

# THE HEART OF GOD

## GENESIS



T. M. Moore

*A Scriptorium Study*

*And beginning at Moses and all the Prophets,*

*He expounded to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself. Luke 24.27*

The Fellowship of Ailbe

The Heart of God: Genesis  
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Susie Moore, Editing and Finishing  
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## Introduction to Genesis

Genesis is like the first chapter of a great novel. Everything's there. All the characters, plot lines, primary themes, and overall structure.

Which makes understanding Genesis extremely important as we begin our study of the heart of God throughout Scripture.

God's covenant begins in the first pages of Genesis, and develops consistently throughout. We begin to understand God's plan for creation, and to comprehend the difficulties that must be surmounted for that plan to be realized. We meet key figures whose importance will linger through all the rest of Scripture. And we begin to glimpse a coming day when God will accomplish His plan to glorify Himself through a people of His own choice.

Our study will consider the primary developments in God's covenant relationship with His people, as we follow the unfolding of His covenant and the divine economy that covenant enables.

*The Heart of God* studies provide a road map through the Scriptures, unfolding key unifying threads and following the development of those matters closest to the heart of our Lord Jesus Christ, from Genesis to Revelation. Through all our study we'll see how the Scriptures lead us to Jesus, and how He, in turn, brings into the presence of our heavenly Father and His Kingdom. There, as we encounter God and His glory, the Spirit can transform us increasingly in to the very image of our Lord Jesus Christ.

We begin our study of *The Heart of God* by looking at the uniqueness and unity of Scripture, and at three primary themes which lie close to the heart of God.

We're pleased to provide *Scriptorium* studies in PDF format at no charge. We hope you will find them helpful and encouraging as you press on in your journey toward spiritual maturity with the Lord.

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If you find these studies, or any of our other resources helpful, we hope you will consider making a contribution to help support our work. You can do so by using the donate button at the website or by sending your gift to The Fellowship of Ailbe, 19 Tyler Dr., Essex Junction, VT 05452.

We hope you find this study of Acts instructive and helpful to equip you for your walk with and work for the Lord. Thank you for joining us.

T. M. Moore, Principal  
[tmmoore@ailbe.org](mailto:tmmoore@ailbe.org)

## 1 The Beginning of God's Covenant

*Read and meditate on Genesis 1 and 2.*

Like the first chapter of a great novel, the book of Genesis sets the stage for everything else that happens in Scripture. An understanding of the basic themes and important doctrines of Genesis is, therefore, critical if we are going to be able to follow the unfolding story told by the unifying threads of divine revelation.

*For reflection*

1. How do the events of Genesis 1 and 2 help us gain some insight to the glory of God? What is suggested about God's glory by the scope, variety, and complexity of the creation? From what we see here, how would you explain the *glory of God*?
2. Genesis 1 and 2 begin weaving two of the major themes of Scripture: the glory of God and the creation of a people for God. How can you see that God's glory is intimately related to His purpose in creating Adam and Eve? How would they benefit from living for His glory?
3. Note the repeated use of the word *good* in Genesis 1. What does this tell us about the creation at this time? What does it tell us about God? How does the idea of *goodness* feed into the notion of God's *glory* and of His purpose in creating Adam and Eve?
4. How did God make it clear to Adam and Eve that He and they were involved in a special relationship? How were Adam and Eve different from the other creatures? Why are human beings uniquely suited for glorifying God?
5. Review Genesis 1.26-28 and 2.15-17. How would you describe God's plan for His people, so that they would glorify Him in the creation?

*Summary*

God and His glory are front and center as the Bible begins. God's covenant begins and ends here. Everything that exists is from God, for His purposes and glory, and designed to manifest His goodness. How did God expect Adam and Eve to *continue* and even *enlarge* that purpose? Does His mandate to them have any continuing significance for us? Explain.

*Closing Prayer*

By the word of the LORD the heavens were made,  
And all the host of them by the breath of His mouth.  
He gathers the waters of the sea together as a heap;  
He lays up the deep in storehouses.  
Let all the earth fear the LORD;  
Let all the inhabitants of the world stand in awe of Him.  
For He spoke, and it was *done*;  
He commanded, and it stood fast.  
The LORD brings the counsel of the nations to nothing;

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He makes the plans of the peoples of no effect.  
The counsel of the LORD stands forever,  
The plans of His heart to all generations.  
Blessed *is* the nation whose God *is* the LORD,  
The people He has chosen as His own inheritance.

Psalm 33.6-12

*Next steps – Demonstration: What opportunities do you have for bringing the goodness of the Lord to light in your Personal Mission Field (Ps. 27.13; Eph. 2.10)? Talk with a prayer partner about this question.*

## 2 Sin and God's Covenant

*Read and meditate on Genesis 3, 4, 6, and 8.15-22.*

The entrance of sin into creation caused enormous disruption. The readings for today should help us understand the great calamity of sin and its severity in the eyes of God. Perhaps they will help us to hate sin, especially when we find it in our own lives.

*For reflection*

1. Adam and Eve ushered sin into the world by preferring the lies of the serpent to the revealed Word of God. Instead of resting in God's Word, they relied on their own feelings and thoughts about what would be best for them. The results of trying to live this way are disastrous in the extreme. How many ways did sin affect Adam and Eve? How did it affect their attitudes toward themselves, one another, and God? Is this what God intended?
2. Sin didn't just affect Adam and Eve. Sin is a force for rebellion, corruption, and destruction that pervades the entire creation, turning the goodness of God to blight, wickedness, and death. How many different ways can you see this in chapter 3?
3. Genesis 3.15 introduces the third unifying thread of Scripture. God was not content to leave His people or the creation with the consequences of human folly, under the oppression of sin. What does God promise here? What will be the effect of this? Why was it so important that God attack the *very heart of the problem of sin* in this first great promise of redemption?
4. What do we learn about God's attitude toward sin from the punishment of Cain and the story of the flood? How does sin affect the glory of God and His plan for His people? How can you see that the ark of Noah represented a validating and unfolding of the promise of God in Genesis 3.15?
5. What do we learn about sin from Genesis 4.16-26 and 6.1-5 about the effects of sin on human life and culture? Does sin become more virulent when it becomes established in cultural forms? Explain.

*Summary*

All creation is affected by the sin of Adam and Eve, even to this day. But God was not content to allow sin and the serpent to have the last word. From the beginning, therefore, God pointed His faithful people forward in time to a coming day of redemption, in which the one who caused the problem of the fall would be crushed and the people of God would be ushered by God's grace through the corruption and storms of sin into a new day of redemption. How can you see the intertwining of the unifying threads of Scripture – God's glory, His people, and His work of redemption – in these early chapters of Genesis?

*Closing Prayer*

Blessed *is he whose* transgression *is* forgiven,  
*Whose* sin *is* covered.

Blessed *is* the man to whom the LORD does not impute iniquity,  
And in whose spirit *there is* no deceit.  
When I kept silent, my bones grew old

Through my groaning all the day long.  
For day and night Your hand was heavy upon me;  
My vitality was turned into the drought of summer. *Selah*  
I acknowledged my sin to You,  
And my iniquity I have not hidden.  
I said, "I will confess my transgressions to the LORD,"  
And You forgave the iniquity of my sin. *Selah*  
For this cause everyone who is godly shall pray to You  
In a time when You may be found;  
Surely in a flood of great waters  
They shall not come near him.  
You *are* my hiding place;  
You shall preserve me from trouble;  
You shall surround me with songs of deliverance. *Selah*

Psalm 32.1-7

*Next steps – Preparation: Think of the world represented by your [Personal Mission Field](#). In what ways can you see the corrupting power of sin at work there? According to Romans 12.21, and in the light of Genesis 1.31, what is your calling in this situation? Share your thoughts with a Christian friend.*

### 3 The Promises of God's Covenant

*Read and meditate on Genesis 12-15.*

In the readings for today, God's covenant begins to come into clearer focus. Although it has been in effect from the beginning, and was mentioned in the story of Noah, in these chapters God brings greater clarity and definition to this important aspect of the divine economy.

*For reflection*

1. In Genesis 12.1-3 you should be able to identify six promises God made to Abram. The land God mentions was to be the staging-ground in which Abram and his offspring would begin to realize these promises. What are these promises, and how would you explain each of them? In what ways are these promises not unlike the promise of *life* and *dominion* God held out to Adam and Eve?
2. We notice that, as Abram began seeking the promises of God, he often paused to build an altar and offer sacrifices. Abel had done the same thing. What does this suggest about Abram's understanding of his relationship with God?
3. As we follow Abram in these readings, what do we learn about how God's people are supposed to respond to being chosen, called, and endowed with His promises? In what ways is Abram's response no different from what God expected from Adam and Eve? How would you describe the role of promises in keeping Abram within God's covenant framework?
4. Meditate on Genesis 15.7-17. These verses describe a ceremony common among kings in Abram's day. An agreement was struck, then a path of animal carcasses created. Each party to the agreement would pass between the animals, taking an oath as they did, something like: "Let the same thing happen to whichever of us violates this covenant as you see having happened to these animals." What is the significance of this ceremony? What was God saying about His covenant? About Himself?
5. How can you see that Abram replicates the fall into sin in his life? Why didn't God deal with him in the same way He dealt with the people in Genesis 6.1-5? Does this have something to do with the *nature* of God's covenant? Does being *in* covenant with God accomplish something for us where *sin* is concerned?

*Summary*

We're already beginning to see something of the cyclical and linear aspect of the unfolding of the divine economy, the eternal plan of God for His glory. The *linear* element is historical, while the *cyclical* element is spiritual and existential. How can you see aspects of a *cycle* in God's plan in these chapters? What is being repeated or renewed or restated?

*Closing Prayer*

Oh, give thanks to the LORD!  
Call upon His name;  
Make known His deeds among the peoples!  
Sing to Him, sing psalms to Him;



Talk of all His wondrous works!  
Glory in His holy name;  
Let the hearts of those rejoice who seek the LORD!  
Seek the LORD and His strength;  
Seek His face evermore!  
Remember His marvelous works which He has done,  
His wonders, and the judgments of His mouth,  
O seed of Abraham His servant,  
You children of Jacob, His chosen ones!  
He *is* the LORD our God;  
His judgments *are* in all the earth.  
He remembers His covenant forever,  
The word *which* He commanded, for a thousand generations,  
*The covenant* which He made with Abraham,  
And His oath to Isaac,  
And confirmed it to Jacob for a statute,  
To Israel *as* an everlasting covenant...

Psalm 105.1-10

*Next steps – Transformation: The covenant God made with Abram (Abraham) is an “everlasting covenant” (Ps. 105.10) – the same covenant He has made with us (cf. Rom. 4.9-17). What does it mean to be led and guided in your life by the precious and magnificent promises of God (2 Pet. 1.4)? Talk with a Christian friend about this question.*

## 4 The Covenant Transferred

*Read and meditate on Genesis 18, 21, 22, 26.1-5.*

In this section of the book of Genesis, God brings the promises made to Abraham down to his son, Isaac. The action of Genesis has slowed down considerably from the first 11 chapters. The reason for this is, in part, because God wants us to understand the details of how His covenant unfolds and how grace progresses from one generation to the next.

*For reflection*

1. In what ways is the birth of Isaac a kind of *down payment* or “guarantee” on the promises to Abraham? What would Isaac’s birth have said to Abraham about the *rest* of His promises? Has God made anything like this – a guarantee with us (Eph. 1.13, 14)? What do we learn from Isaac’s birth about how God expects His people to relate to Him?

2. Can you see any growth in Abraham in this section? In what ways? To what should we attribute that growth? What should we learn from this about what it means to be one of the people of God, living in order to bring glory to Him?

3. Genesis 22 is packed with significance in helping us understand God’s covenant and how to live within it. Briefly comment on the role of each of the following, from what we see in this chapter:

- the Word of God:
- the grace of God:
- the response God seeks from His people:
- the relationship between faith and understanding:

4. Comment on the significance of Genesis 26.1-5, 24, 25 with respect to God’s covenant with His people. What do we learn about God from watching Him in these covenantal dealings with His people?

5. How can you see the *cyclical* nature of God’s covenant as it rolls forward into the life of Isaac? Is there any *enlarging* of the covenant with him? Any more clarity to be gained into the *nature* of God’s covenant? Explain.

*Summary*

The continuation of God’s covenant from one generation to the next depends on God and His grace. However, God works through His people, as they believe and obey Him, to bring His promises to them, and to extend His promises *beyond* them to others. How can you see that in this section, and what does this teach you about living within the framework of God’s covenant?

*Closing Prayer*

Give ear, O my people, *to* my law;  
Incline your ears to the words of my mouth.  
I will open my mouth in a parable;  
I will utter dark sayings of old,  
Which we have heard and known,

And our fathers have told us,  
We will not hide *them* from their children,  
Telling to the generation to come the praises of the LORD,  
And His strength and His wonderful works that He has done.  
For He established a testimony in Jacob,  
And appointed a law in Israel,  
Which He commanded our fathers,  
That they should make them known to their children;  
That the generation to come might know *them*,  
The children *who* would be born,  
*That* they may arise and declare *them* to their children,  
That they may set their hope in God,  
And not forget the works of God,  
But keep His commandments...

Psalm 78.1-7

*Next steps – Conversation: What are you learning thus far about the nature of God’s covenant and what it means to lay hold on His promises? Share what you’re learning with a Christian friend, and encourage your friend to begin reading these Scriptorium studies with you.*

## 5 Jacob

*Read and meditate on Genesis 28-32.*

Having obtained his brother's birthright by guile and manipulation, Jacob became the next generation to receive the promises and covenant of God. His story provides us an opportunity to see the glory of God in His continuing faithfulness toward sinful people.

*For reflection*

1. How can you see in Genesis 28.1-4, and 10-15 the continuity of God's covenant from Adam to Jacob? What specific words connect the blessing of Jacob to Adam, Noah, and Abraham?
2. How should we interpret the symbolism of the ladder Jacob saw in his dream? What was the impact of this vision on Jacob? How did Jesus interpret this symbol in John 1.50, 51?
3. As we see him in these chapters, what kind of man was Jacob? How should this encourage us in our relationship with God?
4. How did God help Jacob become a man of true faith? Did Jacob change or grow during the course of these chapters? In what ways? What does Jacob's experience suggest to us about how we should expect to grow in the promises and blessings of God?
5. Jacob wrestled with the angel in order to receive a blessing from him. What did he actually receive? How did Jacob interpret the meaning of this event (v. 30)? What should we learn from Jacob about God, His covenant, and our calling as His people?

*Summary*

In bringing the blessings of His covenant to the world, God uses sinful, imperfect people. He often puts them through trials and trepidations, but He never forsakes those on whom He has set His love. God's patience and faithfulness persist even when His people are struggling through the consequences of their own sin. What's the most encouraging lesson you learn from the story of Jacob?

*Closing Prayer*

I will bless the LORD at all times;  
His praise *shall* continually *be* in my mouth.  
My soul shall make its boast in the LORD;  
The humble shall hear *of it* and be glad.  
Oh, magnify the LORD with me,  
And let us exalt His name together.  
I sought the LORD, and He heard me,  
And delivered me from all my fears.  
They looked to Him and were radiant,  
And their faces were not ashamed.  
This poor man cried out, and the LORD heard *him*,  
And saved him out of all his troubles.  
The angel of the LORD encamps all around those who fear Him,

And delivers them.

Oh, taste and see that the LORD *is* good;

Blessed *is* the man *who* trusts in Him!

Psalm 34.1-8

*Next steps – Conversation: How does your church work to transfer the blessings and promises of God’s covenant to its children? Talk with a church leader about this question. See if you can discover specific ways the promises of God’s covenant are explained to the children of your church.*

## 6 Joseph (1)

*Read and meditate on Genesis 35.9-29, then chapters 37 and 39-41.*

This section begins with God reaffirming His covenant to Jacob. It will end with Jacob pointing toward a far horizon in the development of God's covenant. Joseph's story brings this stage of the unfolding of God's covenant to a close.

*For reflection*

1. In God's words to Jacob (35.9-15), we find guidance in how to think about our place in God's covenant. How far back did God root this affirming of His covenant with Jacob? How does this guide us in thinking about living within God's covenant? How far back must we go to understand it? How far forward should we be looking as we pursue His promises?
2. Joseph seems an unlikely person to play a significant role in the progress of the divine economy. Why?
3. But how can you see that Joseph is a man of faith? What does Joseph's story teach us about how God unfolds His covenant and promises to His people? What is the duty of His people toward God and His Word?
4. In what ways does the story of Joseph represent a partial fulfilling – a down payment – of God's promises to Abraham? What do we learn from this about how God fulfills His promises to His covenant people?
5. Joseph married an Egyptian woman who bore him two sons. These boys would become part of the twelve tribes of Israel. What does this part of Joseph's story suggest about the *scope* of God's covenant? Does He intend to bless only Israel? Explain.

*Summary*

We note that nearly every time God speaks in Genesis, His words are grounded in His covenant. His people are often faithless, self-centered, and foolish. But they are always His people, and He makes sure to remind them of His larger purpose for them. What can we learn from Joseph about being a person of faith, one who keeps his eye on the Lord in every situation?

*Closing Prayer*

He sent a man before them—  
Joseph—*who* was sold as a slave.  
They hurt his feet with fetters,  
He was laid in irons.  
Until the time that his word came to pass,  
The word of the LORD tested him.  
The king sent and released him,  
The ruler of the people let him go free.  
He made him lord of his house,  
And ruler of all his possessions,  
To bind his princes at his pleasure,

And teach his elders wisdom.

Psalm 105.17-22

*Next steps – Transformation: What can we learn from Joseph about trusting in God and His promises in times of trial?*

## 7 Joseph (2)

Read Genesis 42-45, 48-50.

In the conclusion of Joseph's story, we see the unifying threads of Scripture coming together. Moses ties a solid *covenant knot* in this section, before he moves us into the next phase of God's covenant, which begins over 400 years later.

*For reflection*

1. In what ways does the glory of God come to the fore in the story of Joseph? Can you see how Joseph's use of the word "good" (Gen. 50.20) links the end of Genesis to the beginning? Why does God – the Author of Genesis – do this? What does it suggest about God's purposes for creation and His people?
2. What do we learn about the people of God, and how He works to make them His people, from the story of Joseph?
3. Both Joseph and Judah point us forward to God's work of redemption in Jesus. In what ways? Should we expect Moses would have understood this? Still, why does it matter to us?
4. In the book of Genesis, God uses *prophecy* to point His people forward to a day of fulfilled promises. Prophecy is by its very nature vague; however, when it comes to fulfillment, that fulfillment always fits the prophetic word perfectly. Look at the prophecies in Genesis 3.15; 9.26, 27; 12.3; 17.4-6; 49.8-11. Summarize what these prophecies point forward to in the unfolding of God's covenant.
5. God also uses *types* to communicate truth about Himself and His plan for His people. A type is a thing or an event that has meaning in its own right, but that points beyond itself to further meaning yet to be realized. How does each of the following types keep us focused in God's covenant, in the moment of the type and for a time to come:

- the ark of Noah:
- circumcision:
- the sacrifice of Isaac and the ram of provision:
- the actions of Judah in offering himself as a substitute:

*Summary*

In Genesis we saw God's covenant unfold through three stages: with Adam, Noah, and Abraham and the patriarchs. How can you see that this is the same covenant throughout Genesis? In what ways does it *develop*, and why did it need to develop?

*Closing Prayer*

Israel also came into Egypt,  
And Jacob dwelt in the land of Ham.  
He increased His people greatly,  
And made them stronger than their enemies.  
He turned their heart to hate His people,



To deal craftily with His servants.

Psalm 105.23-25

*Next steps – Preparation: God's plan for His people is for good. How should this affect the way we pray at the beginning of each day? The plans we make for our Personal Mission Field (Eph. 2.10)?*

*For reflection or discussion*

1. What seems to have been God's purpose in creating the world, and people to exercise dominion over it?
2. How did the fall into sin affect God's creation? Are the effects of sin too great for God to overcome? Explain.
3. How can we see in God's covenant with Noah that God ultimately intends both salvation for His people and renewal for the creation?
4. Review Genesis 49:8-11. What seems to be the role of this promised King and Kingdom within the unfolding of God's covenant?
5. What have we learned about God's glory in Genesis? About His people? In what ways have we seen Him at work for their redemption? What's the most important insight or lesson you've learned from the study for this week?

*Glory to Glory*

We are transformed into the image of Jesus Christ *from* the glory we encounter in God's Word *to* the way we live for His glory in the world (2 Cor. 3:12-18; 1 Cor. 10:31).

What have you encountered *of* God's glory in our reading and meditations in this week's studies? That is, how has He shown Himself *to* you more clearly?

How do you expect this *experience* of God's glory to help you *live more consistently for* His glory in the daily details of your life?

What have you learned about yourself from this week's study to help you in knowing more of the presence, promise, and power of the Kingdom? To equip you for serving Christ in your [Personal Mission Field](#)?

## The Fellowship of Ailbe

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Thank you.