:6-9; Heb 11:3).

C . The Everlasting

Nothing in this world will last forever. Only God is the eternal King, the one who was, is and will be. It is also God who can give everlasting life (1 Tim 1:17; 6:12). When we believe in Jesus Christ, we can obtain eternal life (Jn 3:16, 17:3). Of course, we must have faith because God is invisible and immortal.

D . The God Who Watches Over Us

Throughout the book of Genesis, we see how God watched over His chosen people when they needed Him the most. He guided Abraham as he encountered difficult people on his journeys. He even looked after Hagar, the maidservant who bore Abraham a son (Gen 16:6-13). God also cared for Jacob and Joseph in their times of need (see previous lesson). Today, He continues to watch over those who are troubled and grief-stricken. God will answer all who call on Him in their distress (Ps 10:14, 138:6, 146:9; Isa 66:2).

E . The God Who Listens to Our Prayers

God heard Abraham's prayer and sent angels to deliver Lot's family (Gen 19:21). He answered the old servant's prayer, granting him success in bringing Rebekah back to marry Isaac (Gen 24). He listened to Isaac's pleading and gave him sons. Prayer is an important and vital part of our faith today. It may sound like a cliché to some when we tell them prayer is the best way to solve a problem. But we must believe and remember that we can present our requests to God, through prayer and supplication. God will hear us and answer us (Phil 4:6-7; Ps 37:5).

Part 2
*Prefigurations
of Jesus Christ*



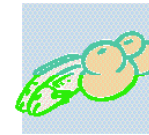
Although it may not be obvious to us, the book of Genesis contains many prefigurations of Jesus Christ. To prefigure means to foreshadow, to tell us something in advance using different objects or characters.

- a. God created light, which is symbolic of Jesus Christ (Jn 8:12, 1:5).

- b. God created Eve out of Adam's rib. This prefigures that Jesus Christ's side would be pierced and blood would be shed to establish the church (Gen 2:21-23; Jn 19:34-36).
- c. God clothed Adam and Eve with garments of skin. Likewise, Jesus Christ, who is the Lamb of God, died and shed His blood so that we could put on the robe of righteousness. For us, this means we put on Jesus Christ and become justified (Gen 3:21; Gal 3:27).
- d. Melchizedek, the king of Salem (which means peace), brought out bread and wine to serve Abraham. Although not much is known about him, he is seen as representing the Lord Jesus as the King of Peace. Just as he gave bread and wine to Abraham, we can also receive grace and truth from God (Gen 14:18-20; Heb 7:2-3).
- e. Isaac's life has many parallels to that of our Lord Jesus. Although Abraham had many sons, Isaac was the only promised one. He carried the wood for his father and submitted to being sacrificed on the altar. Yet later his life was spared and he was able to marry Rebekah. This prefigures how Jesus Christ, the Son of God, would carry the cross and would be willing to be crucified. Later, He resurrected and in the end time, He will return to marry His bride, the true church.
- f. The heavenly ladder in Jacob's dream symbolizes Jesus Christ, through whom believers can gain entrance into heaven (Jn 1:51; 14:6; Heb 10:19-20; Act 4:12).
- g. Joseph was the favorite son of Jacob. He suffered a lot in the early part of his life. First, he was betrayed by his own brothers and then sold to Egypt. Later, he was wrongfully sent to prison. But in the end, he was exalted to a high position. His life foreshadowed how Jesus Christ was rejected, betrayed and killed by His own people. Just like Joseph, our Lord Jesus was innocent but was cruelly punished. Ultimately, Jesus Christ was exalted and is sitting on the right hand of God.

Teaching Tips

For this lesson, you may wish to divide the students into three groups. Then assign each group to study God, Jesus Christ and the church by giving them some guidelines to follow (i.e. give the group studying God the five headings/characteristics found in their notes and ask them to come up with Bible references that support the description). Then after the research and discussion within their own groups, they can share their findings with the rest of the class.



Part 3

The Church in Genesis

The book of Genesis also contains prefigurations about the church.

A. The Garden of Eden

The garden is located in the East, indicating that the true church of the end time would be established in the east. The goal of the True Jesus Church today is to spread the gospel and help bring everyone back to God (Ez 43:2; Isa 51:3, 58:11; Jer 31:12).

B. Eve

While Adam was in a deep sleep, God took a rib out of Adam to create Eve. She was the bone of his bones and the flesh of his flesh. Accordingly, the church is redeemed by the death of Jesus Christ and will become one with the Lord (Eph 5:25-32).

C. The Ark

The ark saved the lives of Noah's family. It symbolizes the true church as God's house of salvation (Mt 24:37-39; 1 Pet 3:20-21; 2 Pet 2:5).

C H E C K F O R U N D E R S T A N D I N G



1 Describe three characteristics of God.

2 What are five prefigurations found in the book of Genesis regarding Jesus Christ?

3 What are three prefigurations found in the book of Genesis pertaining to the church?

4 The church is often described as the bride of Jesus Christ (during His second coming). What should the bride be doing in preparation for the groom's arrival?



The Church and Me

When we think about our faith, we will almost always focus on God. But, as we have learned in this lesson, the church is also equally important to our salvation. It is through the church that the salvation of Jesus Christ becomes fully revealed (Eph 3:10-11, 14-21). Let's examine the special relationship between our faith and the church.

1. The church is the body of Jesus Christ, the assembly of the redeemed (Eph 1:22-23, 4:12, 5:23; Col 1:24; Acts 20:28). As members of the true church we belong to the same body and should act as one.
2. The church speaks the word of God (1 Tim 3:15; Eph 2:20).
3. The church has the spirit of Jesus Christ (Rom 8:9; 1 Cor 12:13).
4. The church manifests the power of Jesus Christ (Mk 16:17-20; Heb 2:3-4; Acts 14:3).
5. The church expresses the nature of Christ (Eph 4:11-16; Jn 8:31, 15:8, 13:35).
6. The mission of the church is to proclaim the gospel (Mt 28:19-20; Acts 1:8).

Questions to think about:

1. *Although Abraham had many sons, Isaac was the only chosen one. Similarly, there are many churches and denominations today, but only one true church. How important is it to you to belong to the True Jesus Church? Do you think it is a prerequisite into the heavenly kingdom or will any church do, as long as we have faith?*
2. *Since the members are "the church," have you been doing what the church is supposed to be doing as described above? Do you speak the word of God or manifest the nature of Jesus Christ?*
3. *Many of us try very hard to keep our bodies in good shape. Do you treat the church as if it were the body of Christ? What have you been doing or not doing?*
4. *Which section(s) of the "church body" do you feel you are a part of?*

5. *Do you often pray for the growth of the church? What does church growth involve and how vital is it to our faith?*
6. *What can you do starting today to help in the growth of the church?*
7. *We know that our service often goes unrecognized, and we know that it is not always easy to display a Christ-like attitude. This is the tension with which we live. Other Christians share it. Read the following poem and answer the questions that follow.*

Lord, you know my fervor
when I am on the pulpit;
Lord, you know how I glow
when I speak at a Bible study;
Lord, you know my enthusiasm
as I lead weekly fellowships;
But I wonder how I would feel
if you asked me,
to clean the bathroom stalls,
week after week,
year after year,
where nobody saw
and nobody knew.

Would I still be full of fervor?

Would I glow and be filled with genuine enthusiasm?

I wonder...

- a. *Do you ever wonder about how you feel when you serve God, even when no one is looking? Think about it now, and jot some reflections down.*
- b. *Are there ways you are serving now where no body sees and nobody knows? Where and how?*
- c. *If you feel you would grow as a Christian from such service, and would like to plan to begin, jot down your ideas here and date their implementation.*

8. *Serving begins with each of us, as Christians in a community follow Christ by helping each other. However, we don't stop there. We help those outside the community as well, and soon, those people who were once "outside" become a part of the Christian community.*

An old Jewish story tells of a rabbi who asked the Lord to show him heaven and hell.

"I will show you hell," said the Lord as He opened the door to a room. Inside was a large, round table with a delicious stew in the center. The people in the room were equipped with long-handled spoons, but they were starving. They were able to dip into the stew quite easily, but because the spoon handles were longer than their arms, they were unable to get the nourishing food to their mouths.

"Now I will show you heaven," said the Lord. This time the rabbi saw a room identical to the first, except that the people were well-nourished, laughing and talking. They had the same long-handled spoons, but somehow had overcome this handicap.

To the puzzled rabbi, the Lord explained, "The solution is simple, but it requires a certain skill—they have learned to feed each other."

Now, list the ways you could serve others in your home, neighborhood, church and nation.

R E F L E C T I O N & P R A Y E R



Because we worship in a physical building with other members, it is sometimes difficult to separate worldly things from God's thing. But today's lesson has taught us the church is God's redeemed, the bride waiting for Jesus Christ's return. Let us remember to respect the church and to do our part in keeping her sanctified and holy.