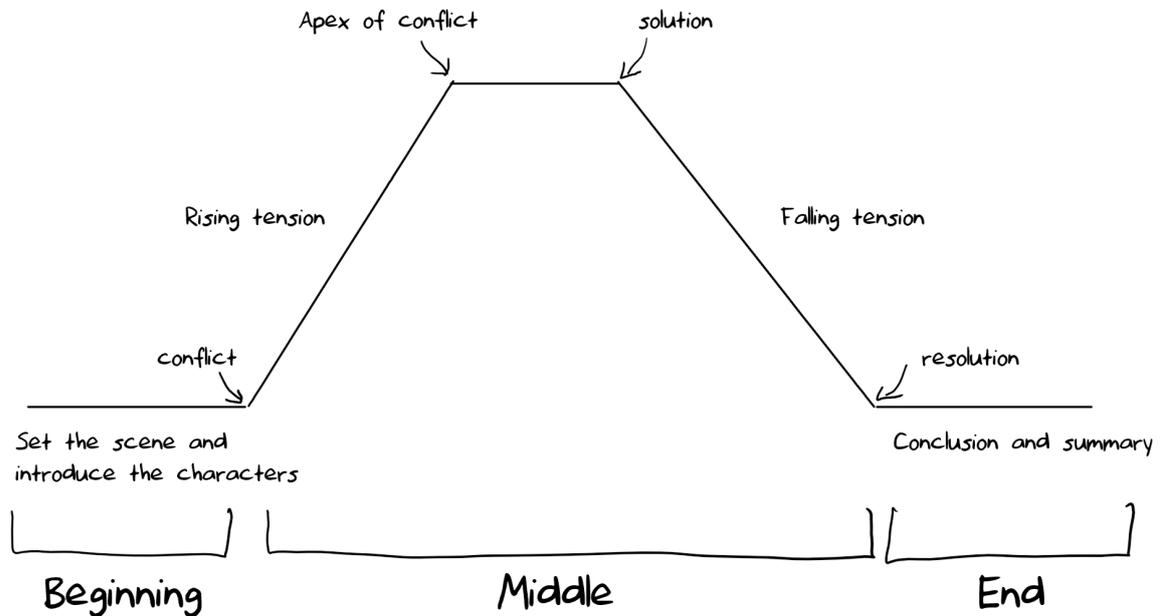


## Mature in Faith

### Genesis 1: What's the point?

The most common literary genre of the Bible is narrative. The most obvious identifying feature of narrative is the narrator, and every narrative more or less follows the following pattern:



The “conflict” or “tension” that drives the narrative of Genesis 1 is the formlessness, emptiness and darkness of 1:2: “The earth was without form and void, and darkness was over the face of the deep.” The story progresses as God speaks, and as he speaks he brings order, light and fills everything up. This becomes clear when we see the parallels between the first three days of creation and the second three days.

Day 1: Light	Day 4: Sun, Moon, Stars
Day 2: Sky and Sea	Day 5: Birds and Fish
Day 3: Land	Day 6: Animals and People

Genesis 1 presents us with some of the founding principles not only of scripture but of all of life.

***God's word bring light, life, goodness, function, order and fullness. Apart from God's word there is only emptiness and chaos.***

A Story with an open ending:

Gen 1:26-30 Then God said, "Let us make mankind in our image, in our likeness, so that they may rule over the fish in the sea and the birds in the sky, over the livestock and all the wild animals, and over all the creatures that move along the ground." (27) So God created mankind in his own image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them. (28) God blessed them and said to them, "Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it. Rule over the fish in the sea and the birds in the sky and over every living creature that moves on the ground."

God creates humanity in his own image, investing in them authority over creation and commissioning them to carry on his own creation work, as seen in 1:28: "Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it." How successful will they be? That depends on whether or not they live by God's word.

Gen 3: doubting God's word

Gen 3:1-5 Now the serpent was more crafty than any of the wild animals the LORD God had made. He said to the woman, "Did God really say, 'You must not eat from any tree in the garden'?" (2) The woman said to the serpent, "We may eat fruit from the trees in the garden, (3) but God did say, 'You must not eat fruit from the tree that is in the middle of the garden, and you must not touch it, or you will die.'" (4) "You will not certainly die," the serpent said to the woman. (5) "For God knows that when you eat from it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil."

The lies of Satan:

1. You will not die = God is a liar
2. Your eyes will be opened = God is keeping you in ignorance
3. You will be like God = autonomy is best, obedience is slavery

The end result: you can't trust God. If you can't trust God, who then can you trust? You will have to trust yourself.

### All sin is unbelief

We often define sin as "the bad things that we do and the good things that we don't do." But if we understand that all of our sinful action is an expression of disobedience that come from a refusal to hear and believe God's word. Knowing this should fundamentally change the way we read the bible: Instead of always seeking the personal application and asking, "What is it telling me to do?" instead we should be asking "Who is God, and what is he doing?" Our faith grows and matures as we hear God's word and see whether or not he does what he says.

Faith, then, is the central issue of the Bible

- ❑ Abram believed God, and God credited it to him as righteousness. (the relationship between faith and works, Rom 4 and James 2)
- ❑ Covenant relationships
- ❑ Israel's idolatry
- ❑ God's judgements
- ❑ The promise of restoration
- ❑ The establishment of a New Covenant
- ❑ The lies of Satan exposed at the cross

## Faith in Romans

Faith Hope and Love as the structure of Paul's letter to the Romans		
Faith: Romans 1-4	Hope: Romans 5-11	Love: Romans 12-15
Faith x 31 Hope x 2 Love x 1	Faith x 17 Hope x 9 Love x 7	Faith x 10 Hope x 5 Love x 8
Structure of the argument		
<p><b>1:16-17</b> The centrality of faith in the life of the Christian</p> <p><b>1:18-3:10</b> The Faithlessness of humanity and the justice of God</p> <p><b>3:21-26</b> God intervenes to bring about faith by his action at the cross</p> <p><b>3:27-4:25</b> Example from the story of Israel</p>	<p><b>5:1-5</b> The centrality of hope in the life of the Christian</p> <p><b>5:6-8:8</b> The hopelessness of humanity apart from grace</p> <p><b>8:9-39</b> God intervenes to bring about hope by sending his Spirit</p> <p><b>9:1-11:36</b> Example from the story of Israel</p>	<p><b>12:1-8</b> The Call to "perfection": Doing God's will, what is good and pleasing and perfect - Building up the body -</p> <p><b>12:9-10</b> Love, Love, Love</p> <p><b>12:11-21</b> Specific details</p> <p><b>13:1-14:23</b> Specific examples</p> <p><b>15:1-13</b> - Building up your neighbor and being united in Christ -</p>
Chapter titles		
Rom 1:17 For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from <b>faith</b> for <b>faith</b> ,	Rom 4:18 In <b>hope</b> he believed against <b>hope</b> ,	10 Be affectioned to <b>love</b> one another with brotherly <b>love</b> .

## It's all about Faith

Rom 1:16-17 For I am not ashamed of the gospel, because it is the power of God that brings salvation to everyone who believes: first to the Jew, then to the Gentile. (17) For in the gospel the righteousness of God is revealed—a righteousness that is by faith from first to last, just as it is written: "The righteous will live by faith."

### *The challenge to faith: Answering a question of God's justice*

Rom 1:32 Although they know God's righteous decree that those who do such things deserve death, they not only continue to do these very things but also approve of those who practice them.

Rom 3:5 But if our unrighteousness brings out God's righteousness more clearly, what shall we say? That God is unjust in bringing his wrath on us?

## Analyzing the structure of the argument by person

### *The Gentiles - 3<sup>rd</sup> person plural 1:18-32*

Rom 1:18-19 The wrath of God is being revealed from heaven against all the godlessness and wickedness of people, who suppress the truth by their wickedness, (19) since what may be known about God is plain to them, because God has made it plain to them.

### *The Jews - 2<sup>nd</sup> person singular 2:1-29*

Rom 2:1 You, therefore, have no excuse, you who pass judgment on someone else, for at whatever point you judge another, you are condemning yourself, because you who pass judgment do the same things.

### *We're all in this together - 1<sup>st</sup> person plural 3:1-20*

Rom 3:5 But if our unrighteousness brings out God's righteousness more clearly, what shall we say?

Rom 3:9 What shall we conclude then? Do we have any advantage? Not at all! For we have already made the charge that Jews and Gentiles alike are all under the power of sin.

Rom 3:19 Now we know that whatever the law says, it says to those who are under the law, so that every mouth may be silenced and the whole world held accountable to God.

*God – 3<sup>rd</sup> person singular 3:21-26*

Rom 3:25 God presented Christ as a sacrifice of atonement, through the shedding of his blood—to be received by faith.

### A language issue

Rom 3:21-26 But now apart from the law the **righteousness** of God has been made known, to which the Law and the Prophets testify. (22) This **righteousness** is given through faith in Jesus Christ to all who believe. There is no difference between Jew and Gentile, (23) for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, (24) and all are **justified** freely by his grace through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus. (25) God presented Christ as a sacrifice of atonement, through the shedding of his blood—to be received by faith. He did this to demonstrate his **righteousness**, because in his forbearance he had left the sins committed beforehand unpunished— (26) he did it to demonstrate his **righteousness** at the present time, so as to be **just** and the one who **justifies** those who have faith in Jesus.

## Paul's Sermon on Faith

*The Gentiles -3<sup>rd</sup> person plural 1:18-32*

(1:16) For I am not ashamed of the gospel, because it is the power of God that brings salvation to everyone who believes: first to the Jew, then to the Gentile. (17) For in the gospel the justice of God is revealed—a justice that is by faith from first to last, just as it is written: "The just will live by faith." (18) The wrath of God is being revealed from heaven against all the godlessness and wickedness of people, who suppress the truth by **their** wickedness, (19) since what may be known about God is plain to **them**, because God has made it plain to **them**. (20) For since the creation of the world God's invisible qualities—his eternal power and divine nature—have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so that people are without excuse. (21) For although **they** knew God, **they** neither glorified him as God nor gave thanks to him, but **their** thinking became futile and **their** foolish hearts were darkened. (22) Although **they** claimed to be wise, **they** became fools (23) and exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images made to look like a mortal human being and birds and animals and reptiles. (24) Therefore God gave **them** over in the sinful desires of **their** hearts to sexual impurity for the degrading of **their** bodies with one another. (25) **They** exchanged the truth about God for a lie, and worshiped and served created things rather than the Creator—who is forever praised. Amen. (26) Because of this, God gave **them** over to shameful lusts. Even **their** women exchanged natural sexual relations for unnatural ones. (27) In the same way the men also abandoned natural relations with women and were **inflamed** with lust for one another. Men committed shameful acts with other men, and received in **themselves** the due penalty for their error. (28) Furthermore, just as **they** did not think it worthwhile to retain the knowledge of God, so God gave **them** over to a depraved mind, so that **they** do what ought not to be done. (29) **They** have become filled with every kind of wickedness, evil, greed and depravity. **They** are full of envy, murder, strife, deceit and malice. **They** are gossips, (30) slanderers, God-haters, insolent, arrogant and boastful; **they** invent ways of doing evil; they disobey their parents; (31) **they** have no understanding, no fidelity, no love, no mercy. (32) Although **they** know God's just decree that those who do such

things deserve death, **they** not only continue to do these very things but also approve of those who practice them.

*The Jews – 2<sup>nd</sup> person singular 2:1-29*

(2:1) **You**, therefore, have no excuse, **you** who pass judgment on someone else, for at whatever point you judge another, **you** are condemning yourself, because **you** who pass judgment do the same things. (2) Now we know that God's judgment against those who do such things is based on truth. (3) So when **you**, a mere human being, pass judgment on them and yet do the same things, do **you** think **you** will escape God's judgment? (4) Or do **you** show contempt for the riches of his kindness, forbearance and patience, not realizing that God's kindness is intended to lead **you** to repentance? (5) But because of **your** stubbornness and **your** unrepentant heart, **you** are storing up wrath against **yourself** for the day of God's wrath, when his just judgment will be revealed. (6) God "will repay each person according to what they have done." (7) To those who by persistence in doing good seek glory, honor and immortality, he will give eternal life. (8) But for those who are self-seeking and who reject the truth and follow evil, there will be wrath and anger. (9) There will be trouble and distress for every human being who does evil: first for the Jew, then for the Gentile; (10) but glory, honor and peace for everyone who does good: first for the Jew, then for the Gentile. (11) For God does not show favoritism. (12) All who sin apart from the law will also perish apart from the law, and all who sin under the law will be judged by the law. (13) For it is not those who hear the law who are just in God's sight, but it is those who obey the law who will be declared just. (14) (Indeed, when Gentiles, who do not have the law, do by nature things required by the law, they are a law for themselves, even though they do not have the law. (15) They show that the requirements of the law are written on their hearts, their consciences also bearing witness, and their thoughts sometimes accusing them and at other times even defending them.) (16) This will take place on the day when God judges people's secrets through Jesus Christ, as my gospel declares. (17) Now **you**, if **you** call **yourself** a Jew; if **you** rely on the law and boast in God; (18) if **you** know his will and approve of what is superior because **you** are instructed by the law; (19) if you are convinced that you are a guide for the blind, a light for those who are in the dark, (20) an instructor of the foolish, a teacher of little children, because **you** have in the law the embodiment of knowledge and truth— (21) **you**, then, who teach others, do you not teach **yourself**? **You** who preach against stealing, do **you** steal? (22) **You** who say that people should not commit adultery, do **you** commit adultery? **You** who abhor idols, do **you** rob temples? (23) **You** who boast in the law, do **you** dishonor God by breaking the law? (24) As it is written: "God's name is blasphemed among the Gentiles because of **you**." (25) Circumcision has value if **you** observe the law, but if **you** break the law, **you** have become as though **you** had not been circumcised. (26) So then, if those who are not circumcised keep the law's requirements, will they not be regarded as though they were circumcised? (27) The one who is not circumcised physically and yet obeys the law will condemn **you** who, even though **you** have the written code and circumcision, are a lawbreaker. (28) A person is not a Jew who is one only outwardly, nor is circumcision merely outward and physical. (29) No, a person is a Jew who is one inwardly; and circumcision is circumcision of the heart, by the Spirit, not by the written code. Such a person's praise is not from other people, but from God.

*We're all in this together – 1<sup>st</sup> person plural 3:1-20*

(3:1) What advantage, then, is there in being a Jew, or what value is there in circumcision? (2) Much in every way! First of all, the Jews have been entrusted with the very words of God. (3) What if some were unfaithful? Will their unfaithfulness nullify God's faithfulness? (4) Not at all! Let God be true, and every human being a liar. As it is written: "So that you may be proved just when you speak and prevail when you judge." (5) But if **our** injustices brings out God's justice more clearly, what shall **we** say? That God is unjust in bringing his wrath on **us**? (I am using a human argument.) (6) Certainly not!

If that were so, how could God judge the world? (7) Someone might argue, "If my falsehood enhances God's truthfulness and so increases his glory, why am I still condemned as a sinner?" (8) Why not say—as some slanderously claim that we say—"Let us do evil that good may result"? Their condemnation is just! (9) What shall **we** conclude then? Do **we** have any advantage? Not at all! For we have already made the charge that Jews and Gentiles alike are all under the power of sin. (10) As it is written: "There is no one righteous, not even one; (11) there is no one who understands; there is no one who seeks God. (12) All have turned away, they have together become worthless; there is no one who does good, not even one." (13) "Their throats are open graves; their tongues practice deceit." "The poison of vipers is on their lips." (14) "Their mouths are full of cursing and bitterness." (15) "Their feet are swift to shed blood; (16) ruin and misery mark their ways, (17) and the way of peace they do not know." (18) "There is no fear of God before their eyes." (19) Now **we** know that whatever the law says, it says to those who are under the law, so that every mouth may be silenced and the whole world held accountable to God. (20) Therefore no one will be declared just in God's sight by the works of the law; rather, through the law **we** become conscious of our sin.

*God – 3<sup>rd</sup> person singular 3:21-26*

(21) But now apart from the law the justice of **God** has been made known, to which the Law and the Prophets testify. (22) This justice is revealed through faith in Jesus Christ to all who have faith. There is no difference between Jew and Gentile, (23) for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, (24) and all are justified freely **by his grace** through the redemption that **came by Christ Jesus**. (25) **God presented Christ** as a sacrifice of atonement, **through the shedding of his blood**—to be received by faith. **He did this** to demonstrate his justice, because **in his forbearance he had left the sins committed beforehand unpunished**— (26) **he did it** to demonstrate **his justice** at the present time, so as **to be just** and **the one who justifies** those who have faith in Jesus.

(27) Where, then, is boasting? It is excluded. Because of what law? The law that requires works? No, because of the law that requires faith. (28) For we maintain that a person is justified by faith apart from the works of the law. (29) Or is God the God of Jews only? Is he not the God of Gentiles too? Yes, of Gentiles too, (30) since there is only one God, who will justify the circumcised by faith and the uncircumcised through that same faith. (31) Do we, then, nullify the law by this faith? Not at all! Rather, we uphold the law.

(4:1) What then shall we say that Abraham, our forefather according to the flesh, discovered in this matter? (2) If, in fact, Abraham was justified by works, he had something to boast about—but not before God. (3) What does Scripture say? "Abraham believed God, and it was credited to him as righteousness." (4) Now to the one who works, wages are not credited as a gift but as an obligation. (5) However, to the one who does not work but trusts God who justifies the ungodly, their faith is credited as righteousness. (6) David says the same thing when he speaks of the blessedness of the one to whom God credits righteousness apart from works: (7) "Blessed are those whose transgressions are forgiven, whose sins are covered. (8) Blessed is the one whose sin the Lord will never count against them." (9) Is this blessedness only for the circumcised, or also for the uncircumcised? We have been saying that Abraham's faith was credited to him as righteousness. (10) Under what circumstances was it credited? Was it after he was circumcised, or before? It was not after, but before! (11) And he received circumcision as a sign, a seal of the righteousness that he had by faith while he was still uncircumcised. So then, he is the father of all who believe but have not been circumcised, in order that righteousness might be credited to them. (12) And he is then also the father of the circumcised who not only are circumcised but who also follow in the footsteps of the faith that our father Abraham had before he was circumcised. (13) It was not through the law that Abraham and his offspring received the promise that he would be heir of the world, but through

the righteousness that comes by faith. (14) For if those who depend on the law are heirs, faith means nothing and the promise is worthless, (15) because the law brings wrath. And where there is no law there is no transgression. (16) Therefore, the promise comes by faith, so that it may be by grace and may be guaranteed to all Abraham's offspring—not only to those who are of the law but also to those who have the faith of Abraham. He is the father of us all. (17) As it is written: "I have made you a father of many nations." He is our father in the sight of God, in whom he believed—the God who gives life to the dead and calls into being things that were not. (18) Against all hope, Abraham in hope believed and so became the father of many nations, just as it had been said to him, "So shall your offspring be." (19) Without weakening in his faith, he faced the fact that his body was as good as dead—since he was about a hundred years old—and that Sarah's womb was also dead. (20) Yet he did not waver through unbelief regarding the promise of God, but was strengthened in his faith and gave glory to God, (21) being fully persuaded that God had power to do what he had promised. (22) This is why "it was credited to him as righteousness." (23) The words "it was credited to him" were written not for him alone, (24) but also for us, to whom God will credit righteousness—for us who believe in him who raised Jesus our Lord from the dead. (25) He was delivered over to death for our sins and was raised to life for our justification.