

Genesis 1 – Numbers 20

As we begin this survey through the bible we'll brush with broad strokes and cover as much ground as possible all with the intention of showing the big picture of God's redemptive plan through His Son Jesus Christ.

Of course before we can begin with redemption through the Son, we have to have someone to redeem and that's where we begin in Genesis 1:1

Genesis 1:1 ^{NAU} In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.

And we know that on the sixth day God created man.

Genesis 1:26-31 ²⁶ Then God said, "Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness; and let them rule over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the sky and over the cattle and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth."
²⁷ God created man in His own image, in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them. ²⁸ God blessed them; and God said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth, and subdue it; and rule over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the sky and over every living thing that moves on the earth." ²⁹ Then God said, "Behold, I have given you every plant yielding seed that is on the surface of all the earth, and every tree which has fruit yielding seed; it shall be food for you; ³⁰ and to every beast of the earth and to every bird of the sky and to every thing that moves on the earth which has life, *I have given* every green plant for food"; and it was so. ³¹ God saw all that He had made, and behold, it was very good. And there was evening and there was morning, the sixth day.

And so, what we see here is God's over all intention for mankind; that they reflect and faithfully represent their Creator by taking dominion over the earth. It was God's to give and it was man's to manage for the glory of God.

But man was also given a mandate to obey and the one thing man was to do was to use all God created with the exception of one thing.

Genesis 2:15-17 ⁵ Then the LORD God took the man and put him into the garden of Eden to cultivate it and keep it. ¹⁶ The LORD God commanded the man, saying, "From any tree of the garden

you may eat freely; ¹⁷ but from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat from it you will surely die."

This is the reason God had chosen the Son before the foundations of the world, and had also chosen the people for whom He would die before the foundation of the world, because it was His intention to come into this world as a man and pay the debt of His elect, which was death.

This was not an after thought for God, nor was it a reaction to a knowledge that God had concerning man's future choices. Man was never consulted and it was not man's future choices that caused God to choose anyone. The choice was always God's to create a world in which man would rebel and God would come to his rescue.

By the way, for those who would suggest that God would not be a good God if He had decreed man's fall, by choosing both men and the Savior of those people, before the foundations of the world, (since that would detract from man's "free will"), they still have to answer an important question.

If God did not plan for man's sin then why choose anyone, including the Savior of those people, "before" the foundations of the world?

Ephesians 1:3-6 ³ Blessed *be* the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly *places* in Christ, ⁴ just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we would be holy and blameless before Him. In love ⁵ He predestined us to adoption as sons through Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the kind intention of His will, ⁶ to the praise of the glory of His grace, which He freely bestowed on us in the Beloved.

The usual answer is, well God chose men because He knew they would sin. And certainly if God knows all things, then He would certainly know the beginning from the end.

But that doesn't answer the question, because if God knew that man would sin, why then did He create men in the first place?

This gets the heart of the issue of God being sovereign and a God who does nothing without purpose and a desire to bring Himself glory in all that He does.

If someone subscribes to God allowing man to sin, but does nothing to intervene to stop man's "free will" to sin, then you have a God who seems to be helpless, but who certainly wants to help by sending a Redeemer after the fact.

From the perspective of those critics of God being unfair, does this make God any less culpable by "allowing" man to sin rather than "determining" that man will sin?

Actually, for those who subscribe to the first proposition, they are the one's who must explain any reason for sin and evil having a purpose. But if God has decreed all things, including the introduction of sin into the world, then the Creator has a purpose that does not violate His goodness and holiness.

As we said last week, there is nothing that God does without a purpose, and that includes the original sin of Adam that was prompted by the already rebellious, Satan. Because God is all good there is no evil in Him.

Psalm 5:4 ⁴ For You are not a God who takes pleasure in wickedness; No evil dwells with You.

^{NAU} **Psalm 92:15** To declare that the LORD is upright; *He is my rock, and there is no unrighteousness in Him.*

And so, whatever God decides to do with His own creation it will always be done first and foremost for His own good pleasure and glory, but it will always be done with His righteousness and goodness at the center of it all.

So, man sins and it does not take God by surprise but actually conforms to God's plan to send a redeemer for mankind.

Genesis 3:14-17 ¹⁴ The LORD God said to the serpent, "Because you have done this, Cursed are you more than all cattle, And more than every beast of the field; On your belly you will go, And dust you will eat All the days of your life; ¹⁵ And I will put enmity Between you and the woman, And between your seed and her seed; He shall bruise you on the head, And you shall bruise him on the heel." ¹⁶ To the woman He said, "I will greatly multiply Your pain in childbirth, In pain you will bring forth children; Yet your desire will be for your husband, And he will rule over you." ¹⁷ Then to Adam He said, "Because you have listened to the voice of your wife, and have eaten from the tree about which I commanded

you, saying, 'You shall not eat from it'; Cursed is the ground because of you; In toil you will eat of it All the days of your life.

Mankind along with all of creation is now cursed in need of someone to take that curse away. And the only One who can do that is God Himself, whom we are told will come from the seed of the woman.

And so, we have the formula for man's problem of sin and it is a formula that comes from God's representative who will be a man, but also will be God Himself as we'll see as we move through this continual revelation that God is giving to mankind through the prophets.

God continually speaks to a number of His people from Adam on, and finally comes to the end of His grace and patience for mankind because of their sin and the Lord carries out the next part of His plan for salvation.

Genesis 6:5-8 ⁵ Then the LORD saw that the wickedness of man was great on the earth, and that every intent of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. ⁶ The LORD was sorry that He had made man on the earth, and He was grieved in His heart. ⁷ The LORD said, "I will blot out man whom I have created from the face of the land, from man to animals to creeping things and to birds of the sky; for I am sorry that I have made them." ⁸ But Noah found favor in the eyes of the LORD.

The flood would be used by God to start over with mankind and Noah would be the one through whom the Messiah would come. He and his family would be saved through the flood.

But it wouldn't take long before mankind once again would turn away from their God and creator.

Genesis 11:1-9 ^{AU} Now the whole earth used the same language and the same words. ² It came about as they journeyed east, that they found a plain in the land of Shinar and settled there. ³ They said to one another, "Come, let us make bricks and burn *them* thoroughly." And they used brick for stone, and they used tar for mortar. ⁴ They said, "Come, let us build for ourselves a city, and a tower whose top *will reach* into heaven, and let us make for ourselves a name, otherwise we will be scattered abroad over the face of the whole earth." ⁵ The LORD came down to see the city and the tower which the sons of men had built. ⁶ The LORD said, "Behold, they are one people, and they all have the same language.

And this is what they began to do, and now nothing which they purpose to do will be impossible for them. ⁷ "Come, let Us go down and there confuse their language, so that they will not understand one another's speech." ⁸ So the LORD scattered them abroad from there over the face of the whole earth; and they stopped building the city. ⁹ Therefore its name was called Babel, because there the LORD confused the language of the whole earth; and from there the LORD scattered them abroad over the face of the whole earth.

It would be one of the descendants of Noah who would finally be called by God to be that one who would become a father of many nations. His name was Abraham. Through Abraham's seed would come the Messiah. This was God's promise to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.

And it would be through Jacob and his twelve sons that we would have the nation of Israel formed in Egypt and ultimately delivered from Egypt by one Moses.

Moses was chosen by God to continue His plan of redemption for His people as God used him to bring them out of Egypt into the promised land flowing with milk and honey.

But the sin of men still prevailed and even after their deliverance from Egypt Israel continued to long for their own desires instead of God's and they were punished by God for 40 years as they wandered in the desert.

During their time in the desert God continued to instruct them concerning His plan to redeem a people for Himself. And the plan began to unfold in a very detailed way through the giving of the law on Mt. Sinai in the desert.

Exodus 20:1-3 ^{NAU} Then God spoke all these words, saying, ² "I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery. ³ "You shall have no other gods before Me.

And He went on to give all the commandments they should learn and observe including the commandments regarding the sacrificial system of atonement.

Exodus 24:1-8 ^{NAU} Then He said to Moses, "Come up to the LORD, you and Aaron, Nadab and Abihu and seventy of the elders of Israel, and you shall worship at a distance. ² "Moses alone,

however, shall come near to the LORD, but they shall not come near, nor shall the people come up with him." ³ Then Moses came and recounted to the people all the words of the LORD and all the ordinances; and all the people answered with one voice and said, "All the words which the LORD has spoken we will do!" ⁴ Moses wrote down all the words of the LORD. Then he arose early in the morning, and built an altar at the foot of the mountain with twelve pillars for the twelve tribes of Israel. ⁵ He sent young men of the sons of Israel, and they offered burnt offerings and sacrificed young bulls as peace offerings to the LORD. ⁶ Moses took half of the blood and put *it* in basins, and the *other* half of the blood he sprinkled on the altar. ⁷ Then he took the book of the covenant and read *it* in the hearing of the people; and they said, "All that the LORD has spoken we will do, and we will be obedient!" ⁸ So Moses took the blood and sprinkled *it* on the people, and said, "Behold the blood of the covenant, which the LORD has made with you in accordance with all these words."

This was God's formal giving of the plan that would ultimately be fulfilled in the One He would send to take away the sins of His people.

And what is central to this plan according to these verses?

The blood.

During the entire book of Exodus God works with His people to direct them and show them that the only way they could enter the land is if they would follow Him and His word. But there was a problem and that problem is what Abraham encountered. Someone else was living in the land of promise.

In God's master plan they would have to be removed and Moses would not be the one to do it because of his disobedience.

But Israel was still being used by God as they were given not just the law but a priesthood that would be established by God for the carrying out of His plan of redemption through the blood of the atonement.

All throughout the book of Leviticus we see God working with the people through this priesthood with the focal point being the blood that washes them clean. This focal point would be found on one day a year called the day of atonement.

Leviticus 16:17-22 ¹⁷ "When he goes in to make atonement in the holy place, no one shall be in the tent of meeting until he comes out, that he may make atonement for himself and for his household and for all the assembly of Israel. ¹⁸ "Then he shall go out to the altar that is before the LORD and make atonement for it, and shall take some of the blood of the bull and of the blood of the goat and put it on the horns of the altar on all sides. ¹⁹ "With his finger he shall sprinkle some of the blood on it seven times and cleanse it, and from the impurities of the sons of Israel consecrate it. ²⁰ "When he finishes atoning for the holy place and the tent of meeting and the altar, he shall offer the live goat. ²¹ "Then Aaron shall lay both of his hands on the head of the live goat, and confess over it all the iniquities of the sons of Israel and all their transgressions in regard to all their sins; and he shall lay them on the head of the goat and send *it* away into the wilderness by the hand of a man who *stands* in readiness. ²² "The goat shall bear on itself all their iniquities to a solitary land; and he shall release the goat in the wilderness.

Leviticus 16:29-30 ²⁹ "This shall be a permanent statute for you: in the seventh month, on the tenth day of the month, you shall humble your souls and not do any work, whether the native, or the alien who sojourns among you; ³⁰ for it is on this day that atonement shall be made for you to cleanse you; you will be clean from all your sins before the LORD.

The book that follows Leviticus is what book?

Numbers.

Does anyone know why this is called the book of Numbers?

Because it is the book that literally numbers the people in Israel by their tribes.

Numbers 1:1-4 ^{NAU} Then the LORD spoke to Moses in the wilderness of Sinai, in the tent of meeting, on the first of the second month, in the second year after they had come out of the land of Egypt, saying, ² "Take a census of all the congregation of the sons of Israel, by their families, by their fathers' households, according to the number of names, every male, head by head ³ from twenty years old and upward, whoever *is able to* go out to war in Israel, you and Aaron shall number them by their armies. ⁴ "With you, moreover, there shall be a man of each tribe, each one head of his father's household.

It is Numbers where all of the tribes are broken down by families and it is in this book that the responsibilities are given to each tribe including the Levites. But it is also in this book that Israel, who is still wandering in the desert, begins to grumble against the Lord because they're getting tired of the way God has provided food for them.

Does anyone remember what type of food came down to the ground with the dew?

Manna.

Numbers 11:7-13 ⁷ Now the manna was like coriander seed, and its appearance like that of bdellium. ⁸ The people would go about and gather *it* and grind *it* between two millstones or beat *it* in the mortar, and boil *it* in the pot and make cakes with it; and its taste was as the taste of cakes baked with oil. ⁹ When the dew fell on the camp at night, the manna would fall with it. ¹⁰ Now Moses heard the people weeping throughout their families, each man at the doorway of his tent; and the anger of the LORD was kindled greatly, and Moses was displeased. ¹¹ So Moses said to the LORD, "Why have You been so hard on Your servant? And why have I not found favor in Your sight, that You have laid the burden of all this people on me? ¹² "Was it I who conceived all this people? Was it I who brought them forth, that You should say to me, 'Carry them in your bosom as a nurse carries a nursing infant, to the land which You swore to their fathers '? ¹³ "Where am I to get meat to give to all this people? For they weep before me, saying, 'Give us meat that we may eat!'

Well, Moses comes before God and says that there's no way he can provide meat for Israel and so God again establishes a number for Moses to use to help solve the problem. The number is 70.

Numbers 11:16-23 ¹⁶ The LORD therefore said to Moses, "Gather for Me seventy men from the elders of Israel, whom you know to be the elders of the people and their officers and bring them to the tent of meeting, and let them take their stand there with you. ¹⁷ "Then I will come down and speak with you there, and I will take of the Spirit who is upon you, and will put *Him* upon them; and they shall bear the burden of the people with you, so that you will not bear *it* all alone. ¹⁸ "Say to the people, 'Consecrate yourselves for tomorrow, and you shall eat meat; for you have wept in the ears of the LORD, saying, "Oh that someone would give us meat to eat! For we were well-off in Egypt." Therefore the LORD will give you meat and you shall eat. ¹⁹ 'You shall eat, not

one day, nor two days, nor five days, nor ten days, nor twenty days, ²⁰ but a whole month, until it comes out of your nostrils and becomes loathsome to you; because you have rejected the LORD who is among you and have wept before Him, saying, "Why did we ever leave Egypt?"²¹ But Moses said, "The people, among whom I am, are 600,000 on foot; yet You have said, 'I will give them meat, so that they may eat for a whole month.'²² "Should flocks and herds be slaughtered for them, to be sufficient for them? Or should all the fish of the sea be gathered together for them, to be sufficient for them?"²³ The LORD said to Moses, "Is the LORD'S power limited? Now you shall see whether My word will come true for you or not."

And what did God provide for them?

Numbers 11:31-34 ³¹ Now there went forth a wind from the LORD and it brought quail from the sea, and let *them* fall beside the camp, about a day's journey on this side and a day's journey on the other side, all around the camp and about two cubits *deep* on the surface of the ground. ³² The people spent all day and all night and all the next day, and gathered the quail (he who gathered least gathered ten homers) and they spread *them* out for themselves all around the camp. ³³ While the meat was still between their teeth, before it was chewed, the anger of the LORD was kindled against the people, and the LORD struck the people with a very severe plague. ³⁴ So the name of that place was called Kibroth-hattaavah, because there they buried the people who had been greedy.

It was also in the book of Numbers that God numbers men from every tribe of Israel to go and spy out the land of Canaan.

Upon seeing the people of Canaan as fierce the spies came back with a report that essentially said we can't do it, with the exception of two men by the names of Joshua and Caleb, who didn't see the people of Canaan through their eyes but through the eyes of the One who could easily defeat them for Israel.

Numbers 14:6-9 ⁶ Joshua the son of Nun and Caleb the son of Jephunneh, of those who had spied out the land, tore their clothes; ⁷ and they spoke to all the congregation of the sons of Israel, saying, "The land which we passed through to spy out is an exceedingly good land. ⁸ "If the LORD is pleased with us, then He will bring us into this land and give it to us-- a land which flows with milk and honey. ⁹ "Only do not rebel against the LORD; and do not fear the people of the land, for they will be our prey. Their

protection has been removed from them, and the LORD is with us; do not fear them."

And of course the people rallied around Joshua and Caleb and said let us take the land in the name of the Lord, right?

Numbers 14:10 ¹⁰ But all the congregation said to stone them with stones. Then the glory of the LORD appeared in the tent of meeting to all the sons of Israel.

It is recorded in Numbers one of the first times that God's grace is demonstrated to the people's in Canaan if they would bless Israel. We see this with the king of Edom.

Numbers 20:14-21 ¹⁴ From Kadesh Moses then sent messengers to the king of Edom: "Thus your brother Israel has said, 'You know all the hardship that has befallen us; ¹⁵ that our fathers went down to Egypt, and we stayed in Egypt a long time, and the Egyptians treated us and our fathers badly. ¹⁶ 'But when we cried out to the LORD, He heard our voice and sent an angel and brought us out from Egypt; now behold, we are at Kadesh, a town on the edge of your territory. ¹⁷ 'Please let us pass through your land. We will not pass through field or through vineyard; we will not even drink water from a well. We will go along the king's highway, not turning to the right or left, until we pass through your territory.'" ¹⁸ Edom, however, said to him, "You shall not pass through us, or I will come out with the sword against you." ¹⁹ Again, the sons of Israel said to him, "We will go up by the highway, and if I and my livestock do drink any of your water, then I will pay its price. Let me only pass through on my feet, nothing *else*." ²⁰ But he said, "You shall not pass through." And Edom came out against him with a heavy force and with a strong hand. ²¹ Thus Edom refused to allow Israel to pass through his territory; so Israel turned away from him.

Why do you think Moses asks permission to pass through the land of Edom?

He humbles himself.

But in the same breath he makes clear that Israel was mightily delivered by God out of Egypt. Why do you suppose he does this?

It is meant to give glory to God their deliverer, but in it is a veiled threat that the God who delivered them from the mightiest nation

in the world will have no problem delivering Edom into their hands as well.

But what is their response?

We'll pick up here next week.