

CONCERNING THE WAY

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Introduction

Well, we are finally to the point where we can start studying the Bible itself! We have spent a lot of time getting to this point, haven't we? I guess you could say that all of the studies that have come before have been laying the groundwork for studying the Bible. Through the previous studies, we now know that there is abundant evidence for the existence of the God of the Bible, and that the Bible is trustworthy for relaying God's message to us and is historically accurate.

So, where do we start? Well, at the beginning, of course! You don't start reading a book in the middle! Genesis is a book of beginnings - many things started here, some obvious, and some not so obvious. Watch carefully as you read through the book - some important doctrines are here in Genesis in seed form, such as the doctrine of the Trinity. In other words, there are hints in Genesis of things which are not fully developed and explained until later on in the Bible. This is an example of Progressive Revelation - God revealing things to mankind over time when His timing is right, not throwing everything at us in the first book.

We will go through Genesis 1-11 very carefully, verse by verse, because in these first eleven chapters four momentous events happen - Creation, The Fall, The Flood, and the Tower of Babel. These events are foundational to understanding everything else in the Bible, so we will take as much time as we need to get through them.

This study's purpose is to introduce the book and lay some of the groundwork we will need to go through the text. Let's begin!

- *Dusty Rhodes*

Why Is It Important To Study Genesis?

- ✓ God deserves glory because of creation (Rev. 4:11)
- ✓ Genesis is God's eyewitness account about how things came to be (Job 38:4)
- ✓ We either trust this eyewitness account or not (2 Peter 3:3-7)
- ✓ We see our need for salvation
- ✓ People don't understand that the world is fallen, cursed, that our bodies are cursed
- ✓ There are 68 New Testament references to Genesis 1-11 alone

Authorship of Genesis

- Scripture, Jewish tradition, and much of church history ascribe the book to Moses. Both the Old and New Testaments repeatedly testify to the Mosaic authorship of the Pentateuch (e.g., Josh. 1:7; Dan. 9:11-13; Luke 16:29; John 7:19; Acts 26:22; Rom. 10:19)
- A view that unknown authors may have written Genesis much later has become more and more popular, even in most Christian seminaries, but this view has no plausible reasons behind it. Conservative Christians and Jews continue to acknowledge Moses as the author.
- Jesus Himself confirmed that Moses was the author A few examples:
 - John 5:46-47 - If you believed Moses, you would believe me, because **he wrote about me**. But if you do not believe what Moses wrote, how will you believe my words?"
 - Mark 12:19 - "Teacher, **Moses wrote for us**: 'If a man's brother dies and leaves a wife but no children, that man must marry the widow and father children for his brother.'" (*Jesus did not contradict them that Moses wrote it*)
 - Mark 12:26 - "Now as for the dead being raised, have you not read in **the book of Moses**, in the passage about the bush, how God said to him, 'I am the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob'?"

Transmission of Genesis

- Moses received the words to write from God
 - Exodus 19:7 - Moses gave the people the words of God
 - Exodus 24:3-4 - WORDS - not just an idea but the words of God
 - Joshua 14:2; 22:2,3,5; 23:6-8 The Lord commanded thru Moses

Historicity of Genesis

- A few examples of hundreds of verses confirming the historicity of Genesis:
 - Isaiah 54:9
 - Matthew 19:4
 - Romans 4:3
 - 1 Peter 3:4-5

Date written

In writing the book of Genesis, Moses doubtless utilized older written sources and oral traditions, as well as material directly revealed to him by God (Num. 12:8). Trained in the "wisdom of the Egyptians" (Acts 7:22), Moses had been providentially prepared to understand and integrate, under the inspiration of God, all the available records, manuscripts, and oral narratives. The composition of the book was probably undertaken during the wilderness exile of Israel (c. 1446-1406 B.C.).

Nelson's Charts and Maps

BEGINNINGS in the book of Genesis

The Universe

Life

Men and Women

Marriage

Evil

Salvation

Government

Language

Nations

Religion

Israel

The Sources of the Genesis account of creation - 4 views

- 1) Drawn from Babylonian traditions
 - 2) Babylonian accounts drawn from Genesis narrative
 - 3) Genesis traditions arose spontaneously - Babylonian, Egyptian, Greek, Roman, etc.
 - 4) All accounts go back to a common source - true account was passed down, preserved by the Holy Spirit, either written directly by Moses or dictated by God. As humanity spread and fell further and further away from God, polytheism and mythologies developed.
- Views 1-3 very difficult to argue for, number four makes the most sense
 - Almost all cultures have a creation story, an “Adam & Eve” story, a flood story - common to all civilizations. Mankind started with the true story, but as mankind spread and time goes by those traditions were corrupted and modified.
 - The Genesis account is the only one among all known cultures that spoke of one all-powerful God, others contained polytheistic and paganistic ideas, and the gods appear to be more humanlike than godlike
 - The Genesis account is the purist account of what really happened and shows divine inspiration when compared with the extravagances and corruptions of other accounts
 - So, Moses gave to us the true stories, that don't contain any pagan ideas.

What you do with Genesis 1-11 sets a precedence for how you treat the rest of the Bible

- If you don't take God at His Word from the very first page, there's no incentive to do so in the rest of the Bible
- If I deny the miracle on the first page, why would I accept the miracles in the rest of the book?
- Once your will is broken and you accept what God has said in Genesis 1-11, the rest of scripture is easy to accept
- Only in Genesis 1-11 do we see our need for salvation. Why is there a curse? Why do I need to be saved? If we don't understand this, there's no reason to trust Christ, and His death is meaningless
- If I think the world is a wonderful place and there's no problems, then why would I become a Christian?
- Genesis 3 explains that we live in a world of constant sin terminated by death, and if I understand that, then salvation makes sense.

Genealogy

- Genealogy in Luke 3:23-38 starts with Jesus and goes back to Adam - shows historicity
- If you deny Adam as a historical person, you will deny Jesus as a historical person
- Genesis genealogies also show true historicity, these were real people

How to Interpret Genesis 1-11

- Use the same method you would use for any other historical document or part of the Bible
- Popular method today is dual hermeneutics - using historical/normal method for some part of the Bible, and allegorize others (like prophecy), used a lot for Genesis now
- A consistent hermeneutic should be used from Genesis to Revelation - literal grammatical-historical, ordinary plain sense

Genesis and Science

- How many eyewitnesses to creation? Only one - there was God
- If you reject what He says about what happened, you're rejecting the only eyewitness available - Hebrews 11:3 (Hall of Faith chapter - creation is first in the list)
- Job 38:4 - God tells Job he doesn't know anything
- Uniformitarianism - the idea that we can understand the past by observing the present - this is the dominant philosophy of science today.
- God says that's a silly way to evaluate the past, I was there! I did something not normal in your world - the only way you can understand it is to accept what I have revealed.
- 2 Peter 3:3-7 teaches that uniformitarianism is false teaching
 - They say that God doesn't intervene in history
 - They deny the 2nd coming of Christ ("all things continue")
 - In the original Greek it says they "push it out of their minds" (creation and the flood, two times God obviously intervened)
- Unless you factor in God's involvement in creation and in history, you will come up with a faulty idea of how things started.

Science and the Bible - 2 approaches

- Accommodation - use the latest findings to interpret Genesis in the light of the latest science
- Biblical presupposition - hold the scientific community accountable for what the Bible says in Genesis

Accommodation Methods - manipulating the text to keep up with science

- Gap Theory - catastrophe involving Satan's fall occurred between Gen 1:1 and Gen. 1:2
- Theistic Evolution - God used evolution (over millions of years) to create the universe
- Literary Framework Hypothesis - Genesis 1-11 not literal
- Genealogy Stretching - Genesis genealogies only contain highlights, not every person
- Day/Age Theory - each day of creation not a literal day
- Local Flood - not global
- Progressive Creationism - combination of the above

Accommodation is the traditional approach to interpreting Genesis 1-11. When science starting "conflicting" with the Bible, this was the method the church adopted to "keep up" with science. Problems with this approach:

- Confuses philosophy with science
 - Science traditionally has always been something observable, testable, and repeatable in a laboratory
 - Example - Stating the earth is 4 billion years old as scientific fact is wrong - it is not a fact. We were not there, and it is not testable or repeatable
 - So science then becomes philosophy, extrapolation, and assumptions
 - The latest scientific opinion isn't science at all, it is philosophical
- Science is a moving target - they always are changing their minds on things such as the origin of the universe, the age of the earth, etc. Scientific opinion always changes.
- Sacrifices textual integrity of the Bible - reading into the Bible what is not there.

Biblical Presupposition Model

- Henry Morris' "The Genesis Flood" in 1961 changed the evangelical view from accommodation to this model
 - Morris, a scientist, challenged the scientific community
 - Created a huge upheaval in the scientific community, Morris is still hated in the community for his views
 - Morris was the first to show that the events of Genesis 1-11 can be corroborated scientifically
 - Showed the flaws in scientific assumptions
 - "We have to interpret the scientific world and nature in light of scripture". Morris (Genesis 2:16-17)
 - We are not free to interpret nature any way we want to, we must interpret nature and science in the light of what God has revealed
 - Henry Morris showed that nature can be misread!
 - "The human mind, though brilliant in what it can achieve, suffers from limitations and darkening. (Charles Ryrie)
 - Scientists look at rocks, trees, stars, etc. with a built-in bias. They are not looking objectively, trying to build a system of assumptions and philosophy without including the possibility of a Creator-God's intervention into the universe. They're looking through a grid, which can be:
 - The grid of our fallen nature
 - Their academic training, sometimes without being aware of it.
 - A preconceived notion that there is no God and miracles are impossible
- When someone is speaking of scientific things, ask yourself which model are they coming from?
- When you interpret nature in light of God's Word, the two fit very well, you can harmonize them.
- There is no real conflict between nature and the Bible.

Structure of Genesis

PART 1

Chapters 1-2 - Creation

Chapters 3-5 - The Fall

Chapters 6-9 - The Flood

Chapters 10-11 - National Dispersion

PART 2 - Historical narrative of the Patriarchs - 4 people

Chapters 12-25 - Abraham

Chapters 25-26 - Isaac

Chapters 27-36 - Jacob

Chapters 37-50 - Joseph

Message and Purpose of Genesis

- Written in the time of Moses
- Written to Israel when they were becoming a new nation, when they came out of Egyptian bondage
- Moses wrote to the people to remind them of their history so they could go into the promised land and become who God called them to be
- God's purpose was for Israel to mediate God's purposes to a fallen world
- They had to know where they'd been before they could know where they were going. Israel had forgotten most of their history during their enslavement in Egypt

Three Themes of Genesis

- Creation and man as the pinnacle of creation
- How this perfect creation was lost, how the terrible process of sin started to escalate, making necessary a Savior through the Jewish line of Abraham
- Traces the Messianic line that would bring about redemption, starting from Genesis 3:15 to the end of the book.

Closing comments:

Your view of the Bible as a whole will stand or fall with your view of Genesis. If Genesis is not an accurate historical record, then is any of the Bible accurate? We have already shown many reasons in previous studies to believe that the Bible is accurate and can be trusted.

Still, many, even many who call themselves Christians, do not believe Genesis is literally true history. What do you believe? It is your choice, but be careful that your beliefs are honest, not just trusting what you were taught in school or have learned by watching the Discovery Channel! Think for yourself! I won't tell you what to believe, but there is lots of solid evidence for a young earth. Does it make sense to take what the latest scientific opinions are over what God says? I choose to believe God, who was the only one there!

Does it really matter if you believe that God created the earth in 6 days or 6 billion years? Apparently most people think it doesn't matter. In fact, most think Genesis doesn't matter, because I can't recall the last time I heard a message preached in church on Genesis 1-11. Have you heard one recently at your church or on the radio? Let me know, it should be interesting.

Join us for the next lesson as we tackle Genesis Chapter 1!

In Christ,
Dusty Rhodes