

Junior 1 Year 2 Book 1 Lesson 1
Overview of Genesis and Exodus
Passages: Genesis, Exodus

Memory Verse

“Now therefore, if you will indeed obey My voice and keep My covenant, then you shall be a special treasure to Me above all people; for all the earth is Mine.” (Exodus 19:5)

Knowledge of God’s Will [God’s Word]	Knowledge of God [God’s Divine Nature]	Good Works [Behavior]
1. The themes in Genesis are beginnings, sin, and salvation. 2. The themes in Exodus are slavery, redemption, and God’s holy nation.	1. God is an almighty God, full of love and justice. 2. God is holy, and desires for His people to be holy.	Remember God’s love in our daily lives by acting out His will, devoting our time and thoughts to Him, and interceding for others.

Overview

Events and Spiritual Teachings

- A. The Book of Genesis: Beginnings
- B. The Book of Genesis: Sin and Salvation
- C. The Book of Exodus: Slavery and Redemption
 - 1. Slavery
 - 2. Redemption
- D. The Book of Exodus: God’s Holy Nation
 - 1. God’s Special Treasure
 - 2. A Kingdom of Priests
 - 3. A Holy Nation

Life Application: How Does God Love Me?

Memory Verse

Conclusion: The Books of Genesis and Exodus teach us the basic premise behind our need for salvation, and how to receive it. It also shows the roots of God’s plan for salvation, established even before the creation of the world.

Spiritual Teachings

A. The Book of Genesis: Beginnings

In this lesson, we will be exploring three major themes found in Genesis: “beginnings,” “sin,” and “the promise of salvation.” The Hebrew name for the book, *Beresheet*, means “in the beginning,” while the Greek word *genesis* means “origin” or “source.” While the book is obviously the beginning of the Bible, there are actually many different “beginnings” or “sources” written in this book. It teaches us the beginnings of:

- Creation
- Man
- Marriage
- Civilization
- Sin
- Salvation
- Prophecy
- The Israelite Nation

As you can see, there are many “beginnings” recorded, but the Book of Genesis is most famously known for its creation story. There are hundreds of different stories about the creation of the world, and about how people came to be. These stories form the basic foundation of any ancient religion because the question of how the world came to be is a fundamental one that people always tend to ask. But the Bible tells us plainly and explicitly how creation came to be: “In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.” With this simple statement, God’s existence, power, and sovereignty are clearly demonstrated. We will never know how exactly God created the universe, but the Bible tells us three ways by which the world was created.

- He created all things through His Spirit (Gen 1:2; Job 26:13)
- He created all things by His words (Ps 33:6, 9)
- He created all things from nothing (Heb 11:3)

What does the universe teach us about God?

As much as we’d like to have all the answers about how the world came to be, the purpose of creation is not for us to focus on the things that are created, but to know the Creator (Rom 1:20). God wants us to look at the world around us and learn about God Himself. Looking at creation, we can see that God is:

- The maker of the heavens and the earth
- An almighty God, for whom nothing is impossible
- An eternal God, with all things under His control
- A God who cares and provides for us by preparing a beautiful world, teeming with living things and food for us to enjoy
- A creative God, who filled the world with beauty, wisdom, artistry, and grandeur

B. The Book of Genesis: Sin and Salvation

The “beginning” that is most important for us to learn about is the beginning of sin, and the beginning of the plan for salvation that God set in motion as a result. When God created mankind, He gave him character, will, and the freedom to choose. By giving Adam and Eve the one commandment not to eat of the fruit of the tree of knowledge, He wanted to establish an order where He is the Creator and His creation would obey Him in recognition of His sovereignty. But God does not demand obedience. He gave Adam the freedom of choice. If he chose to obey, God would bless him, but if he disobeyed, there

would be consequences. Sadly, Adam and Eve did disobey, so they suffered several consequences for their sin against God:

- They lost their intimate relationship with God.
- They were cast out of the garden.
- They lost the trusting relationship between husband and wife.
- Adam was condemned to toil the earth for survival, and Eve, to suffer pain in childbirth.
- They were condemned to a physical and spiritual death because sin was now in the world.

With sin now in the world, we were condemned to death. But because of God’s love for us, long before the creation of the world, He set up a plan to destroy death and restore mankind to be His children once again. The entire Bible revolves around this salvation plan, but the events that take place in the Book of Genesis actually point towards God’s master plan of sending His Son to die on the cross, defeat sin, and establish the true church for the salvation of mankind. Let’s look at some of these events that point to God’s plans.

Foreshadowing	Fulfillment
God created light and separated it from darkness.	The Lord Jesus declared that He is the light of the world, who shines into our darkened hearts to transform us, so that we can be partakers of God’s divine nature (2 Cor 6:9; 2 Pet 1:4).
“And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your seed and her Seed; he shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise His heel.” (Gen 3:15)	The “Seed” of the woman refers to the Lord Jesus. The serpent refers to the ancient serpent, Satan (Rev 12:9). Satan tried to bruise the heel of Jesus by having Him nailed to the cross. But God used the death of Jesus to destroy Satan and save mankind from sin and death.
The coverings of fig leaves they had made were insufficient, so God made garments of skin for Adam and Eve, meaning an animal was sacrificed (Gen 3:7, 21).	This prefigures how the Lord Jesus is the Lamb of God who was sacrificed for mankind’s sin. Mankind cannot save themselves by their own actions, but must rely on the Lord’s sacrifice, mercy, and grace (Tit 3:5).
The garden of Eden was planted in the east, with four rivers that watered the garden. It contained gold and precious stones, and all creatures lived in harmony (Gen 2:8–14).	Eden represents the true church established by God Himself. It arose from the east, in China, in 1917. The presence of the Holy Spirit waters the hearts of its members, and the complete gospel of salvation offers peace, joy, and harmony.
Noah built an ark according to the exact dimensions and instructions from God. As a result, those who entered the ark were saved during the flood (Gen 6:13–7:23).	The ark represents the true church of the end times. Just as there was only one ark, only one church will lead the way to salvation. And as Noah followed God’s instructions, the true church must be built upon the teachings of the prophets, apostles, and the Lord Jesus, so that all who enter can be saved.

In summary, while the Book of Genesis both raises and answers many questions about the beginning of creation, its purpose is to make us aware of sin, of why we need salvation, of God’s plan for saving us, and of why God is the only one powerful enough to save us from death.

C. The Book of Exodus: Slavery and Redemption

Let's now move on to an overview of Exodus. The Greek word *exodus* signifies "going out." This book is a continuation of Genesis, and covers 145 years of Israelite history, beginning with their freedom from Egypt. The main themes in this book are: "slavery"; "redemption"; and "God's holy nation."

1. Slavery

Over the span of 400 years, Jacob's descendants grew to over 2,000,000 people. Their vast numbers made Egypt's new Pharaoh fear them. What if they allied with enemy nations, or attempted to overthrow the Egyptians? So, to address these fears, he enslaved them. Under this cruel and merciless taskmaster, the Israelites lived a life of misery, oppression, and hopelessness, with no end to the suffering in sight. Today, mankind is born into slavery much the same way, except it is slavery to sin and death. Where Pharaoh was the Israelites' cruel taskmaster, today it is Satan who stalks the world as a hungry lion, filling our lives with hardship, suffering, and misery while attempting to destroy our chance to receive life.

2. Redemption

Amidst their suffering, the people cried out to God for deliverance. Let's read God's response in Exodus 3:7–10. He said that He had *seen* their suffering, had *heard* their cry, and *knew* their sorrows. The Book of Exodus goes into great detail about God's faithfulness in keeping the promises that He made to Abraham. His love for them is clearly evident in the many wonders that He performed. He saved them from many things, such as from:

- Slavery
- The hand of Pharaoh and the Egyptians
- The ten plagues
- The Red Sea
- Hunger and thirst in the wilderness
- Their enemies

These are only a few of the things that the Lord saved the Israelites from. Over and over again, throughout the entire Bible, God demonstrated His faithfulness, love, and almighty power in saving His chosen people. And this redemption is now not just for the Israelites, but for all of us. He has saved us from what we could never overcome: He has redeemed us from death.

D. The Book of Exodus: God's Holy Nation

God didn't just bring the Israelites out of Egypt to deliver them from slavery. Let's read Exodus 19:5. This is a key verse in the Book of Exodus. The Lord declared to the nation, "Now therefore, if you will indeed obey My voice and keep My covenant, then you shall be a special treasure to Me above all people; for all the earth is Mine."

1. God's special treasure

The Israelites were not necessarily unique in God's act of freeing them from slavery. Amos records that the Lord delivered the Ethiopians, the Philistines, and the Syrians from slavery as well (Amos 9:7). God cares for all the nations of the earth, because He is their Creator and sustainer (Ps 24:1; Acts 14:15–17). But of all the nations in the world, God chose only Israel to be His "special treasure."

A treasure is something of great worth or value to someone. It may be something very precious, very rare, or perhaps something which gives you happiness. It is something that you spend the

extra time to take good care of. Israel was God's special treasure, and He went to great lengths to take care of them. Deuteronomy 32:10 says that Israel was the apple of God's eye, whom He embraced and instructed. Let's read Isaiah 43:1–4. What were the many ways God treasured His people? (*Allow students to answer. He: redeemed them; called them by name; promised to be with them; protected them; honored; loved; and exalted them above all other peoples.*)

2. A kingdom of priests

Israel was not only to enjoy God's love and protection. God gave them a special mission, too: they were to be a kingdom of priests. What does it mean to be a kingdom of priests? First, let's look at the first high priests in the Bible. Let's read Numbers 18:4–5. At Mount Sinai, Aaron and his sons were set apart and consecrated as priests. Together with the Levites, they were responsible for serving and attending to the needs and duties of the tabernacle of the Lord. The priesthood was an honor that they did not earn, but a special status that God gave to them as a gift. But what exactly were their duties?

- a. They taught the Lord's statutes and commands to the people, so that they would know what was right and wrong (Lev 10:11).
- b. They made judgments for the people of God.
- c. They acted as mediators between God and men, offering sacrifices for the sins of the people and blessing them.

Today, any who are baptized have become priests of God. As His priests, we need to live out His truth and spread the gospel. We also need to teach others about what is right in God's eyes and encourage our brethren so that they do not spiritually decline. We are the mediators between God and those around us and are here to bring blessings to the world and do good for others (Num 6:22–27). Through our service as priests, we are a gift to the church, and to the world.

3. A holy nation

God brought the people of Israel out of Egypt so that He could be their God, and they, His people. They were to be a chosen nation, holy to the Lord and separate from the other nations. He repeatedly told them to "be holy, for I am holy" (Lev 11:44–45). In order to be holy, however, they had to obey God's word and keep His commandments. God gave them instructions for every area of life: food, family, work, worship, and more.

The immense number of laws were not meant to be a bondage to the people but were supposed to be a bridge through which they could have a relationship with God and be a part of His divine nature. Today, in order to follow His laws, we need to simply follow the fundamental rule that God be the king in our lives, thoughts, actions, and speech. If we strive to achieve this, then we can be God's people, and He will give us His blessings and His protection.

In conclusion, the Book of Exodus gives us a greater understanding of God's holy nature. It teaches us that as long as we are slaves to sin, we will never receive our inheritance. So, in order to receive salvation, we must no longer be slaves to sin, but learn to be holy as God is holy. This means that we must act out our duty as His priests and help to bring together His holy nation so that we can one day enter the promised land that is eternal life.

Check for Understanding

1. **What are the three main themes in the Book of Genesis?** Beginnings, sin, and the promise of salvation.
2. **What are the three main themes in the Book of Exodus?** Slavery, redemption, and God's holy nation.
3. **What do the events in Genesis point us towards?** They point towards God's master plan of sending His Son to die on the cross, defeat sin, and establish the true church for the salvation of mankind.
4. **What three special statuses did the Israelites have as God's chosen?** They were God's special treasure, a kingdom of priests, and God's holy nation.
5. **Overall, what does the Book of Exodus teach us?** It gives us a greater understanding of God's holy nature. It also teaches us that as long as we are slaves to sin, we will never receive our inheritance. So, in order to receive salvation, we must no longer be slaves to sin, but learn to be holy as God is holy.

Life Application

How Does God Love Me?

It can be easy to forget that God loves us in many ways, especially because we cannot see Him or because we may sometimes feel restricted by the words of the Bible. One way to overcome this feeling is by thinking of the ways that God has expressed His love for us.

1. He laid down His life for us (Jn 3:16; 1 Jn 3:16)

The greatest manifestation of God's love is, undoubtedly, His death for us. He did not simply die for us. He gave up His glory and splendor in heaven, reduced Himself to become a man, and laid down His life by suffering the worst possible death anyone could experience. Isaiah 53:12 says that the Lord Jesus "poured out His soul unto death, and He was numbered with the transgressors[.]" This death is the plan of salvation that God had been faithfully and diligently working out since before the beginning of creation, all to save each and every single one of us.

God may not ask us to give up our lives, but He may ask us to give up a little of our time each day for Him. Which part of your day would you give up for God? How would you devote it to Him?

2. He chose us (1 Jn 3:1)

In Deuteronomy 7:7–8, Moses reminded the Israelites that to be chosen by God is to be loved by Him. When the people asked God, "In what way have You loved us?", the Lord answered that His love was manifested in His choosing of them (Mal 1:2–5). Esau was the firstborn and rightful heir, but God had chosen Jacob to be the one through whom Israel and the Messiah would be born. What does this mean for us? It means that it is not we who chose God, but God who chose us (Jn 15:16). And if we ever begin to doubt God's love, we should remember what the Bible says: "Behold what manner of love the Father has bestowed on us, that we should be called children of God!" (1 Jn 3:1).

We should give thanks to God for His salvation every day. How can we express our thanks to God in our daily lives?

3. He thinks of us (Ps 139:17–18)

When the Israelites traveled through the wilderness, they lacked nothing. Their clothes and their sandals never wore down (Deut 29:5). God provided water when they were thirsty, and manna when they were hungry. He used mighty miracles to free them from slavery, but He also performed numerous small miracles in taking care of their everyday needs. These miracles may have been less

noticeable, but they were miracles nonetheless, possible only because of God's power and love. Let's read Psalm 139:17–18.

Just as our earthly parents are concerned about the well-being and future of their children, God also thinks of us day and night (Ps 40:5). But while our earthly parents are limited in power, God's thoughts towards us are innumerable and constant. He knows the number of hairs on our head, knows the words on our tongues before we even utter them, and knew who we were even before we were born. These thoughts are only possible for our heavenly Father. As such, He reminds us not to worry about what we shall eat or wear, but only to think about Him and His words. He wants us to trust that He will take care of us.

What are your first thoughts when you wake up in the morning? What is your last thought when you go to sleep at night? How often do you think of God during the day? Do you think of God, or something else entirely? What kind of thoughts would God think when He thinks of you?

4. He intercedes for us (Lk 22:31–32; Heb 7:25)

Part of the high priest's attire was a breastplate on which were arranged twelve gemstones in four rows, each gem representing one of the tribes of Israel. This meant that the high priest was to carry the Israelites in his heart and intercede for them when he approached the Lord. It was his duty to pray for the sins and weaknesses of the people, and to intercede for them. In the same way, the Lord Jesus is constantly interceding for us as our High Priest. Because of His intercessions, we are able to approach the Lord without fear and have hope in our home in heaven.

Have you ever interceded for someone? Share a time when you experienced the power of intercession, either as the interceder or the interceded.

Memory Verse

"Now therefore, if you will indeed obey My voice and keep My covenant, then you shall be a special treasure to Me above all people; for all the earth *is* Mine." (Exodus 19:5)

Meaning

The Israelites were special not because of anything that they did, but because God chose them out of all the nations on the earth to be His own holy nation and His kingdom of priests. But such a special relationship runs two ways – in exchange, the Israelites had to obey His voice and keep His commands. If they did, God would bless them and care for them. We enjoy this same promise today. But as with the Israelites, for the Lord to be our God, we must learn to walk in His ways.

Conclusion

The Books of Genesis and Exodus teach us the basic premise behind our need for salvation, and how to receive it. From the moment Adam sinned, to the Israelites' freedom from Egypt and their establishment as His holy nation, until today—where we have become the new kingdom of priests—all of these events show God's plan for our salvation, established even before the creation of the world.

Lesson 1 Homework Assignment Answer Key

1. What made the Israelites different from other nations?
They were the only nation that God chose to be His special treasure.

2. “And I will put _____ between you and the woman, and between your _____ and her _____; He shall _____ your _____, and you shall _____ His _____.” (Genesis 3:15)
enmity, seed, Seed, bruise, head, bruise, heel.

3. What are the overall themes for the Books of Genesis and Exodus?
 - *Genesis: Beginnings, sin, and salvation*
 - *Exodus: Slavery, redemption, and God’s holy nation*

4. What does the Book of Exodus teach us about God, our inheritance, and salvation?
It teaches us about God’s holy nature; as long as we are slaves to sin, we will never receive our inheritance. So, to receive salvation, we must no longer be slaves to sin, but learn to be holy as God is holy.

5. Explain three duties that we have as God’s priests.
We need to live out God’s truth and spread His gospel; teach others about what is right in God’s eyes and encourage our brethren so that they do not spiritually decline; and act as mediators between God and men.

6. How often do you think of God each day? In a favorite notebook or journal, spend a few minutes each day writing a brief, one-or-two sentence note to God. This can be a note of thanksgiving, prayer, request, or Bible study. Find a distinctive time to do it, such as before breakfast, after dinner, or before bed. At the end of the week, bring your notebook to church and share some of your thoughts with your classmates during the next lesson.
Personal answers.