

The Purpose of the First Eleven Chapters of Genesis

1:1 to 11:29

The first eleven chapters in the book of **Genesis** record those events and circumstances that were necessary for the call of **Abraham**, the patriarchs and the nation of Isra'el in the first place. Human sin had become so severe that it threatened to undo God's good creation. There were several examples of this. After **the Fall (3:1-24)**, **Cain** murdered **his brother Abel (4:1-15)**. **The Flood** came because **every inclination of the thoughts of mankind's heart was only evil all the time (6:5)**. But no matter how widespread sin becomes, **God's** grace preserves a means of saving mankind from the full consequences of sin. The primeval history reached its climax as man prepared to build a monument to **Himself**. This led **the LORD** to say: **nothing they plan to do will be impossible for them (11:6)**. The combination of **the Babel** story with the genealogy of **Shem**, culminating in **Abram**, emphatically makes the point that the call of **Abraham** constitutes the divine response to the human condition, a response of grace channeled through the Hebrew people, an Israelite nation, and a Jewish Savior, **the Seed of the woman (3:15)**, **Christ the Lord**.²²³

There is a sequence of *blessing-sin-grace* that is clearly seen throughout the book of **Genesis**. Abraham, Isaac and Jacob are blessed with promises from **God**, and in spite of their failures, **Elohim** guards **His** promises until they find their fulfillment in the nation of Isra'el.

Nevertheless, the sin problem in **Genesis 1-11** is shown to be worldwide, so that all of us may understand our own personal problem with sin. *None of us are exempt*. But **God's** grace runs like an undercurrent throughout the whole eleven chapters. He always maintains a means of escape. The promise to **Adam and Eve** that their offspring would confront and ultimately conquer the offspring of the serpent is still a reality today. As we travel through the book of **Genesis**, we will learn the means of escape. Through the line of **Shem** and **Terah**, **He** prepared, at long last, for **the Messiah** and **His** triumph over sin and evil. And just as the sin problem is both universal and personal, so is the solution. **The LORD** will pay the price and buy us back through the sacrifice of **His Son, Jesus Christ**. This is not only the solution for the world; it is also the solution for you and me.²²⁴