

97-08-02a

As we prepare to worship together in the study of God's Word this morning, let's begin by going to the Lord in prayer. Father, thank you for all of your many blessings and the many ways that you have provided for us and expressed your character toward us and your faithfulness regardless of the ups and downs in our lives and our attention span and our focus on the reason for which we are here. May you remain faithful and patient and constantly expressing love and the relationship that you have to us as our Heavenly Father.

We thank you for our Savior, Jesus Christ. We thank you for the tremendous opportunities that we have in this life through Him. We thank you for the standing that we have before you that results from His work on our behalf and that is maintained and depends wholly on Him and His character.

We thank you that our relationship with you is eternal and unchangeable because of that fact. And we pray this morning that as we worship and look at the truth of your Word that God the Holy Spirit will give us insight and understanding. We pray that as we embark on this tremendous record of your creative works in history and the initiation of your promises to the human race through the patriarchs and the inception of the nation of Israel that are all contained in this book of Genesis.

We pray that these lessons will not just be historical accounts and give us an understanding of how circumstances came to be but that we will derive the spiritual truth that will nourish our souls and will transform us and equip us through faith for every good work. We ask these things in Jesus' name. Amen.

For our scripture reading this morning, if you'll turn with me to the Psalms. We're going to look at two Psalms. We're starting a new study and so we're going to have a slightly longer scripture reading this morning.

These Psalms both make reference to God's creative work which is of course where Genesis starts off. Let's begin with Psalm 104. One of the things we want to watch for is to see what it is that God wants to communicate to the human race, to the nation of Israel, to us today through the record of his activities that we find in Genesis.

David understood these things. The psalmist here in Psalm 104, perhaps it was David, perhaps another psalmist, that we have that understanding reflected in this Psalm. So that's something to watch for as we read.

Psalm 104 begins, Bless the Lord, O my soul. O Lord my God, you are very great. You are clothed with honor and majesty, who cover yourself with light as with a garment, who stretch out the heavens like a curtain.

He lays the beams of his upper chambers in the waters. He makes the clouds his chariot, who walks on the wings of the wind, who makes his angels spirits, his ministers a frame of fire. You who laid the foundations of the earth, so that it should not be moved forever.

You covered it with the deep as with a garment. The waters stood above the mountains. At your rebuke they fled.

At the voice of your thunder they hastened away. They went up over the mountains, they went down into the valleys, to the place which you founded for them. You have set a boundary that they may not pass over, that they may not return to cover the earth.

He sends the springs into the valleys. They flow among the hills. They give drink to every beast of the field.

The wild donkeys quench their thirst. By them the birds of the heavens have their home. They sing among the branches.

He waters the hills from his upper chambers. The earth is satisfied with the fruit of your works. He causes the grass to grow for the cattle, and vegetation for the service of man, that he may bring forth food from the earth, and wine that makes glad the heart of man, oil to make his face shine, and bread which strengthens man's heart.

The trees of the Lord are full of sap. The cedars of Lebanon which he planted, where the birds make their nests. The stork has her home in the fir trees.

The high hills are for the wild goats. The cliffs are a refuge for the rock badgers. He appointed the moon for seasons.

The sun knows it's going down. You make darkness and it is night. In which all the beasts of the forest creep about.

The young lions roar after their prey and seek their food from God. When the sun rises they gather together and lie down in their dens. Man goes out to his work and to his labor until the evening.

O Lord, how manifold are your works. In wisdom you have made them all. The earth is full of your possessions.

This great and wide sea in which are innumerable teeming things, living things both small and great. There the ships sail about. There is that leviathan which you have made to play there.

These all wait for you that you may give them their food in due season. What you give them they gather in. You open your hand, they are filled with good.

You hide your face, they are troubled. You take away their death, they die and return to

their dust. You send forth your spirit, they are created.

And you renew the face of the earth. May the glory of the Lord endure forever. May the Lord rejoice in his works.

He looks on the earth and it trembles. He touches the hills and they smoke. I will sing to the Lord as long as I live.

I will sing praise to my God while I have my being. May my meditation be sweet to him. I will be glad in the Lord.

May sinners be consumed from the earth and the wicked be no more. Bless the Lord, O my soul. Praise the Lord.

If you look back to just a page or two previously to Psalm 102, Hear my prayer, O Lord, and let my cry come to you. Do not hide your face from me in the day of my trouble. Incline your ear to me in that day that I call.

Answer me speedily. One of the things that we saw there in Psalm 104 is the contrast between God's creative and renewing works in creation and the destructive effects of sin and of man's failure. Because of sin, animal life dies.

Vegetation perishes. Death entered the world because of man's sin. And it is God who renews and who ensures reproduction and restoration.

Contact with God brings about life. Separation from God brings about death. And one of the major themes that we're going to see in Genesis is that theme, that the contrast between fellowship with God, union with God, contact with God versus separation and alienation from God and what those effects are.

It's a thread that begins in the very first few verses of Genesis and extends throughout the Scriptures. And you see that again here in Psalm 102. Here is the psalmist.

This psalm is subtitled, A Prayer of the Afflicted, when he is overwhelmed and pours out his complaint before the Lord. All of us have been in that place. And we come to that place because of sin, because of the fall, because of the events that we're going to study in the first few chapters of Genesis and all of the domino effect that has trickled down from there.

And the presence of God is the issue. Where does restoration and renewal and life come from? Well, the psalmist understands this, and so he goes to God when he finds himself in this place of affliction. Hear my prayer, O Lord, and let my cry come to you.

Do not hide your face from me in the day of my trouble. Incline your ear to me in the day that I call. Answer me speedily.

For my days are consumed like smoke, and my bones are burned like a hearth. My heart is stricken and withered like grass, so that I forget to eat my bread. Because of the sound of my groaning, my bones cling to my skin.

I am like a pelican of the wilderness. I am like an owl of the desert. I lie awake and am like a sparrow alone on the housetop.

My enemies reproach me all the day long. Those who deride me swear an oath against me. For I have eaten ashes like bread and mingled my drink with weeping.

Because of your indignation and your wrath, for you have lifted me up and cast me away. My days are like a shadow that lengthens, and I wither away like grass. But you, O Lord, shall endure forever.

In the remembrance of your name to all generations, you will arise and have mercy on Zion. For the time to favor her, yes, the set time, has come. For your servants take pleasure in her stones and show favor to her dust.

So the nations shall fear the name of the Lord and all the kings of the earth. Your glory. For the Lord shall build up Zion.

He shall appear in his glory. He shall regard the prayer of the destitute and shall not despise their prayer. This will be written for the generation to come, that a people yet to be created may praise the Lord.

For he looked down from the height of his sanctuary. From heaven the Lord viewed the earth to hear the groaning of the prisoner, to release those appointed to death, to declare the name of the Lord in Zion and his praise in Jerusalem. Then the peoples were gathered together in the kingdoms to serve the Lord.

He weakened my strength in the way. He shortened my days. I said, O my God, do not take me away in the midst of my days.

Your years are throughout all generations. Of old you laid the foundations of the earth, and the heavens are the work of your hands. They will perish, but you will endure.

Yes, they will all grow old like a garment. Like a cloak you will change them, and they will be changed. But you are the same, and your years will have no end.

The children of your servants will continue, and their descendants will be established before you. It's another wonderful reminder of the purpose for creation. It's like a garment.

We have the saying, clothes make the man, or the man makes the clothes, or whatever. Apparel and what people wear is often a reflection of their personality and even their character. The way people present themselves communicates something about them.

And that's what God has done in creation, is to present himself to us. And there's going to come a time when he will change that garment. This is his means of self-expression now.

But that will pass away, and there will be new and even greater ways in which God will express his character and his personality to us. But God himself will remain the same. And so to see God's self-expression, his communication of himself to us, is another reason that we have the book of Genesis, the record of creation, and the record of the initiation of the problem that separates us from God, and the steps that God has taken to demonstrate his compassion and his love in that circumstance.

So these are many, many passages we could go to. These are two psalms that are a wonderful reassurance to us of the faithfulness of God and his desire to restore and renew. He allows failure, he allowed sin to enter the universe, and he works it together for good.

There is a reason why he allows it. One of the great questions in history, in almost every culture, in almost every generation of history, people have asked the question, why is there suffering? Why is there sin? Why are there these terrible things that happen? If there is a God, how could he allow this? In the last several decades, Israel, the Jews, have asked, how could God have permitted the Holocaust? Many Jews have decided that there must not be anything to the Old Testament, which they consider to be their Bible, because how could God have allowed the Holocaust? It leaves them puzzled and confused. And there is a reason.

Many of us as believers look around and say, you look at the famines in Afghanistan and the slaughter in Cambodia and many of the terrible things that happen around the world, which we see through the media, and we wonder, what is God's purpose in allowing this? I asked myself that question on strange things. I happened to see one of the magazine shows on TV, and there was a Siamese twin show going on. And I asked myself, in all of the purposes of God, and this may seem like a trivial thing, but it made me stop and think, why does God allow deformity? Why does God allow strange and bizarre things to take place like Siamese twins? These men were basically joined at the chest, and it was just a very puzzling existence that these types of things have.

What is God's purpose? That's what the book of Genesis exists to tell us. We, in this day and in this age, we're very scientific. We have lots of technology.

We have archaeology and astronomy and so forth, and we seek to answer the puzzling questions of origins of the universe and so forth. And we come to Genesis with those questions in our mind. How did the earth get here? How old is the earth? How do we explain fossils and geological formations and the apparent age of the universe? How do we reconcile that with the biblical account? And we look to Genesis, and we examine it under the magnifying glass to try to find a way to reconcile science and God's inspired

communication to us.

But the real question, and we will address those as well, but the real fundamental question that Genesis is written to answer is centered on God himself, the person of God, and his purpose for the human race. Why does the universe even exist? What is God's purpose in allowing it to fall into corruption? Why does God create creatures knowing in his omniscience and in his foreknowledge that they're going to sin, that they're going to rebel, and that as a result of that, ultimately some of them will be consigned to eternal damnation? This is a question that disturbs many of us as believers. God knowingly creates creatures that he's going to have to eternally punish.

How can he do that? Why does he do that? Genesis answers that question. Genesis also gives us a context. It gives us a beginning point.

Everyone is concerned with the question of origins. Many people who reach their teen years or their early adulthood and have been adopted want to go back and find their birth parents. It's a quest for origins.

It's a quest for identity. It's a quest for context. Who am I? Why am I here? Without a relationship with God, this seems to be the holy grail.

People who feel the emptiness that comes from lack of relationship with God often decide that that must be because they don't know who they really are. So they embark on a genealogical quest. There's nothing intrinsically wrong with that, but if the reason is to try to find meaning and purpose in one's life by going back and tracing roots.

People can do this who know that they're in their birth family and so forth. But people go back and trace their genealogy and try to find the trendy term is validation by seeing where they have come from and that they're part of the great fabric of their family and so forth. That's an innate and a natural instinct that we have to place ourselves in some sort of context.

Well, God understands that, and it is necessary to understand what our context really is. That's another purpose for the book of Genesis. Who was the original audience for this book? Who were the first people to hear the contents of Genesis as a whole? It was the nation of Israel as they came out of Egypt.

Abraham, of course, didn't have a copy of Genesis since it had not been finished yet. Noah didn't have a copy. Joseph did not have a copy.

They may have had access to some of the sources that Moses drew upon, family records and so forth, which we'll talk about here shortly. But the book in its finished form, taking its place as the first of the five books of Moses, the Pentateuch, if you want to include Joshua as the natural extension from Deuteronomy, you have the Hexateuch or the six books. What do those books do for the nation of Israel? They do two primary things, and

Genesis, standing at the head of that body of work, starts this out.

The two things that these books and that Genesis in particular accomplish are, first of all, to define the problem, to define the constants and the variables of human existence. There is a God. He is one God.

He is supreme. He is the creator of everything. He is the source from which everything that we know, everything we see, everything that we experience originated.

He is not an abstract. He's not a principle. He's not an impersonal force.

He is a personal, concrete, though infinite, person and personality. He has a purpose in what he does. He has initiated this series of events and this sequence of circumstance that we perceive as human history.

We'll see in a minute how important that is. We sort of take that for granted, but this was kind of a blockbuster when it came out in the ancient world. When you compare it to some of the other literature that was then in existence, this was quite a novel sort of revelation.

The second thing that this does is not only define the problem, define reality for human beings in the universe and the problem of sin, but it also shows God's continued concern and God's provision of a solution for that problem. Specifically, the relationship that God is going to have with man through promise. As soon as the problem arises in the garden, you have the effects of that fall, the effects of that alienation and that separation, the barrier that goes up that we studied Friday night between God and man.

There is cursing associated with that interruption of relationship and fellowship with God. And God details the consequences, which are going to be far-reaching and long-lasting and will affect far more than just man himself. The ground is cursed.

The planet is cursed. The universe that surrounds us is off kilter as a result of our sin. But along with that comes promise.

And even as God pronounces the consequences, the curses that arise out of disobedience and rebellion against God and His standards and His commands, God includes a promise. And even as there is this warfare between man and the serpent, the promise is that the serpent's head will be bruised. It does not come without a price.

The heel will be bruised. There is going to be a cost to overcome the serpent, but it's a promise. His head is going to be bruised.

And a head bruise is a fatal wound. And so even in the midst of the curses, we have God's promise. And the story of Genesis is of the promise of God, of the nature of fulfillment of those promises.

It depends on God, not on man. We're going to see some fascinating things as we go through the record of the patriarchs. So we embark this morning on a study of this fascinating and very important book, the first book of the Pentateuch, the first book of the Old Testament, the first book of the Bible, the first and perhaps greatest of the inspired written records that God has placed before us.

The title of this book, Genesis, comes from the early translations out of Hebrew into Greek and Latin. Its title in the Hebrew canon, Hebrew books, the books of the Old Testament, were typically referred to by their first word or their first phrase. The first word in Genesis, the first word in the entire inspired record of God, is bereshit, B-E-R-E-S-H-I-T.

The prefix B there is the Hebrew preposition for in. Reshit is a derivative of the word rosh. Rosh in Hebrew, R-O-S-H, means head.

And bereshit, head, has the idea of beginning, starting place, the head of a river, the origin of it. And so this means in the beginning. And this was the Hebrew word for the book.

They would say, well, let's open the scroll of bereshit. And they would read from Genesis. Later on, when this was translated into Greek and into Latin, you have your words for Genesis.

We have the word Genesis used for other things besides this book. Like many of the loan words that we have gotten from the Romance languages, that's where our English title for this book came from. That's its title.

The date of composition, when we start a book, we try to figure out, well, when did this book come into being? And that's tied inextricably with the authorship of the book. Scripture universally attributes the first five books to Moses. Jesus Christ himself attributed these to Moses, and that pretty much ends the discussion in my mind.

The question of authorship, especially in Genesis, has become notorious in the last 150 years. It was unquestioned and wasn't given much thought until the mid-1800s with the work of Wellhausen and some of the other film-critical scholarship. What film criticism does is to look at a book, specifically a book of the Bible, and try to dissect it based on its form, its qualities as a piece of literature, as a composition.

A feature of Genesis in particular, which had been noted for many centuries, was that God is referred to by two different names. In some passages, in some sections of the book, he is referred to as Yahweh, the Tetragrammaton, Y-H-W-H, which came over through the Germans, who can't say Y and can't say W. In German, a Y becomes a J, and in German, a W becomes a V. Just watch Colonel Klink on Hogan's Heroes or something, and you'll hear that take place. So Yahweh, through that and a mix-up of vowels,

became Jehovah.

The word Jehovah is an amalgam of the J-H-V-H from German scholarship and the vowel points from the noun Adonai, because the scribes and priests and readers of Scripture would not pronounce the name of God. They would not say Yahweh. It was considered too holy to corrupt by speaking it from a human mouth.

And so whenever they encountered the Tetragrammaton in the text, they would substitute the word Adonai, which is translated Lord, in English. Well, when they wrote the Hebrew text down, initially it was only written in consonants. When you found the Tetragrammaton, you would find Y-H-W-H.

In fact, they considered that name so holy that as the Hebrew script changed over the centuries from the Paleo-Hebrew, you know, paleontology means the study of really old things, well, Paleo-Hebrew is the really old Hebrew, the Hebrew that you find on the Salome inscription that I have in here, that cast copy of what they found inside the tunnel that Hezekiah built. That's the real old Hebrew script. That's not what we have in a copy of the Hebrew text today.

During the Babylonian captivity when Aramaic, which is a close cousin of Hebrew, came into use, even for the copies of the Scriptures, the Aramaic square script began to be used. And it's different. It's a more modern alphabet than the Paleo-Hebrew alphabet that Moses and David wrote in.

And so along about 600, 500 B.C., the shape of the letters in which the text of the Old Testament was recorded changed from the Paleo-Hebrew to the square script. We don't have any Scripture texts in the Paleo-Hebrew. All of our texts, as old as they go, the oldest ones we have are the Dead Sea Scrolls, but those are pretty much all written in the square Aramaic script, except for one word, and that word is the Tetragrammaton, Yahweh.

They considered that to be such a holy name and a holy word that they didn't even feel comfortable changing the alphabet. And so you'll be reading along in one of these ancient manuscripts in the square Aramaic script, which is still recording the Hebrew words, but when you get to God's name, Yahweh, it will be in the original four letters of the Paleo-Hebrew. They would write that in ink and then cover it with blotter paper so that no dust would get trapped in the ink.

That's how careful and how reverent the scribes were in recording the name of God. And that name is used in Genesis in many passages. In other passages, a different name for God occurs.

And we'll see these and note them as we translate through the first several sections of the book. And that's the word Elohim. El is the primitive root, E-L.

This was also, by the way, the name of the supreme god of the Canaanite pantheon. Even today, the Allah that is worshipped in Islam and so forth, Allah, is derived from this very old primitive root, El. But in Hebrew, very rarely, once in a while, God will refer to himself as El.

But most of the time, he is Elohim. And if you know a little bit about Hebrew, you know that that I-M on the end is a plural. Shemaim is the word for heavens, and it's a plural.

Mayim is the word for seas or oceans. Many of the masculine plurals in Hebrew end in I-M. And God's name, Elohim, is a plural.

And what that plural means has been interpreted in various ways. As I mentioned, when talking about the possibility of death for partaking of the tree of good and evil, God said, In the day that thou eatest thereof, thou shalt surely die. Well, that King James translation, surely die, comes from the doubling of the Hebrew verb for death.

It's in the participle form and in a regular future tense there. And the idea is that by doubling that word, by making two of those words, that is great emphasis. It stands out.

It's like underlining in English. They didn't do underlining in the spoken word, and so they would double the word. A plural is a doubling of a noun, where here you have a doubling of a verb by duplicating the verb.

So it is a means of emphasis. We also have the plural of majesty, something that has come down even in English when the Queen speaks and she says, We are not amused. She's talking about herself, but the plural separates her and elevates her as royalty.

And all of these ideas, including the Trinity, the existence of the Father, the Son, and the Spirit in the Godhead, are all wrapped up in this second term for God, Elohim, E-L-O-H-I-M. Well, observers of the Hebrew text notice that in some passages, God was referred to as Yahweh, and in others as Elohim. Wellhausen, the foremost proponent of this in the last century, decided that the editor or pseudo-author of Genesis had actually incorporated two earlier accounts, one of which used the word Yahweh and the other which used the word Elohim.

So he redacted or edited these two texts together and blended them into the book of Genesis. And so this was the idea of source criticism or form criticism. Based on the form, we could try to weed out the sources and then deal with these independently.

Ultimately, they discerned four or more sources in the Pentateuch, three sources in Genesis, and they referred to these by letters. J is the Yahwist. Again, a lot of this happened in German scholarship, so J was used for Yahweh, and the J source is the one who uses the term Yahweh for God.

The E source is the one who used Elohim to refer to God. So you have J and E, and they

go through, and you cannot believe, you literally cannot believe the amount of literature that has been devoted to nothing more than trying to figure out which passages are J passages and which passages are E passages. I see no productive fruit that has ever come out of this, but it has occupied scholars for 150 years, and they've pretty well come to a consensus on which are J and which are E passages.

In addition, in the Pentateuch, believing that it was written late, around the time of the United Monarchy at the earliest, under David and Solomon, and that some of the later, especially the law portions and the duties of the priests and so forth that are in Leviticus and Deuteronomy and so forth, they felt like this was actually written after the days of David, after the days of Solomon, when Israel was in captivity. You have the account of Josiah, and when they return and they find the scroll in the temple, they unroll it and read it, and they realize that they've fallen down on the job. Well, in the minds of these scholars, somebody wrote it and planted it, and then said, oh, we found the scroll of the law and read it, which is absurd, but it makes sense to them.

And so they've seen two more sources. One called D is the Deuteronomist, and this is the individual who wrote the book of Deuteronomy, the legal code, somebody who was concerned with good order and discipline and wanted to make the rules and wrote a book of rules, like you find in Deuteronomy. And then another source, a fourth source, designated P, which is the priestly source, and all of the things that tend to promote the priesthood and worship and dependence upon tabernacle or temple worship and so forth, these all came from the priestly source.

And they don't find but three of those sources in Genesis. I mention this only so that if you see a study note or read a commentary that refers to these, you'll have some inkling of what they are. To me, going any further into that would be like going down to the city dump and burrowing through the refuse down there and categorizing it and saying, well, here's paper products and here's tin products and here's glass products and here's plastic products.

And now let's try to find out where these came from and who might have thrown this away. And it's in the dump because it's useless. And I don't see any reason to go through and study it and categorize it.

So a lot of the fruit of scholarship in many of these men are believers who have a funny view of how the Bible came into being and how inspired it is. But any literature, particularly any literature from this century that addresses the first five books of the Bible, you will find references to the Yahwist and the Elohist and these sources and what did they do, this, that, and the other. It's a funny thing because after agonizing over this for over a hundred years and men devoting their life's work to trying to explain and fill this, flesh this all out, in the last 10 or 15 years, they've done some computer analysis on the text and discovered that a lot of it doesn't hold up.

And so now a lot of them are starting to get away from that and saying, you know, after we've worked on this for all these decades, we've discovered it's not really helpful and we've hit a wall and it doesn't really seem to lead anywhere. And so now going back and saying, you know, I think really the answer to understanding these passages is to take a literary approach. And so now they're going to analyze the Bible as literature and this sort of thing.

So we're off on another tangent. We need to look at this book, as every other book in the Bible, as the inspired, inerrant word of God. It has a purpose.

It doesn't really matter to me if God dictated this to Moses, whispered every word of it into his ear, the genealogies, the dates, the lifespans, the events, or as I believe and as we will see the evidence for, Moses incorporated some written records, some family records that came into his possession and that he had a unique opportunity to draw upon to write this. Anybody who writes anything relative to history typically draws on sources and in drawing on that and weaving it together creates a fabric of his own. Anyone who manufactures fabric starts out with thread and that thread comes from somewhere, but the fabric becomes uniquely the product of the person that created it.

And there's nothing bad about saying, well, you know, you can't really call that your own because you didn't weave the thread. Well, Moses used what God put into his hands and under the direction of the Holy Spirit produced this very important account of not only creation but the patriarchs. A final observation we'll make here before we take our break is we tend to think of Genesis, when we think of Genesis, we immediately think of creation, we think of the first several chapters.

And if you think about the length of Genesis, how many chapters does Genesis have? This is a question we should be able to answer. How many chapters does Genesis have? Fifty chapters. There are fifty chapters in Genesis.

Look at the, we've already seen the first words in Genesis, in the beginning, God created. Look at the very last words of Genesis, in a coffin in Egypt. Those are the last words of Genesis.

We start with God, with his creative, divine, powerful acts of creation and life-giving. We end with man in a coffin in Egypt. That brackets and really expresses one of the major themes of this book, the difference between God and man apart from God.

I'm reminded of this when I look around at the way grass grows, at the way mold and fungus grow. Isn't it interesting that even when a volcanic island forms out in the middle of the ocean, it's only a few days before you start to see sprigs of plant life. A bird will fly over and seeds and a little bit of fertilizer will be dropped there and before you know it, there's life.

Moss and fungus and mold grow despite our best efforts to keep them away. There is an inherent vitality in life. It springs back.

It endures adversity. And that is an ongoing momentum that comes from the spoken word of God. God said, let there be, and there was.

God said, let it reproduce after its kind. And those words that were spoken so many centuries and so many millennia ago still drive life on this planet, even under the curse, even after all of the dismal effects of sin and the fall of man. It doesn't undo the work of God.

The work of God has a divine power and a divine vitality that cannot be overcome by anything that we do. And this written, inspired record teaches us about that. It shows us the nature of God, the inherent fruitfulness and overflowing bounty that is a part of God and his creation, and the destructive, corrosive, degenerative effects that take place when God's creation departs from him, disconnects from him, separates from him.

Not only does it show us that contrast, but it also shows the remedy, that there is no failure too great for God, for God's plan. There's no failure that can thwart God's purpose. There's no sin that can outmaneuver God and the ultimate fulfillment of his agenda.

And it should fill us with great hope and great confidence because we have an eternal connection to God. We are no longer separate. We are no longer alienated from the life of God.

And because we have that connection, and because we have divine promises, and because we have divine power attached to us, we are going to rule and reign in life and in the future just the way that God's ultimate purposes and promises are going to be accomplished. It depends on God. It flows through that connection that we have with God.

That's going to be explained and documented in this book. It's a terrific, motivating study of the nature and the character of God and his purpose. We're going to pause and take our break, and when we come back, without any further ado, we're going to begin with Genesis 1.