




The First 40 Days

Seek God and Restore Everything

A 40-Day Journey with Glenn Beck

STUDIES 1-5

How to Use This Book

- Set aside 30-45 minutes a day for the next 40 days to complete these studies.
- When you see this symbol , that means it's time to stop where you are, pick up your Bible and read the passage.

For example:

 **Matthew 1**

- Reading from a physical Bible is preferable. But you can also read or listen online at Biblegateway.com, or wherever you access your digital Bible.
- At the end of each study are questions, challenges, or prompts. This is your opportunity to engage with what you've learned, do your own research, and examine what you believe to be true and why.
- The next five days of studies will be available at Glennbeck.com/First40 on Monday, October 9.

ONE

DUST

After all, the same things that happen to people happen to animals, the very same thing — just as the one dies, so does the other. Yes, their breath is the same; so that humans are no better than animals; since nothing matters, anyway. **They all go to the same place; they all come from dust, and they all return to dust.** Who knows if the spirit of a human being goes upward and the spirit of an animal goes downward into the earth?” So I concluded that there is nothing better for a person to do than take joy in his activities, that that is his allotted portion; for who can enable him to see what will happen after him?

ECCLESIASTES 3:19-22

Our time is characterized by a blurring of the lines between man and machine, good and evil, purposeful and useless.

We are facing existential questions. What does it mean to be human? Who are we? Why are we here? Are we just dust waiting to return to dust again? What should we do with the time we are given?

The forty days of study we are about to embark on will not definitively answer those questions for you. But it will set you on a path to answer those questions for yourself.

The book of Isaiah says, “*Seek The Lord while he may be found. Call on him while he is still nearby.*”

You may be saying, “Can’t God always be found?”

Yes, but only in your lifetime can **you** find him.

Let’s begin our study with who you are.

In the beginning, God formed man from the *dust* of the Earth.

Then The Lord, God, formed a person from the dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, so that he became a living being.

GENESIS 2:7

As a reminder of his earthly beginning, the first human on Earth was named Adam. Adam is derived from the Hebrew word “*adamah*,” which means “earth” or “soil.”

In his very name was a reminder to Adam that, before God breathed life into his nostrils, he was just dust.

The Hebrew word for dust is *aphar*, and it pops up throughout the Bible in a slew of fascinating contexts.

After Adam and Eve ate the forbidden fruit, God said:

You will eat bread by the sweat of your forehead till you return to the ground — for you were taken out of it: **you are dust (*aphar*), and you will return to dust.**

GENESIS 3:19

But the descendants of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob are also compared to dust (*aphar*).

Then suddenly The Lord was standing there next to him; and he said, “I am The Lord, the God of Abraham your father and the God of Isaac. The land on which you are lying I will give to you and to your descendants. **Your descendants will be as numerous as the grains of dust (*aphar*) on the earth.** You will expand to the west and to the east, to the north and to the south. By you and your descendants all the families of the earth will be blessed. Look, I am with you. I will guard you wherever you go, and I will bring you back into this land, because I won’t leave you until I have done what I have promised you.”

GENESIS 28:13-15

With that in mind, the curse that God gave to the serpent in the garden becomes even more fascinating.

The Lord, God, said to the serpent, “Because you have done this, you are cursed more than all livestock and wild animals. You will crawl on your belly and **eat dust** as long as you live. I will put animosity between you and the woman, and between your descendant and her descendant; he will bruise your head, and you will bruise his heel.

GENESIS 3:14

I have always brushed past this verse and assumed “eat dust” is just an idiom for being wretched and lowly. But what if there is more to it? What if the serpent is relegated to eating, in a metaphorical sense, people— a task he is doomed to never accomplish?

But are we just dust? Without God, maybe we are.

The recipe for the first human was:

- Dust
- God’s breath of life

The word “breath” in that verse is “neshamah,” which means “breath,” “life,” and “spirit.”

That means God breathed his spirit of life into Adam, and that is what transformed him from dust to human.

In a world where we are wrestling with what it means to be human, maybe we need to remember the original recipe.

To be human is to be dust **filled with the spirit of God.**

For the next forty days we will draw closer to God by studying His word, and not only studying, but learning how to live it. The word of God is not meant to change our minds, but to change our lives. If you aren't looking to change your life, then this isn't the study for you. But, if you are ready, I invite you to be transformed by the Word—the breath of God. Because without that breath – that spirit – are we really human?

▶ **TOMORROW:** FAMINE OF HEARING

SET YOUR FOCUS

Answer the questions below, and, if you are able, discuss your answers with a friend or group.

Why did you decide to undertake *The First 40 Days*?

What are your goals?

What is motivating you to complete this study?

What potential challenges to completing this study do you foresee?

What in your life are you not yet ready to surrender to God if He asks you to?

TWO

FAMINE OF HEARING

“The time is coming,” says the Lord GOD, “when I will send famine over the land, not a famine of bread or a thirst for water, but of **hearing the words of The Lord**. People will stagger from sea to sea and from north to east, running back and forth, seeking the word of The Lord; but they will not find it. When that time comes, young women and men will faint from thirst.

AMOS 8:11-13

Today’s question:

Are you starving?

Are you more equipped to withstand a famine of food, or a famine of *the hearing of the Word of God*? Messiah Jesus teaches us,

Do not fear those who kill the body but are powerless to kill the soul. Rather, fear him who can destroy both soul and body in hell.

MATTHEW 10:28

It's not literal starvation we should fear but rather being starved of the hearing of the Word of God. Average Americans can access their Bibles from their phones. They can listen to it on Youtube. They can almost undoubtedly get a free Bible through a local congregation. Yet the 2023 State of the Bible Report found that only two-in-five Americans were "Bible users," which they define as individuals who use the Bible three or more times a year. If you think of the Bible as food for the soul, then Americans are wandering through an endless buffet starving to death.

Consider your life. Are you starving?

In the book of Hosea it says,

My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge.

Because you rejected knowledge,

I will also reject you as priest for me.

Because you forgot the law of your God,

I will also forget your children.

HOSEA 4:6

It is a lack of knowledge that destroys both body and soul, but not the kind of knowledge that lives and dies within the confines of our minds. This knowledge walks.

The Hebrew word for "hear" used in Amos 8:11 is "shema." It not only means "hear." It means hear and take to heart and **put into action**.

The word is not confined to an intellectual space, it manifests in what **we do**.

When Amos warns of a famine of hearing, it is not only about *studying* God's word, but *seeing it lived out* in His people. Using this context, consider the words of Paul in Romans 10:17.

"Faith comes through hearing and hearing by the word of God."

Another important Hebrew word is "emunah," which is the word typically translated as "faith."

But it's not just faith, it's *faithfulness*. It is an action-oriented word about reliability and support. In essence, **to have faith is to practice faithfulness**. It is to be someone who is supporting God's mission –someone God can rely on to do His work. Like shema, emunah is a word that implies action.

The German Theologian and courageous anti-Nazi dissident, Dietrich Bonhoeffer, echoes this sentiment in his book, *The Cost of Discipleship*.

He wrote, "For faith is only real when there is obedience, never without it, and faith only becomes faith in the act of obedience."

Look around you. Are people hearing and living the word of God?

Look at yourself. Are you?

Deuteronomy 6:4 is considered the fundamental declaration of faith for believers in the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. The first word is shema–hear.

Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one.

Shema Israel Adonai Eloheinu, Adonai Echad

DEUTERONOMY 6:4

These few words lay out not only the path but how to walk it.

First, **hear** God.

Matthew 14:22-32.

When the disciples saw Jesus walking on the water, they could not believe what they **saw**. Peter **heard** the Messiah tell him to walk on the water, but,

...when he **saw** the wind, he became afraid; and as he began to sink, he yelled, “Lord! Save me!”

MATTHEW 14:30

Peter had clearly **heard** the Messiah’s call, but what he **saw** caused him to stumble.

As it says in Hebrews 11,

Faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.

We **hear** God because if we could **see** him, faith would not be required.

When Jesus said “come,” Peter was supposed to shema– **hear** and **obey**, as a result of his trust.

But he saw the waves.

Peter doubted what he **heard** because of what he **saw**, and as a result, he did not **do** what the Messiah asked.

Is there a famine of hearing in your home, in your community? Do you really know what the Bible says? Do you believe it and act on it? Do you live it?

Feed yourself, then go out and feed your community. They are starving.

► **TOMORROW:** SIN OF SODOM

CHALLENGE: CREATE A BIBLE STUDY PLAN

(Your plan should begin the day after these studies end.)

Step 1: Set aside specific, weekly, consistent time, or times, for studying the Bible.


Hint: Make this goal realistic and attainable. You can always add more time in the future.

Step 2: Read the whole Bible.

Like any book, the Bible is best understood as one connected story. Imagine only reading the last act of *Romeo and Juliet*. It may still be wonderful, but you would be missing important context that would make it even better.

Step 3: DO IT.

This is the most important step. A good plan is no good if it's not carried out consistently over time.



Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path.

PSALM 119:105

***Note: Many Bibles are not arranged in chronological order. If you want to read the Bible chronologically, there are many resources available online as well as chronological Bibles for sale.**

THREE

TOO MUCH BREAD

 **Genesis 18:20-33, 19:1-29**

What was the sin of Sodom? Many assume the chief sin was sexual perversion, but the book of Ezekiel offers a different opinion.

The crimes of your sister Sodom were pride and **gluttony**; she and her daughters were careless and complacent, so that they did nothing to help the poor and needy. They were arrogant and committed disgusting acts before me; so that when I saw it, I swept them away.

EZEKIEL 16:48

The Hebrew words translated to “gluttony” literally means “a fullness of bread.” A chief sin of Sodom, according to Ezekiel, is too much bread—an idiom for being prosperous, which in and of itself is not a sin. But, in their affluence, they became prideful, careless, arrogant, and indifferent to the poor and needy. They forgot to love their neighbors. These traits and the “disgusting acts” that arose from them brought Sodom to ash.

It would be much simpler to blame the downfall of Sodom on one type of sin, but the sin of Sodom infects us all.

If you have ever encountered the Alcoholics Anonymous program, then you know that one of the steps asks the fellowship members to “make a searching and fearless moral inventory” of themselves. Then they admit their wrongs to God and their fellow men and humbly ask God to remove their defects. After that, they take a moral inventory again. It’s an ongoing process which eventually, God willing, leads to a spiritual awakening.

The same is true for us. There are plenty of people to blame for the unraveling of the moral fabric of our families, our communities, our nation, and our world. But first, let’s blame ourselves.

For the time has come for the judgment to begin. It begins with the household of God; and if **it starts with us**, what will the outcome be for those who are disobeying God’s Good News?

1 PETER 4:17-19

It starts with us. If the people of God are lazy, prideful, careless, and complacent, what can we expect of the world? It is the righteous whose cries reach God.

The eyes of the Lord are upon the righteous, and His ears are open unto their cry.

PSALM 34:15

Before they crossed over into the Promised Land, God warned the Israelites not to forget Him amidst their coming prosperity.

Deuteronomy 8:11-20

It seems impossible to think that a nation who had been miraculously saved from slavery, witnessed the parting of the sea, ate bread from heaven, and even heard the voice of God could forget God. But look at God's definition of "forget."

"Be careful not to forget God by not obeying his commands, rulings, and regulations."

To forget God is not a mental state; it is a state of disobedience to His word.

God promises to hear the cry of the righteous, but also to condemn the wicked.

Which one are we?

Psalm 34

Are we striving to be the righteous deserving of God's ear? Or are we Sodom—drowning in bread and carelessness, yet starved for the word of God?

► **TOMORROW: NOAH**

JOURNAL YOUR RESPONSE

Take a fearless moral inventory of yourself. Where do you stand in relation to God and your fellow man? What sins are you struggling to overcome? What are you not doing that you know you should be?

When you're ready, whenever that is, share this response with someone you trust.

Confess your sins to one another and pray for one another, that you may be healed.

JAMES 5:16

Then bring your response to God in prayer.

If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

1 JOHN 1:9

FOUR

NOAHIC COVENANT

Today begins our dive into some but not all of the Biblical covenants. Together, the covenants of God tell the story of our God and His relationship with His people.

The word “covenant” is expansive. There are covenants between men—like a treaty or pact. But there are also covenants made by and with God. These covenants—the biblical covenants – are where we will focus our attention.

Let’s begin with Noah.

 **Genesis 6:9- 9:19**

God spoke to Noah and his sons with him; he said, “As for me — I am herewith establishing my covenant with you, with your descendants after you, and with every living creature that is with you — the birds, the livestock and every wild animal with you, all going out of the ark, every animal on earth. I will establish my covenant with you that never again will all living beings be destroyed by the waters of a flood, and there will never again be a flood to destroy the earth.” God added, “Here is the sign of the covenant I am making between myself and you and every living creature with you, for all generations to come: **I am putting my rainbow in the cloud — it will be there as a sign of the covenant between myself and the earth.** Whenever I bring clouds over the earth, and the rainbow is seen in the cloud; I will remember my covenant which is between myself and you and every living creature of any kind; and the water will never again become a flood to destroy all living beings. The rainbow will be in the cloud; so that when I look at it, I will remember the **everlasting covenant between God and every living creature of any kind on the earth.**”

GENESIS 6:9- 9:19

Here is God’s covenant with Noah in a nutshell: God has promised to never again flood the earth, so we can trust that He won’t. No matter what we do, no matter how many Sodom, Gommorahs, and Nineveh’s we build, He has promised to never again flood the entire earth.

This is what is called an “**unconditional covenant.**” Where other covenants made between two parties have mutual conditions, this covenant doesn’t. Think of it as a covenant God made with Himself on our behalf. The only thing that separates us from a global watery grave is the faithfulness of God. If God flooded the earth, then naysayers could say, “Look! Your God isn’t faithful!” For the sake of God’s honor, that will never happen. That doesn’t prove that we are good. It proves that God is good.

For he makes his sun shine on good and bad people alike, and he sends rain to the righteous and the unrighteous alike.

MATTHEW 5:45

Another lesson embedded clearly in the Covenant made with Noah (and every living creature on earth forever) is that **covenants come with outward signs**—visible reminders of the promise. They do not reside exclusively in the realm of the spiritual; they appear clearly in our realm as well. This is really important to remember as we move through the covenants. In the case of Noah, the outward sign—the reminder of God’s unconditional covenant— is a rainbow. In other cases, the signs involve significantly more human interaction.

► **TOMORROW: ABRAHAM**

WORD SEARCH

Answer the questions below using Genesis 6:9- 9:19 as your guide.

Of every clean animal, how many couples entered the ark?

Of every unclean animal, how many couples entered the ark?

Consider this: How did Noah know which animals were clean and which were unclean?

When the flood began, the water didn't only come from the sky. Where else did it come from?

God described the rainbow as a sign of the covenant between himself and _____ .

Consider this: In Genesis 9:16, God says, "The rainbow will be in the cloud; so that when I look at it, I will remember the everlasting covenant..." Does God forget?

FIVE

ABRAHAMIC COVENANT

Embedded within the Bible are the answers to two fundamental questions:

- Who is God?
- What is the purpose of my life?

But the answers are not obvious. Unfortunately, there is no chapter you can turn to with big, bold, letters that say, “THIS IS WHO GOD IS AND WHY YOU SPECIFICALLY ARE ALIVE.”

The answers in the Bible are for those who seek them, and to seek God is a lifelong adventure. Let’s seek Him today in the story of Abraham, a man who let God change the course of his life and thus the course of human history.

 **Genesis 12 and 13**

The story of Abraham as we know him begins with the end of Abraham as he knew himself.

Now The Lord said to Abram, “Get yourself out of your country, away from your kinsmen and away from your father’s house, and go to the land that I will show you. I will make of you a great nation, I will bless you, and I will make your name great; and you are to be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you, but I will curse anyone who curses you; and by you all the families of the earth will be blessed.

GENESIS 12:1-3

In the first of many interactions between Abraham and God, God asked Abraham (known then as Abram) to abandon his old life and promised to make of him a nation and to give that nation a land. It was a promise with spiritual and physical connotations. There was and is a specific, literal, physical land promised to Abraham (Numbers 34). There was also a physical line of descendants: the tribe of Israel. Among the people of Israel is the spiritual seed of Abraham. But that’s a lesson for another day (Tomorrow, to be exact).

But for today, suffice it to say that the term “Israel” throughout this study refers to a concept beyond the political nation-state of modern Israel. Israel is a people and a land, and by its very nature is set apart for God—to love and serve Him according to His word.

“I will bless those who bless you and curse those who curse you,” was established by God as a natural law as true as gravity. As you read the Bible yourself, you’ll find that to be true. Those who bless Israel are blessed. Those who curse them are cursed. That’s still true today.

Genesis 15

A floating caldron and levitating torch. What is this, *Harry Potter*?

To the modern reader, this passage can feel mysterious and spooky. But if you place the story in its proper context, it’s much clearer. For starters, it was a custom of the time to ratify a covenant between two parties by cutting up an animal and walking between the pieces—as we see in this passage. Like “cutting a deal,” they literally “cut” covenants (a bit more bloody and hard hitting than the pinky promises or the firm handshakes of our time).

But why was Abraham asleep?

Like the covenant with Noah, *the covenant with Abraham is an unconditional covenant*. Putting Abraham to sleep and having the fire pot and torch pass through on Abraham’s behalf gives us a visual illustration of an unconditional covenant. Abraham didn’t really have anything to do with it. He was asleep. The covenant was made *on his behalf*. Just like the covenant with Noah, God’s covenant with Abraham can not, as a whole, be broken or voided ever. Not all covenants are unconditional, (actually most aren’t), but the Abrahamic covenant is.

For when God made his promise to Abraham, he swore an oath to do what he had promised; and **since there was no one greater than himself for him to swear by, he swore by himself and said**, “I will certainly bless you, and I will certainly give you many descendants”;

and so, after waiting patiently, Abraham saw the promise fulfilled. Now people swear oaths by someone greater than themselves, and confirmation by an oath puts an end to all dispute. Therefore, when God wanted to demonstrate still more convincingly the unchangeable character of his intentions to those who were to receive what he had promised, he added an oath to the promise; so that through two unchangeable things, in neither of which God could lie, we, who have fled to take a firm hold on the hope set before us, would be strongly encouraged.

HEBREWS 6:13-18

Similarly to the covenant with Noah, this is not a reflection of the goodness of the people. It's a reflection of the goodness of God. In Israel He has placed his name—staked his reputation.

In this way they are to put my name on the people of Israel, so that I will bless them.

NUMBERS 6:27

It is not because of your righteousness, or because your heart is so upright, that you go in to take possession of their land; but to punish the wickedness of these nations that The Lord your God is driving them out ahead of you, and also to confirm the word which The Lord swore to your ancestors, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.

I have been asked in the past, “But why Israel?” What makes that land and people so special? The best answer is, because God said so. Who are we to question God?

DEUTERONOMY 9:5

Who are you, a mere human being, to talk back to God? Will what is formed say to him who formed it, “Why did you make me this way?” Or has the potter no right to make from a given lump of clay this pot for honorable use and that one for dishonorable?

ROMANS 9:20-21

Genesis 17:1-14

The sign of this covenant was circumcision—an outward sign. But, like the rainbow, the persistence of the Seed of Abraham is a sign to the nations that God is faithful. As God promised, through the seed of Abraham all the nations of the earth have been and will be blessed.

The covenant of Abraham is deeply and eternally connected to a people and a land. Israel—physical and spiritual, is the apple of God’s eye.

Anyone who injures you injures the very apple of my eye.

ZECHARIAH 2:8 OR ZECHARIAH 2:12, DEPENDING ON TRANSLATION

You may be saying, “But what if I’m not part of Israel?
What about me?”

▶ **TOMORROW:** WHAT ABOUT ME?

Make Your Case Using the Bible.

Then, if you can, discuss your answers with a friend.

Does God play favorites?

Are there any circumstances under which God's unconditional covenants can be voided?
