

Valley Bible Church - Bible Survey

Bible Survey Lesson 2: Book of Genesis, Part I

INTRODUCTION TO THE BOOK OF GENESIS

There are several things I would like to note as we begin this study:

1. The Principle of Recurrence

This principle is seen throughout Genesis. Brief statements of truth are made then elaborated on in the following Scriptures. i.e. The creation of man in chapter one is revisited in chapter two with an emphasis on the details or the introduction of a genealogy of Noah in chapter five, with details about Noah in chapter six.

2. Looking for God's Emphasis

The creation of the material world and man (2000 years +?) takes 11 chapters. God's relationship with man, Abraham through Joseph (350 years?) takes 39 chapters.

Where does God's priority lie? "What if a man gains the whole world . . . ?"

3. Nature of the Book of Genesis

Not a scientific book written in 20th or 21st century terms, but full of science and not incorrect on any scientific pronouncements.

4. Genesis is foundational

A strong foundation is important to the stability of any structure. As Rick Balogh says, "Your view of the historicity of creation and the creator (God) determines your view of all Scripture and how you live your Christian life."

In any book if you tear out the first 50 to 75 pages, you lose understanding of the ending as well.

Introduction:

The Book of Genesis is:

1. A History Book—The historical account of the creation of the world and other stuff. The founding of the chosen nation, Israel

2. A Revelation Book—It reveals God's ideal plan, man's selfish rebellion and helplessness in trying to get back to God (sin), then God's intervention to bring man back into a personal relationship to Him (grace).

3. A Practical Book—Persons and events show us that God is the boss—the creator, and we are the needy subjects—the created.

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In Psalm 8 David says: *"When I consider Your heavens, the works of Your fingers, the moon and stars, what is man that You are mindful of him, the son of man that You care for him?"*

It reminds me of God's challenge to Job: *"Where were you when I created everything, twerp"* (my translation)

But this time the answer is: *"You made him a little lower than the heavenly beings and crowned him with glory and honor. You made him ruler over the works of your hands . . ."*

God created man for a high and lofty purpose, and God will pursue man until that purpose is fulfilled. **THAT IS THE MESSAGE OF THE BOOK OF GENESIS.**

I. INFORMATION

A. Name

1. The word "Genesis" is from a Greek word meaning origin or source. In fact, it may be best translated "birth."

When the Old Testament (Hebrew) was translated into Greek in 285-247 BC. by 72 Jewish priests in Alexandria each book was identified by its first Hebrew word. That word translates "in the beginning," and so we have the birth of Genesis.

2. Genesis tells us of the birth of just about everything (my school students wrote over four pages of them) but the existence of God is assumed. Without Genesis our knowledge of a creative, creating God would be sorely limited and we could not conceive the birth of the universe. Just note the wild and wonderful theories men have devised.

B. Author

1. By far most scholars, both religious and secular, Jewish and Christian, attribute the writing of the first five books of the Bible (The Pentateuch) to Moses. How? By direct revelation, since he talks to God, by the work of the Holy Spirit, and by historical records handed down to him by his ancestors.
2. Moses was highly literate. He was raised in the Egyptian Pharaoh's court with access to all of their sources (Ex.34:27; Num.17:7; Deut.6:9,24:1-2; Joshua 8:32).

Ur (his earlier home) has been excavated and archeologists have found thousands of books including: dictionaries, grammar books, reference books, encyclopedias, as well as math, geology, geography, religious, and political books.

C. Purpose

To give Israel an accurate report of the creation of the world and of the founding of their nation.

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II. SIMPLE OUTLINE

A. Birth of the Material Universe and the Human Race—Primeval History (1:1-11:9)

1. Creation (1-2)
2. Fall (3-4)
3. Flood (5-19)
4. Tower of Babel (11)

B. Birth of the Nation of Israel and the Hebrew Race—Patriarchal History (11:10-50)

1. Abraham (12-25)
2. Isaac (17-19)
3. Jacob (28-35)
4. Joseph (35-50)

I will present a much more complete outline in Lesson 3.

Bible Survey Lesson 3: The Book of Genesis, Part II

OUTLINE OF THE BOOK OF GENESIS

Introduction:

Genesis is by definition, the birth of the world as we know it.

We learn the history of our planet and our race and we learn how far God is willing to go to fulfill His original plan that we should live in harmony with creation and in a personal relationship with Him.

I. Birth of Material Universe & Human Race--Primeval history (1-11:9)

"In the beginning God created . . ." This is a statement of fact. Just how did He do that? By fiat. "He spoke and the worlds were framed"-- Heb. 11:3 Who was He? -- John 1:1, Heb. 1:1 -- Jesus!

A. Creation (Chapters 1-2)

Don't have time to go into detail. Refer to teaching of Rich Balogh about the time periods, historicity, and the creation evolution debate and evidences.

1. Progressive

Can you name the order of creation?

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a. World of matter (1:3-19)

Day 1: Light, before sun, moon and stars

Day 2: Firmament, atmosphere

Day 3: Dry land, plants and fruit trees, separation from water

Day 4: Light sources, Sun, moon, stars

b. Systems of life (1:20-25)

Day 5: Fish and fowl

Day 6: Cattle and Man

Day 7: Rest

c. Woman and man (1:26-27)

We don't have all the details, but we do know "Man was created in the image of God," or with God's stamp, enough different from animals and enough like God to fulfill the express purpose of personal relationship.

2. Purposeful

Everything God does has a purpose. Not only was man to fellowship with God, but:

a. Man created to tend creation (2:4-17)

vv. 8-14 explain Eden, his environment and states, "He put him in the garden to work it and take care of it" -- v 15. Eden was a real historical place with geographical landmarks and definable borders. Man was fully capable, creative, and supremely intelligent and able to name all the animals.

b. Man needs a suitable helper (2:18-23)

It is not good for man to be alone. A man needs a good woman.

c. God institutes marriage (2:22-25) This does not mean we need to marry our kids off before they're twenty, nor ignore the single, widowed and divorced members of the body, but God explains elsewhere that singleness is a gift for those God wants alone. Singles are special with special service for the body.

Lesson: God is the creator, we are the created. He has a plan for us beyond our imagination. We need to line up our life with His plan.

B. Fall (Chapters 3-4)

Adam and Eve were created in the image of God, in perfect innocence, in a perfect environment, with perfect minds and bodies, the ability to choose wisely, and in a perfect personal relationship with God . . . AND YET ...

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1. Paradise Lost

a. Temptation by serpent (3:1-5)

We know the Serpent is Satan because of the "seed war" here and in Rev. 12:9; 20:2

b. Fall of woman and man (3:6-8)

If we compare vs. 6 with I John 2:16, and the temptation of Christ in Luke 4, we can see Satan's standard pattern of temptation:

1. Physical, lust of the flesh
2. Mental/Emotional, lust of the eye
3. Spiritual, pride of life
4. Appearance of God (3:9-13)

We sin, hide from God, but He doesn't go away. In fact He searches . . .

Throughout time God will pursue a renewal of that personal relationship He intended, even as we wander in and out of it. This is the first of an ongoing campaign of pursuit--EVEN TO THE CROSS

2. Punishment and Provision

Evidence of God's Justice and God's mercy.

a. Curse and covering (3:14-22) What is the curse?

1. Emotional/ Social--Separation from relationship with God
2. Physical--Work and childbearing becomes hard

Spiritual--Eternal death

God never allows sin to go unpunished (Justice)

God never punishes without hope (Mercy)

v. 21 Foreshadows the substitute sacrifice that God demands *"Without the shedding of blood there is no remission of sin"*

b. Banishment from Eden (3:23-24)

Even this shows God's mercy by keeping them from eternal life while they *"have the knowledge of good and evil,"* and no power to resist evil

c. Opposing responses--Cain and Abel (4)

Immediately, relationship with God affects relationship with others. God's request is simple but is a first evidence of the need for: FAITH as opposed to LOGIC, OBEDENCE vs. REBELLION

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vv. 16-22 show progression of rebellion and wickedness until "*GOD SAW THE WICKEDNESS OF ALL . . .*"

Lesson: We are, by nature sinners and need supernatural help to be obedient, but God is constantly looking for us to come back into fellowship with Him.

C. Flood (Chapters 5-9)

We have been introduced to man as capable, creative and highly civilized before the flood and yet, or perhaps, AND SO MAN HAS A . . .

1. Problem

a. Man multiplies and sin multiplies (5, 6:1-7) Why chapter 5? Man disperses and multiplies as God instructed and some of them were very good (Enoch), but the rest are so bad that God wonders why he bothered even to create them.

Man excels in architecture, art, music, and the entertainment industry and yet they can't control their lusts and desires and have to turn their backs on God, just like Adam did. What developed was a civilization of sophisticated sinners, techno-killers.

b. Preaching and building (6:8-22) One man and his family were obedient. The only ones. We have it good. 120 years of persecuted preaching and hard labor--Faith brings works. Even as the rain falls God extended the free gift of salvation. (7 days of Grace.)

c. Occupying and working (7) How did all the animals fit on the ark? How did they feed them? What about the dinosaurs? Didn't it get smelly? etc.... Books avail.

2. Promise

a. Departing and worshiping (8)

Noah gave the credit to God, even though he built the boat.

b. God's covenant to Noah (9:1-17) One step down from his perfect relationship with Adam and Eve:

1. No destruction by water

2. Dominion over animals by fear

3. Man now permitted (commanded) to eat animals

4. Man placed under human authority as well as God's (government)

c. Sons of Noah (9:18-28)

Nations created, dispersed and characters defined. **SEE FAMILY CHART**

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Lesson: Our obedience is necessary regardless of circumstances, pressure or result.

D. Babel (Chapters 10-11)

Here we go again, its after the flood and man has a new start. maybe this time they will get it right. " Be fruitful and multiply and live in peace."

1. Propagation

a. Noah's sons disperse (10)

At first they do well. They spread out, they build, they develop, they trade, they mind their own business. Some even remember God.

b. Unity of Speech and settlement (11:1-2)

Instead of the unity of speech and purpose causing them to bring glory to God, it makes them proud, rebellious, and self-centered.

"Let us make a city with a tower that reaches to God, so we can make a name for ourselves, and not be scattered" (God's instruction).

c. Building of city and tower (11:3-4) So they did. Man will become their own God.

2. Punishment

a. Anger and judgment (11:5-7) God's anger has a reasonable explanation. "If they do this, nothing (no evil thing) will be impossible to them."

b. Dispersal abroad (11:8-9) By confusing their language God accomplished several things:

1. Stopped the building of the tower
2. Broke down communication (which was only causing rebellion)
3. Spread them out, as they were to have done in the first place.

c. Shem's line leads to Abram (11:10-32) Foreshadowing of what is explained in Acts 2 when all barriers are broken and united in Christ. "No longer Jew, Gentile, Roman, Greek"

Lesson: DESPITE THE ON-GOING REBELLIOUS WICKEDNESS OF MAN, GOD STILL WANTED TO HAVE A PERSONAL RELATIONSHIP -- PERHAPS A PEOPLE?

II. Birth of Nation of Israel & Hebrew Race--Patriarchal History (11:10-50)

In chapter 11, "*ALL MEN TURNED THEIR BACKS ON GOD*" The reality of Him, His message, His name, virtually lost.

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A. Abraham (Chapters 12-25)

Through Abraham God will start a legacy of promise

1. Preview and Promise

a. Call to Canaan and Egypt (12:1-20) The entire story starts with an example of Abraham's FAITH. Like David, he was far from perfect, but he "believed God" and God called him, My friend."

He left the civilized land of Ur to go to a land he knows nothing about because God said, "Do it!"

Another evidence of his heart was the building of an altar as his first act everywhere he went.

b. Separation from and rescue of Lot (13-14) In practical decisions he trusted that God would take care of him.

c. God's covenant, circumcision and promise (15, 17)

(Justification by Faith--Chapter 15)

The Abrahamic Covenant:

1. A land as an inheritance
2. Becoming a innumerable, great nation
3. Be a blessing to the world (Scripture, witness, Messiah)

Covenant passed on to Isaac (26:15) and Jacob (28:13-15)

2. Problems

a. Hagar and Lot incidents (16,18-19) The Hagar story along with Abe's reaction to king in regard to Sarah exhibits his lack of faith as opposed to his boldness in faith in regards to pleading for Lot's salvation.

b. Proof of faithfulness and faith (21-22:19) The ultimate "faith test" used throughout scripture and the church to illustrate what faith is and how it works is the offering of Isaac. Isaac also becomes an example of God's substitutionary sacrifice.

c. Death of Abraham (25:1-11)

Lesson: The test of our faith is not perfection but do we believe God.

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B. Isaac (Chapters 17, 22, 24-27)

God proves His faithfulness to his "friend"

1. Provision

a. Miracle birth (17, 21:1-7) The promised child comes only when it cannot be mistaken for anything but a miracle from God.

b. Brush with death (22:1-19) Ultimate test of faith and evidence of God's faithfulness involved Isaac as well as Abraham.

c. Wife chosen by God (24)

Even in the finding of a wife, God shows his faithfulness in protecting his son from a idolatrous marriage.

2. Problems

With a heritage of faith, you would think he would be ultimately wise and exhibit great faith

a. Sons (25:15-28) Playing favorites, Blessing unimportant (see below)

b. Abimelech (26) deja vu all over again.

c. Crossed blessings (27) Rebekah plots with Jacob to fool Isaac (see below)

Lesson: Children are a heritage of the Lord and will imitate their parents, despite all attempts to teach them wisdom.

One thing I noticed. God has a great plan and He occasionally reaches down into the natural world and makes waves, but He usually just uses ordinary men and women to carry out His plans.

A. Jacob (Chapters 25-35)

Jacob is loved by many people for the same reason Peter is. He's human. He was, as his name indicates, a supplanter, one who takes what belongs to another, but God calls Himself "the God of Jacob", and perhaps that gives hope to us all.

1. Preempting

Perhaps the most used example of the sovereignty of God. See Malachi 1:1-4 God's sovereignty is shown in action which is not arbitrary, not unjust, and really not as drastic as we might think (temporal, not spiritual), and not permanent (both were blessed).

a. Twin Birth (25:1-28) Pre-birth struggle

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- b. Buying birthright (25:29-34) free market economy, what the traffic will bear
- c. Plot to deceive (27) Collusion between mother and son.

2. Prosperity

- a. Blessing and dream (28)

Jacob receives his blessing from Isaac and then covenant renewal from

God (stairway to heaven)

- b. Laban's deception and results (29-32:21) Jacob meets his match in the marketplace, receives two wives for the price of one.

- c. God's blessing, return to Bethel (29-35)

God intervenes and turns deceit into blessing. Up to this time Jacob is scheming under his own power for everything, even God's blessing. Now he meets God still trying to force a blessing from Him, until he is crippled. He says, "I won't let go 'til you bless me," but can he really hold on? NO! Now God blesses him. His strength comes in his weakness. He has to trust God and God changes his name to Israel.

Lesson: God's strength is made perfect in our weakness. Give up your schemes and look for God's direction. (2 Corinthians 12:9)

D. Joseph (Chapters 37-50)

This story is a perfect example of God intervening in the affairs of men. Joseph said it best himself, "You meant your plans against me for evil, but God meant it for good."

1. Problems

- a. The family dreamer (37:1-20) Family favorite becomes target for brothers.
- b. Sold into slavery (37:21-36) Probably 17 years old.
- c. Good news, bad news, good news, bad news (39-41:38) Potiphar's head steward; falsely accused, imprisoned; Heads jail, interprets dreams; forgotten....Eureka!

2. Promise

- a. National Hero (42-50) Saves entire nation at 30 years old.
- b. Revenge opportunity (42-47:12) He resists true revenge, but can't resist a little sibling taunting.
- c. Reconciliation and death (49-50) God uses him to get family out of Canaan so they would not intermarry with the idol worshipping races. With the death of Joseph Genesis seems like the death of a dream.

Lesson: Always act in private as if God is the one you please or hurt. He is!