

# The **Platform**



## **CHOSEN**

Explore week by week God's mission to rescue us and bring us back to him

**There is no better way to get to know God than to read the bible and hear for yourself how He has worked in peoples lives, working to restore our relationship with Him.**

**So we challenge you to open up your bibles, explore God's rescue mission for yourself.**

**There are four weeks between now and the next Platform, and we have designed this booklet specifically to help you explore with us the bible passages as we go along.**

**There are eight reflections/studies in each booklet. This is the second in the series, taking a further look at Genesis, and studying the characters that we find displayed there.**

**It's designed to make it easy for you, with only two studies each week between The Platforms. Here continues the adventure of God's relationship with man, how man progresses and deviates from God, but how God's grace is lavished on those who respond to Him.**

## **Genesis Overview:**

God created a perfect world; however man's sin placed the world under a curse. This is where the written account of God's plan to save mankind through His Son begins.

Genesis shows God's ultimate control and how God can work all things out as good for the sake of His people and those who believe in Him.

Genesis has several parts: the first part is chapter's one through eleven, which acts as an introduction; the second part found in chapters twelve through to fifty is where we see how God works with us, and blesses us.

We see through out Genesis God's sovereignty and control and His ultimate blessings on those who follow and believe in Him, particularly His choice to bless the least deserving or those people that from a human perspective we would not think to choose.

Some of the main themes in Genesis include the idea that there is only one true God, and that this same God who created the heavens also intimately cares for individuals, such as Abraham, Sarah, and their descendants. We see the concept of sinful fallen man, separated from God because of the choices they made. We read how man became so wicked God has to flood the earth. The flood shows us that sin needs to be gotten rid of, and that people who live outside of a relationship with God, because of sin, will not survive. But we also see how God will graciously save those who have faith in Him, Noah and his family. We are given the initial foresight of Jesus through the role of Noah, one man restoring the human race. Through all this we see our need for God, and to be saved by God. We see how salvation can only come from a Holy God and that man apart from God can not bring about his own salvation, but instead gets worse and worse.

Through the lives of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and Joseph, we see how God works with the least, and works with those who trust Him. We see how He chooses people, and works all things for their good, and for His purposes.

**In the next four weeks you will be looking at Genesis 4-50, and we hope that you take the time to read all those chapters through. With only eight studies, we have not been able to examine at length each and every part of those 46 chapters, instead choosing to look at the themes that appear throughout the book. There may be questions that arise as a result of what you read, and if that is the case then feel free to email me at [emily@c-y-m.org.uk](mailto:emily@c-y-m.org.uk) or perhaps speak to your youth worker about the questions you have so you can explore the things you have noticed.**

# Day One

Due to the length of Genesis 4-50, we won't be studying the book chapter by chapter, or even verse by verse. Instead, in each study we will be looking at the major themes that run throughout the book and the lives of those we meet and interact with as we read.

BUT... knowing the themes in themselves means nothing if you don't understand how they fit in the setting from which they were taken.

THEREFORE.... today's study is simply to find a comfortable, quiet spot and **read through Genesis 4-50 over the next few days**. Let your imagination go wild as you picture the family arguments, the incredible depravity of the world before the flood, as you imagine the sights and smells of all those animals in the ark, as you imagine what Abraham was like and why he repeatedly called his wife his sister, as you read about Lot, his daughters, the angels and his infamous wife, as you encounter Isaac, his twin sons Esau and Jacob, and see Jacob work 14 years in order to get the girl of his dreams, and then finally as you read about who Joseph really was other than a man with a multicoloured coat.

**Read and enjoy. Don't analyse, but just simply meet the people, read about their lives, and see all that God did for them.**

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# Day Two

**Read Genesis 4:1-12, 17:19-21, 25:23-34, 27:1-40, 37:2-4, 39:2-6.**

**Why is God pleased with Abel's offering and not Cain's?**

**Read 4 vs 3-5 again.** Abel honoured and revered God because he brought the best of what his work had produced as an offering. In vs 6 God tells Cain that if he does what is right then he would be accepted, and had clearly not done this in his offering.

**What does this tell us about the way God chooses to work with His people, the type of people He chooses to bless, and have a covenant relationship with?**

In these chapters we see the descendants of Adam and Eve, and see how God chooses to bless them and work in and through them. Contrary to cultural expectations, God is pleased with Abel's offering more than Cain's, even though Cain was the first born. As a result, Cain kills Abel, and the blessing of God passes from him onto the third born Seth.

This choosing of an unlikely candidate is a pattern which is repeated throughout the families in Genesis.

Traditionally in the Hebrew culture, the firstborn was the one to receive the blessing from their father and in turn God. They were the one to whom land, status and responsibility was to be given. But right here at the beginning, God establishes a pattern which continues throughout Genesis, that of the least gaining the most. Seth is chosen instead of Cain, Isaac is chosen instead of Ishmael (Genesis 17: 19 – 21), Jacob instead of Esau (Genesis 25: 29 – 34, Genesis 27:1-40 Jacob tricks Esau and Isaac for the birthright and blessing, but God still honours it, and blesses Jacob), Joseph instead of Judah (Genesis 37:2-4, Genesis 39:2-6), and even though Joseph was more chosen than Judah, he forgets and struggles when he realises the blessing will not go to his first born Manasseh but to Ephraim, his second born instead (Genesis 48: 17 – 22).

### **What do we see about the attitudes of Cain, Esau, and Judah in these passages and chapters around them?**

What we see of Cain, Ishmael, Esau and Judah are men who are not willing to walk God's way. Cain goes out and kills Abel rather than addressing his issue with God. Esau hates that his birth right has been taken from him, failing to see the part he played in it, by putting a dish of stew over the value of his birthright in the first place. He then goes out and does what he knows he must not, marry and sleep with Canaanite women. Judah plots to kill his brother out of jealousy, failing to see the blessings he does have in his life.

Now the others are not perfect by any means, they make a fair few mistakes in their walk with God, but what we see is that their hearts are tied to God and they are passionate about trying to walk in His ways, the way of righteousness (doing what is right). They RESPOND to Him, they strive for Him (Jacob even went to the lengths of wrestling with God until he received a blessing – Genesis 32:24-30).

God's choice of blessing is not done on the basis of best behaviour, but on those that understand and desire a relationship with Him. Cain's offering does not show that, whereas Abel's did.

### **Read Ephesians 1:3-6**

#### **Prayer:**

Lord help me to understand that your grace is offered to those who want to know you, who want to walk in your ways, and to live as you want them to live. Help me to know your voice, and to have that desire to know you, just as Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and Joseph had. Help me to know you are God and see you fully as God of my life. Help me not to put me and my needs first as Cain, Esau, and Judah did, but look to you and what you have for me.

## Day Three

Last month we looked at the beginning of the world and the fall, and we saw how man chose himself and what he desired over God. We left it at the point where God had sent them out from the garden of Eden never to eat of the tree of life again.

Genesis tells us what happens from there to mankind.

**Read Genesis 4: 3 – 12, Genesis 6: 5 – 7, 11-13, 17 – 22, Genesis 7:17 – 23, Genesis 11: 1 – 9, Genesis 18: 20 – 19:29.**

**What state is mankind in now?**

**List some of the things mankind is doing that would be displeasing to God:**

**What is God's reaction to all of these?**

**What does this show us about God's attitude towards sin?**

**Why was it necessary for God to flood the earth, confuse our languages and destroy Sodom and Gomorrah?**

The picture we see of God in these chapters is that of a God that cares SO much that He cannot see His world and His people in so much destructive bad behaviour. Therefore, something must be done about it. We encounter this ferocious God, who protects us from sin by getting rid of all that harms and endangers us, even if it means confusing our language or even killing those people He wants to save because He knows the damage we can bring to ourselves.

The flood shows us the result of man's sin. It shows us God's righteousness, how He cannot bear to see sin in the world, how sin requires an action from an almighty, just, loving God, a God who knows He needs to help us by dealing with the sin we do.

In these passages we see that sin is not something that can just be left or ignored, but instead sin brings with it the punishment of death. This is INCREDIBLY important for us to realise as we begin this adventure through the bible. If we can't fully understand and see the consequences of sin, then we don't fully realise our need for God to rescue us.

### **Glimmers of hope: Read Genesis 9:1-11**

Even though God destroys all men on the earth (except Noah and his family), He still tells us we are His, He still trusts us, and cares for us.

### **Compare the words of God in this passage with the commands given to Adam and Eve in Genesis 1:26 – 30.**

God still thinks of man as reflecting His image, no matter how evil they had become. He still believes that they should and could have the roll of subduing and caring for the earth, and all He has created. Through the flood He has shown us the consequences of our sin, and now in the next chapters He shows us the way we can be saved from it.

### **Prayer:**

Lord help me to understand fully how much you hate sin. Help me to realise the areas of my life that don't match with what you want for me, for my family, friends, and your world and the people around me. Help me to understand how much this hurts you, and how you cannot let sin continue in this world. Thank you that you have provided a way out that is different from the flood, and utter destruction. Thank you that you have given us Jesus, and that I can have my sin dealt with and still be in a relationship with you.

## **Day Four**

**Read Genesis 6:1 - 9:17, Genesis 18:20-33, Genesis 37, Genesis 39 – 41, Genesis 45: 4 – 7, 50: 19 – 21.**

In the last study we read about God's reaction to sin, and how there is a need to get rid of it in the world. God tells us through Genesis quite how much He hates sin, and that the consequences of sin are death.

**Having read today's passages, what glimmers of hope can we gain from the stories of Noah, Abraham, Lot and Sodom and Gomorrah, and Joseph?**

**What do we learn about how God chooses to rescue His people?**

**Read Genesis 22: 1 – 18.**

**What other example of a father being willing to sacrifice a son does this remind us of?**

Notice that God provides a "scapegoat", a substitute so that Isaac doesn't have to die.

**What example is God already setting here in the story of Isaac and Abraham?**

We have seen that the result of sin is death. But in the lives of these men, we see that there is another way.

God used the above men to physically save mankind, nations, and God's people. They are our first human example that God will save mankind COMPLETELY, not just physically, through one man, Jesus. In the above passages, God saves mankind through a righteous man and his family, Noah; God shows the grace and compassion He has when talking with Abraham and declaring that He would save Sodom and Gomorrah for just 10 righteous people; God shows us through Abraham the example of being willing to sacrifice your son, and also shows us that God will provide another way, a scapegoat so that death need never happen; and finally God saves a nation, Israel, through the work of Joseph, a man faithful to God and what He asked him to do.

Through all these passages God is showing us that whilst the punishment of sin is death, another way will be provided, and mankind will be saved through a righteous man. We see God's utter grace for those who respond to Him and walk with Him.

He loves us, we are made in His image, and reflect Him. He desires relationship with us, but He must also deal with sin. Here we see the beginnings of God's plan. Man is sinful and deprived, but God still loves us, and will save His people.

### **Prayer:**

Lord I thank you that right from the start we can see Jesus was always your plan. Thank you for the examples set by Noah, Abraham, Isaac, and Joseph that predicted the ways in which you are going to save all those that love and follow you. Thank you that you never wanted to flood the earth again, but rather had a plan to bring all who believe in you back into relationship with you.

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## **Day Five**

Noah, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and Joseph are all men held up as examples for us regarding how to live a life for God. They are far from perfect, and make lots of mistakes. But....

**Read Genesis 6: 10, 7:1 – 5, Genesis 22: 1 – 2, 10 -13, Genesis 32: 24 – 30, Genesis 39 – 41 and Genesis 46: 1 – 7.**

**Even though they make lots of mistakes, what do these verses tell us about why God chooses to work with them?**

**Read Genesis 18: 19.**

**For what purpose was Abraham chosen?**

**How does this relate to why the others were also chosen?**

**What lessons can we learn for our own lives from Noah, Abraham, Jacob and Joseph regarding how they respond to God and talk with God?**

**What do you think walking with God means for your own life?**

### **Prayer**

Lord help me to know you more, to be able to hear what you want me to do, whether that be through the voices of others, an inner voice, your bible, or through circumstances. Help me to be obedient to when you call, and seek after you and your blessing as desperately as Jacob did. Let me never miss the call to act for you in a way which pleases you, not just in the big things but also in the small decisions each and every day. Help me to understand that it doesn't matter how many times I mess up, as long as I am listening and trying to act for you, then you will act for me. Thank you Lord that I do get to live my life with you.

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## **Day Six**

Faithful. Easy to say, but what does it really mean to be faithful. How faithful are we to God, but also how faithful do we think He is to us?

**Read Genesis 22: 1 – 18.**

**Why does God ask Abraham to sacrifice his own son Isaac?**

**What does Abraham's actions in vs 3 – 5 tell us about Abraham's faith in God?**

**What does the statement vs 5 “we will worship and then we will come back to you” and vs 8 in the passage indicate about what Abraham thought was going to happen on the mountain?**

**Vs 12. Do you think God could say the same of you? Does your life, the decisions you make and the things you do reflect your passion and understanding of who God is and who He needs and ought to be in your life?**

**Note:**

God asked Abraham to kill his own son, and Abraham was willing. Abraham was faithful to God with EVERYTHING he had and everything he asked him to do, including killing his own son. Vs 10 tells us that Abraham would have gone through with it completely, he had the knife poised at the throat, and it was God that stopped him.

BUT... vs 5 and vs 8 tell us that Abraham was not only faithful to God, but he also knew God was going to be faithful to him. He declares that both of them will come down the mountain to meet the men they leave there, he tells Isaac that God would provide the sacrifice. I don't think that at any stage Abraham was deceiving himself or others. He knew that God would do something so that Isaac would come back with him, he knew that God would save him, he was faithful, and knew God would be too. But that didn't stop him being fully obedient. He didn't think to himself, at any stage now God's going to cut in, any stage now..... He tied his son up and had a knife to his throat! What amazing faith, to act as God asked him to, and know that God would make it all ok.

**Abraham is not the only faithful man in Genesis. As our last study showed, the main characters in Genesis have amazing faith in God, even when they themselves don't perhaps always behave all that faithful. When God calls them, and gives them something to do, they do it, and they give the glory to him (Genesis 14: 22 – 24 – Abraham didn't want the King to take the credit for anything God would do, Genesis 40: 8, 41:16).**

**Prayer:**

Lord, help me to have faith in you, in the things you ask me to do. Help me to have the confidence to do all that you ask, and help me to trust you as Abraham trusted you. Thank you that you are a faithful God. Help me to see that more fully in my own life as I step out and trust you more.

# Day Seven

Promises. We heard in the last study that God wants us to have faith in Him for He is faithful. But to what is He faithful. What kind of things does He promise us?

**Read the following passages:**

**Genesis 9: 8 – 17, Genesis 12: 1 – 3, 7, Genesis 13: 14 – 17, Genesis 15: 1 – 6, 13 – 15, 18 – 20, Genesis 17: 1 – 22, Genesis 22: 15 – 18, Genesis 26: 24, Genesis 28: 13 – 15, Genesis 35: 9 – 14, Genesis 46: 1 – 4.**

In the above passages there are the promises that God made to generation after generation.

**List the things promised by God to His people:**

**Who did God give these promises to?**

**Why do you think God promised land and family?**

**Note:** Land and descendants were the way you could tell that a nation was great. Land showed wealth and status, and many descendants showed the same.

**Why do you think God chose to build His people, the descendants of Noah and Abraham through 3 barren women (Sarah married to Abraham, Leah married to Jacob, and Rachel married to Jacob)?**

**What promises do you think God has made to you?**

**What evidence do you have that He will be faithful to keep them?**

The promises that God makes here are for the whole of the nation of Israel, which includes us today. He promises to protect them, and provide for them, if they walk in His ways, and follow after Him alone.

It is right here at the beginning of the nation of Israel that we see all that God offers us. God promises to be faithful to them, to care for and provide for them, to be their God, and for them to be called His people. He bound himself to them in the covenant he made, and binds himself to us through that same covenant and through Jesus.

**This is the beginning of the story of God's chosen, set apart people.**

### **Prayer:**

Lord, thank you that you are a great God, the one true God, who offers to provide for us, care for us, and protect us. Lord thank you that promises you made in the old testament still are true for me today. Help me to see how you are going to use me to glorify you, and help me to understand and live by your ways.

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## **Day Eight**

**Read back over the notes you have made in the last seven studies, and refresh your memory of the six main themes:**

- **God chooses the least and the unlikely in the world's eyes, but chooses the faithful and the responsive to Him.**
- **The consequences of sin are death and destruction.**
- **God shows us that He will never flood the earth, but will save His people through one person - there is another way!**
- **Why did God choose the people He did - because they answered His call, and He then lavished His grace on them to enable them to do the things He asked them to do.**
- **What example do they set us – one of faith.**
- **What does God promise for us – that He will be our God, and will protect, provide and care for us.**

**Spend some time with God asking Him to show you what He is asking you to do today, this week, this month etc... Ask Him to give you His strength to do it, and thank Him that He loves and cares for us, in our every need, physical and spiritual.**