**The One Year Study Bible - Study Notes**

**JANUARY 1**

**Daily Readings — Genesis 1:1-2:25 | Matthew 1:1-2:12 | Psalm 1:1-6 | Proverbs 1:1-6**

**Old Testament Study — Genesis 1:26**

In what ways are we made in God’s image? God has no physical body, so he obviously did not create us exactly like himself. Some think that our reason, creativity, speech, or self-determination is the image of God. We will never be totally like God because he is our supreme Creator. But we embody his character when we exhibit love, patience, forgiveness, kindness, and faithfulness.

If humans are made in God’s image and share many of his characteristics, then we clearly have incredible worth. Often people determine worth based on possessions, achievements, physical attractiveness, or public acclaim. But God does not base our worth on those things. Instead, our worth is based on being made in God’s image. This is great encouragement to everyone. You are valuable because you bear God’s image. Knowing that you are a person of worth helps you love God, know him personally, and serve others around you.

**New Testament Study — Matthew 1:1-17**

In Matthew’s genealogy, we meet 46 people whose lifetimes total 2,000 years. All of them were ancestors of Jesus, but they were remarkably diverse in personality, spirituality, and experience. Some were heroes of faith — like Abraham, Isaac, Ruth, and David. Some had shady reputations — like Rahab and Tamar. Many were very ordinary — like Hezron, Ram, Nahshon, and Akim. And others were evil — like Manasseh and Abijah.

God’s work in history is not dependant on human successes or limited by human failures or sin. He often works through ordinary people. Just as God used all kinds of people to bring his Son into the world, he uses all kinds today to accomplish his will. And God invites you to be a part of his work, blessing people, walking through life with them, and caring for the world he created.

**Further Study: What does the Bible tell us about creation?**

The creation account in Genesis is foundational to the message of the entire Bible, not just of Genesis or the Pentateuch. Understanding the early chapters of Genesis is thus crucial to forming a biblical worldview.

Genesis 1-2 deals with fundamental questions: Who created the world, and for what purpose? Why is the world in its present condition? Genesis answers these questions. Genesis taught Israel that the one true God created all things and has absolute authority over them. For those reasons, he alone is worthy of worship. In both Egypt and Canaan, the people of Israel were surrounded by worship of things other than God. Without Genesis, Israel would unknowingly make the same mistakes.

Every worldview tries to explain where the world came from, what is wrong with the world, and how it can be set right again. The creation account in Genesis teaches that when God made the world, it was “very good!” (Genesis 1:31). Through creation, God turned disorder into restful order and emptiness into the fullness of abundant life. In this environment, humans enjoyed unbroken fellowship with their Creator until their rebellion severed that fellowship and implanted evil in human hearts. The world’s evil does not come from some defect in creation. Rather, God put the world under a curse because of human rebellion.

**JANUARY 2**

**Daily Readings — Genesis 3:1-4:26 | Matthew 2:13-3:6 | Psalm 2:1-12 | Proverbs 1:7-9**

**Old Testament Study — Genesis 3:11-13**

Why would God place a tree in the garden and then forbid Adam and Eve to eat from it (Genesis 2:16-17)? God wanted Adam and Eve to obey, but God gave them the freedom to choose. They did not understand God’s reason for his command, so they chose to act in another way that seemed better to them. Without their freedom to choose, Adam and Eve would have been like prisoners, and their obedience would have been hollow. The two trees provided an exercise in choice, with rewards for choosing to obey and sad consequences for choosing to disobey. It became a matter of the will.

All of God’s commands are for our own good, but we may not always understand his reason for them. Sometimes trusting God means obeying him without clearly knowing why. In these times, our trust is in God’s wisdom and love, not in our own understanding (Proverbs 3:5). People who trust God will obey him because he asks them to, whether or not they understand why he commands it. When you are faced with choices like this, choose to trust God’s goodness, and then work out your trust by obeying him.

**New Testament Study — Matthew 2:13**

This was the second dream or vision that Joseph received from God. Joseph’s first dream revealed that Mary’s child would be the Messiah (Matthew 1:20-21). His second dream told him how to protect the child’s life. Although Joseph was not Jesus’ natural father, he was Jesus’ legal father and was responsible for his safety and well-being. In all this, Joseph remained receptive to God’s guidance, and he obeyed it faithfully. Divine guidance comes only to prepared hearts. Joseph’s heart was ready to hear from God and ready to respond in faith to what he heard.

**Further Study: What is original sin?**

Genesis 3:1-24 describes how human moral innocence collapsed through rebellion. What God declared as “very good” (Genesis 1:31) was no longer completely so. Man and woman ate the fruit that promised knowledge of good and evil and thus broke God’s command. Worse, they tried to become like God and thus fell from their sinless state. Alienated from God, one another, and creation, they also became subject to death.

The term “original sin” denotes sin’s complete, universal infiltration into individual lives and human society as a result of human rebellion. When the first man and woman ate the fruit in disobedience to God, they forfeited their own innocence and that of their children, the entire human race (Romans 5:12-14; 1 Corinthians 15:21-22). All humans are “fallen”, born in sin, predisposed to sin (Genesis 8:21; Psalm 51:5), and awaiting death. As people yield to their inherited predisposition to sin, they become responsible for their own wrongdoing (Ecclesiastes 7:20; Romans 3:23)

The first man, Adam, introduced sin, but the “second Adam”, Jesus Christ, is sin’s antidote (2 Corinthians 5:21). When Christ died as Redeemer, he made God’s salvation from sin available to all (John 3:16; Romans 1:16).

**JANUARY 3**

**Daily Readings — Genesis 5:1-7:24 | Matthew 3:7-4:11 | Psalm 3:1-8 | Proverbs 1:10-19**

**Old Testament Study — Genesis 7:16**

Many have wondered how this animal kingdom roundup happened. Did Noah and his sons spend years collecting all the animals? In reality, the creation, along with Noah, was doing just as God had commanded. There seemed to be no problem gathering the animals — God took care of those details while Noah faithfully built the boat.

Othen we do just the opposite of Noah. We worry about details over which we have no control, but we neglect specific areas that we should be working on. Worrying about the details distracts us from what we should really be focusing on — things like our attitudes, relationships, and responsibilities. Like Noah, concentrate on what God has given you to do, and leave the rest to God.

**New Testament Study — Matthew 3:9-10**

Just as a fruit tree is expected to bear fruit, God’s people should produce good deeds. This includes serving others, resolving conflict, confronting sin, and faithfully doing our everyday jobs. God has no use for people who call themselves Christians but live for themselves, stir up trouble, or avoid their responsibilities. Like many people in John’s day who were God’s people in name only, we are of no value if we are Christians in name only. If others never see the fruitfulness of our faith, we may not be God’s people at all.

**Further Study: Why did God decide to judge mankind with a flood?**

God gave humans the commission of procreating and caring for the world (Genesis 1:28). Instead, murder and violence multiplied with humanity’s spiritual wickedness, resulting in a corrupt world that required cleansing.

The purpose of the flood was to enact God’s global cleansing and retribution against evildoers. Retribution means “giving what is due” and usually refers to repayment for wrongdoing. Retribution is motivated by the conviction that moral order is woven into the fabric of the world and must be maintained or restored.

God maintains moral order by administering justice, punishing wickedness, and rewarding right behavior. Since God oversees the world, it is never entirely overwhelmed by moral chaos; God holds people accountable for what they do. The judgement and exile of Adam and Eve, Cain’s sentence and blood-revenge, and the worldwide flood and annihilation are Old Testament examples of God’s retribution. They reveal a sovereign God who exacts just punishment because he has good intentions for the world (Deuteronomy 30:15-20).

Retribution is an application of God’s righteousness; it purifies the world for his Kingdom of peace. Through retribution, the divine King proclaims his universal rule and exercises his justice on all who reject his rule or defy his commands (Deuteronomy 7:10; Micah 5:15; Thessalonians 1:5-6).

**JANUARY 4**

**Daily Readings — Genesis 8:1-10:32 | Matthew 4:12-25 | Psalm 4:1-8 | Proverbs 1:20-23**

**Old Testament Study — Genesis 8:21-22**

Noah and his family were delivered into an opportunity to start over. This will not be the last time God does this. Countless times throughout the Bible we see God showing men and women his love and patience in order to save them. Although he realizes their hearts are evil, he continues trying to reach them. When we sin or fall away from God, we deserve God’s judgment, which would destroy us. But God has promised never again to destroy everything on earth until the day when Christ returns to judge evil and destroy it forever.

Now every change of season, every new day, reminds us of his solemn promise. But they’re also joyous reminders of God’s long-lasting patience. “He does not want anyone to be destroyed, but he wants everyone to repent” (2 Peter 3:9). Let each new day of God’s grace remind you to repent and rejoice in God’s patient love.

**New Testament Study — Matthew 4:17, 23-24**

Jesus started his ministry with the same message people had heard from John the Baptist: “Repent of your sins and return to God, for the Kingdom of Heaven is near”. Jesus preached the gospel — the Good News — to everyone who wanted to hear it. The Good News is that the Kingdom of Heaven has come, that God is with us, and that he cares for us. God can heal us, not just physically but spiritually as well. There's no sin or problem too great or too small for him to handle. Jesus’ words were good news because they offered freedom, hope, peace of heart, and eternal life with God. The message is the same today as when Jesus and John gave it. Turning to God means turning away from ourselves, our self-centeredness, and independence. It means turning over our lives to God’s direction and control. What are you facing that you can submit to God’s guidance?

**Further Study: What was God’s covenant with Noah?**

The first explicit reference to a covenant in scripture occurs after the flood (Genesis 9:17). Covenant (Hebrew *berith*) means “bond”: A covenant is a binding relationship rooted in a commitment that includes promises and obligations. Whether between individuals, whole nations, or God and humans, the covenant relationship calls for faithfulness and makes peace and harmony possible.

Here God took the initiative to bind himself again to human beings and to the whole creation despite human faithlessness. When God charged Noah to build an ark to escape the deluge, he also promised to establish a covenant with him (Genesis 6:13-18). The corruption and violence of the human race had provoked God’s anger but his gracious favor remained with Noah (Genesis 6:8, 11, 13). Through this covenant God guaranteed that he would maintain a relationship with one family even as other divine-human relationships were being severed. God’s covenant promise to Noah came with his command to build a large boat (Genesis 6:14). Noah’s receipt of the covenant blessing depended on his obedience to this divine command (Genesis 6:22; 7:5).

When Noah made an offering to God after the flood, God elaborated on his covenant with humans and with all living creatures. God promised never again to send such a flood as judgment on the world.