

God's Plan OF *Redemption*

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Dedication

To the memory of my parents, Bill and Flora Wilson, who led me to Christ, taught me to love God's Word, and encouraged me in Christian service.

This revised study is also dedicated to the women who have taught this study through the years and who have introduced women to the Savior and helped other women grow in their understanding of God's Word.

God's Plan of Redemption

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Introduction

A FEW YEARS AGO I started using an e-reader. I still like books in print, but I have read some interesting books on my e-reader. And I probably would never have known about them were it not for some regular e-mails I receive with e-book deals.

I have read dozens and dozens of book descriptions from these e-mails, and I have been amazed at how many of them say something like this: “A story about love, redemption, and second chances.”

Why does the word *redemption* appear so often in book descriptions? Probably because we all like to read stories with happy endings. And redemption is a happy ending. A relationship is restored, the characters change for the better, or some unhappy situation is overcome. These are all variations of redemption.

But if you check the dictionary, these are not the primary meanings. Meaning number one is “to buy back or repurchase.” I read about a man who paid a huge sum of money to “buy back” his dog from someone who had stolen it. The dog rightfully belonged to the man. He loved his dog. Then when his dog was stolen, the man was willing to pay whatever the price in order to reclaim his dog. This is redemption.

And in a much greater way, redemption is the story of the Bible. People belong to God by the right of His creation of them. But starting with Adam and Eve, people have chosen to go their own way. For God to reclaim His own creation, He had to pay a high price to redeem them—the price of His own Son. Someone has said that “though unbelievers today are quick to denounce Christianity as exclusive or unfair or narrow in perspective, it is, in fact, the story of the greatest outpouring of redeeming love ever

manifested on Earth and the result of the greatest redemption price ever paid in all of history.”¹

The purpose of this book is to help you understand the big picture of the Bible—the plan that God designed before He ever created the world. This plan is the outworking of God’s redeeming love. As you work through this study, you will follow God’s loving plan from its introduction in Genesis to its completion in Revelation.

Many years ago I heard someone say, “The Bible is red with redemption truth. Cut it anywhere and it bleeds.” You will realize this truth more fully as you complete these lessons. Every period of human history has been marked by the necessity to shed innocent blood in order to be obedient to God.

This is not a detailed study of Bible passages. It is an overview of the Scriptures. Many of the things in the Old Testament are better understood in the light of New Testament truth. You will come to understand what is meant by the couplet, “The New is in the Old concealed; the Old is in the New revealed.” Scripture is the best commentary on Scripture, and the New Testament definitely helps us understand the Old.

If you are studying these lessons in a group setting, I encourage you to answer the questions in “Discover the Truth” as completely as you can. If you are studying one-on-one with another lady, you may choose to answer the questions together. “Review the Truth” will help you keep going over the things you have learned, especially a list of Biblical people and events. “Practice the Truth” is a vital part of each lesson. It is important to apply the truths you are learning. Don’t neglect this part of the study.

It is my prayer that this study will accomplish three things: (1) help you grasp a basic understanding of the entire Bible; (2) cause you to more fully appreciate the loving, redemptive plan of God and His work in your life; (3) lead you to accept Christ as Savior if you have never made life’s most important decision.

Note

1. Thomas C. Simcox, “If That Isn’t Love,” *Israel My Glory* (November/December 2013): 18.

God's Plan of Salvation

AS YOU STUDY the Scriptures—alone or with a group of women—you may realize that you have never entered into a personal relationship with Jesus Christ. We use a number of different terms to designate this relationship:

- being born again (John 3:3, 7),
- accepting the gift of eternal life (Romans 6:23),
- being saved (Acts 4:12),
- receiving Christ as Savior (John 1:12),
- becoming God's child (John 1:12).

These descriptive terms are synonymous. Sometimes it is easier to understand one concept more than another, but all of them are true of a person who “believeth in him”—that is, God's Son (John 3:16, 18, 36).

A person who wants to enter this personal relationship with Jesus Christ must acknowledge and believe five basic truths.

(1) *I am a sinner.* The Bible says, “For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God” and “There is none righteous, no, not one” (Romans 3:23, 10). Until a person recognizes that she is a sinner in God's eyes, she will not be able to admit she needs a Savior.

(2) *God loves me.* The Bible says, “But God commendeth [showed] his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us” (Romans 5:8). Jesus said that God loved the world of sinners so much that He sent His Son into this world (John 3:16, 17).

(3) *Jesus died for me.* The Bible says, “Who [Jesus] his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree” and, “Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things,

as silver and gold, . . . but with the precious blood of Christ” (1 Peter 2:24; 1:18, 19). Jesus loved *you* enough to die for *you*.

(4) *I receive Him*. The Bible says, “For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord” (Romans 6:23). It also says, “For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: not of works, lest any man should boast” (Ephesians 2:8, 9). The basis of our salvation is what Jesus has done for us; not what we can do for Him.

(5) *I am God's child*. The Bible says, “But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name” (John 1:12). When you receive Christ by faith, God makes you His child. He is now your Heavenly Father, and this is a forever relationship! The Bible says no one or no thing can ever take you out of God's hand (John 10:28, 29) and nothing at all can ever separate you from God's love (Romans 8:38, 39).

If you are ready to make this life-changing decision, you may want to express your desire to God in prayer. “For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved” (Romans 10:13). As soon as possible, tell someone else about your decision.

Welcome to God's family!

The Plan Revealed

Genesis 1—8

“But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him” (Hebrews 11:6).

THE BIBLE is God’s revealing of Himself to mankind. It is a unique book. God used human writers to record exactly what He wanted us to know. The Bible says this about itself: “All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness” (2 Timothy 3:16). This truth is the starting place for our study. The Bible is our only authority for what we believe and how we behave.

God gave us His Word, the Bible, so that we may know Him and so that we may know the way to Him. “The holy scriptures . . . are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus” (2 Timothy 3:15). The entire Bible is the story of God’s redeeming love for His creatures.

Every human being belongs to God by right of creation, but each one is separated from God. So from “before the foundation of the world” (Ephesians 1:4), God has had a plan for purchasing people for Himself. He has bought us back with the price of His own Son. But we are getting ahead of the story.

The whole Bible is the unfolding of God’s plan to redeem His creation. In these lessons, which will help us get an overview of the Old and New Testaments, we will see God’s plan of redemption worked out on our behalf.

Discover the Truth

Creation

1. Read Hebrews 11:6. What must we believe about God as we approach this study in His Word?

Theologians have many different arguments to prove the existence of God. But the Bible invites us to simply believe that God is.

2. Read Genesis 1:1. What are the first words of the Bible?

God does not try to prove Himself. He makes a declarative statement about what He did. We must accept this opening statement by faith, believing that He is, or the rest of the Bible is nonsense to us.

3. Do you have trouble believing in the existence of a personal God? Why or why not?

If your answer is yes, ask God to give you the faith to believe that He is. Then you can undertake this study with the certainty that God will reward your seeking heart.

After asserting that God is and that He created, Genesis 1 continues with the account of creation.

4. What did God make on the first day (vv. 3–5)?

5. What did God make on the second day (vv. 6–8)?

6. What did God make on the third day (vv. 9–13)?

7. What did God make on the fourth day (vv. 14–19)?
8. What did God make on the fifth day (vv. 20–23)?
9. What did God make on the sixth day (vv. 24–27)?
10. What was God’s evaluation of His creation (v. 31)?

God’s creative work was finished, so God rested on the seventh day (Genesis 2:2)—not because He was tired, but because His creative work was done.

God made a beautiful setting in which Adam and his wife, Eve, could live. In that Garden was everything Adam and Eve could possibly want. They had a close personal relationship with God. They had meaningful work.

But God did not want robots serving Him. He wanted His creatures to love and enjoy and obey Him because they *willed* to do so.

11. What test did God give Adam and Eve (Genesis 2:16, 17)?

Man’s Sin

Into this beautiful setting came God’s archenemy, the Devil, in the form of a serpent.

12. Read Genesis 3:1–7; then describe what happened.

We refer to this event as the Fall. In that moment Adam and Eve died spiritually and began to die physically. They were separated

from the God Who created them and loved them. In order to secure people's loving obedience, God would have to redeem the people He had made, the people who were His possession.

13. Genesis 3:14–19 describes the punishment meted out on the various parties involved. Verse 15 records God's words to Satan. This verse is the first indication in the Bible of God's redemptive plan. What did God say would happen?

With their punishment ringing in their ears, Adam and Eve had to leave the Garden. Never again would life be like it had been. In love, God made it impossible for the sinful pair to eat of the tree of life and thus live forever in their sin. God killed animals and made clothes of skin to cover Adam's and Eve's nakedness in place of their own feeble attempts to cover themselves (Genesis 3:7, 21). From that time until the Redeemer Himself came, animal sacrifices would be necessary to provide a covering for sin.

Cain and Abel

Adam and Eve left the Garden and sometime after that had children.

14. Read Genesis 4:1 and 2. What were their sons' names and occupations?

15. Read Genesis 4:3 and 4. What happened when it was time for Cain and Abel to offer sacrifices?

16. Whose offering did God accept (Genesis 4:4)? Why do you think God accepted that offering?

17. Read Genesis 4:8. What was the final outcome of this event?

“Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death” (James 1:15). In the first three chapters of the Bible, we move from God’s good creation, to the idyllic Garden of Eden, to disobedience and death. God, Who created people for His own pleasure, must now deal with His creatures who had willfully chosen to disobey Him.

The Flood

18. But the situation only got worse. What was the condition of the human race according to Genesis 6:5?

19. What did God decide to do (Genesis 6:7)?

In the midst of this bleak picture, one man feared God and found grace in His sight. In obedience to God’s directions, Noah and his family built an ark. God used this vessel as the means of saving one human family as well as animals and birds.

20. Read Genesis 7:17–24. How did God destroy all the living things that were not in the ark?

When Noah, his family, and the animals could finally leave the ark, God promised that He would never again destroy the human race in that manner (Genesis 8:21).

God was not caught by surprise by Adam and Eve’s sin or by Cain’s or by the people of Noah’s day. God planned redemption “before the foundation of the world” (Ephesians 1:4). It would be many centuries before God’s plan was brought to fruition. But just as one man’s (Adam’s) disobedience brought the death of all

people, so one Man's (Jesus Christ's) obedience would bring life to all who believe (Romans 5:19).

In the unfolding of this grand program of God, Genesis introduces the reader to the nature of God as the sovereign Lord over the universe who will move heaven and earth to establish His will. He seeks to bless mankind, but does not tolerate disobedience and unbelief. Throughout this revelation, the reader learns that “without faith it is impossible to please God” (Heb. 11:6).¹

*I am not skilled to understand
What God hath willed, what God hath planned;
I only know at His right hand
Is One Who is my Savior!*

*I take Him at His word indeed—
“Christ died for sinners,” this I read—
For in my heart I find a need
Of Him to be my Savior.
—Dora Greenwell*

Review the Truth

1. Who are the main characters in the first eight chapters of Genesis? In addition to God, you should be able to name five others.

2. Explain in your own words why God gave Adam and Eve a test in the Garden of Eden.

Practice the Truth

1. Compare Satan's temptation of Eve with 1 John 2:16. What aspects of the Garden temptation compare to the three areas named in 1 John? How does Satan use these same areas when he tempts you to sin?

2. What have you learned about God as you studied this lesson? List some of His characteristics, or attributes.

3. What is your personal relationship to God?

Note

1. Allen P. Ross, "Genesis," in *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: Old Testament*, eds. John F. Walvoord and Roy B. Zuck (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1985), 26.