

Background:

Title:

The term “**Genesis**” comes from the Hebrew “**Bere’shith,**” first word in the Bible. It means “**in the beginning.**” The term in the Greek Septuagint and the English translations means “**origin**” or “**beginning.**”

Author:

Moses - the lawgiver and leader of Israel during the exodus from Egypt and wilderness experience. He is known as the author by Jews and Christians alike. The Old Testament contains both direct and indirect references to the Mosaic authorship of the entire Pentateuch (Ex 17:14; Lev 1:1-2; Nu 32:2; De 1:1; Jos 1:7; 1Ki 2:3; 2Ki 14:6; Ez 6:18; Neh 13:1; Da 9:11-13; Mal 4:4). In the line, the New Testament also contains numerous references to Moses as the author (Mt 8:4; Mk 12:26; Lk 16:29; Jn 7:19; Ac 26:22; Ro 10:19; 1Co 9:9; 2Co 3:15).

Moses was called by God to be a leader for His people (Ex 3). Reluctantly he complies. It would be difficult to find another man as well qualified as Moses. He had received his formal education in Egypt (7:22), and possessed the practical skills to correctly integrate and understand all the available records, manuscripts and oral transmissions into the four inspired volumes called the Pentateuch. **Genesis** is the first.

Date:

Various times are given, but the most logical time seems to be when Moses was with God on Mt. Sinai (Ex 24:12).

Time Span:

From creation to the death of Joseph and the settlement of God’s chosen people in Egypt. The beginning of **Genesis** cannot be dated with certainty, but the final events of the book probably occurred around 1700 B.C. half of the entire period of Old Testament history.

Summary:

History is the account of the acts of God. In a real sense history is viewed as God’s story. **Genesis** is the beginning of the acts of God in human events and is in many respects the foundation book of the entire Bible. It starts with the beginning of all things and assumes the existence of an eternal, all powerful, holy God. Man is created and placed in a protected garden. He is driven out because of disobedience and establishes cities. Politically and religiously, man is under the dominion of Jehovah. It is not until after the flood that “nations” are formed, and not until the Exodus that the nation of Israel is created.

During the period from Abraham to Joseph, the rest of the world develops slowly. Signs of civilization are sparse. In the nearby Balkans, the Bronze Age has just begun. In the area of Western France, the dead were being buried in vast stone tombs, the last of the Stone Age. In Britain, the Temple of the Sun at Stonehenge was being built, and Germany was beginning to learn farming.

After the creation of the world, the sin of Adam and Eve, and the great flood, God calls a particular man, Abraham, from Ur of Chaldees, a city on the Euphrates River. By this man’s seed, all the families of the earth will be blessed. The Bible is the account of God’s covenant promise to mankind through Abraham and its ultimate fulfillment in Christ and the church (Gal 3).

GENESIS

The Drama Begins

Key Text:

Ge 3: 15

I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and hers; he will crush your head, and you will strike his heel.

Theme:

- I. Genesis is the Book of Beginning:
 - A. The creation of the universe and all living things.
 - B. Beginning of sin and death.
 - C. Beginning of the plan of redemption.
 - D. The distribution of peoples, languages and nations.
 - E. The Hebrews become the chosen nation.
- II. Genesis tells about God’s promise to Abraham. Three elements: (12:1-9)
 - A. A nation would arise *from* his seed.
 - B. A land will be given *to* his seed.
 - C. A blessing will be given *through* his seed.
- III. Genesis describes God’s providential care for His people, and gives assurance that His word will be fulfilled.



Book
Look
at the

Sermon Outline

The B-I-B-L-E

Introduction:

I recently counted the number of Bibles I have in my office—seventeen. That doesn't count the audiotape version I carry around in the car, or the Bibles I keep at the house. In the drawer of the bedside table of every hotel I've slept in, there has been a copy of the Bible—free for the taking. Walk into most bookstores in the USA and the problem you face is not finding a Bible but making a choice between the wide variety of Bibles available. There are King James or modern English versions. There are Simple-English Bibles. There are red-letter or illustrated editions. You can buy Amplified Bibles or Condensed Bibles or Bibles that contain eight translations in parallel columns. You can choose between leather or hardback or paperback bindings.

We are drowning in Bibles. They fill our shelves, clutter our coffee tables, slide around in the back seats of our cars. If we were a swearing people, we would always have handy the stack of Bibles to do it on.

Unfortunately, having a Bible is not the same as being hungry for what it says. The sad truth is that many of us do not read any of the Bibles in our possession. We open them on occasion. We read along when someone else is reading publicly. We can even recall vague snatches of scriptures learned in childhood. But as for a consistent, disciplined, sequenced pattern of personal Bible reading or study...we do not feel the need to dine on God's word. One recent survey indicated that only 12 percent of Bible believers spend any time in the word on a daily basis; 34% read the Bible only once a week; while 42% of those who say they believe the Bible is God's word read from it only once in a great while.

Almost 70 years ago, Henry Halley (the author of Halley's Bible Handbook) identified the lack of Bible reading as the major crisis facing the church of his own day and fumed:

Oh, we talk about the Bible, and defend the Bible, and praise the Bible, and exalt the Bible. Yes indeed! But many church members seldom ever even look into a Bible—indeed would be ashamed to be seen reading the Bible. And Church leadership generally seems to be making no serious effort to get people to be Bible readers.

Outline:

I. Instances of Bible Burning

- A. **Jeremiah: Read Jeremiah 36:1-7, 15b-32**
- B. **The Jews under Antiochus IV (Ephiphanes)**
- C. **Diocletian**

1. A.D.303, Roman emperor Diocletian ordered every Bible in Rome to be confiscated and burned.
2. 25 years later, Constantine ordered 50 copies of the Bible at state expense. There were plenty of Bibles around from which to make copies!

Transition: Voltaire boasted that in 100 years the Bible would be non-existent, replaced by his own work. 50 years after his death, the Geneva Bible Society bought his house and printing press and printed 1000's of Bibles in his living room!

II. The Sacrifices involved in the making of manuscripts

- A. **The preparation of the materials**
- B. **The Process of Copying**

1. The Scriptoriums
2. Our debt to these men: "Only three fingers write, but the whole body is in agony."

III. Getting the Book in our Own Language

A. John Wycliffe

1. Completed first translation of the N.T. in English.
2. Wycliffe was tried post-humously, convicted of heresy, dug up and burned.

B. William Tyndale

1. The story of Tyndale's N.T.
2. In 1536, Tyndale was burned at the stake for the heresy of publishing a Bible in English Language.

C. The Great Bible

1. Henry VIII had an authorized English version placed in every church in the country.
2. A bishop complained that so many were reading they no longer listened to his sermons!

Conclusion: What sacrifices others were willing to make so that we could have a Bible. What a tragedy it is that so few of us read the Bibles their blood and sweat made readily available to us!

Christ in Genesis

This book of beginnings also anticipates the coming of Christ. Though veiled to those who do not believe, several verses speak clearly to the faithful and show the plan of God to bring His Son to the world.

Prophecies:

The “seed” of woman (Ge 3:15): This is the first prophecy of the redeemer. Sin has produced separation and condemnation for all men (Ro 5:14ff). The only remedy is the “seed” which will come. He will crush Satan’s head (bring an end to Satan and his work), but He will be bruised (crucifixion and resurrection). Starting from this passage, the prophecies and promises of the Christ continue until their fulfillment in Jesus. (cf Heb 2:9-15; Gal 4:4-5).

The “seed” of Abraham (Ge 12:1-4; 18:18; 22:18; 26:4; 28:14): The undeniable meaning of these promises made to the Patriarchs is that through their posterity salvation should be extended to all the nations of world. The fulfillment can be seen in Christ (Jn 8:36; Gal 3:16-19; Ro 4:13-25).

The “Lion” of Judah (Ge 49:10): “Shiloh” means *pacifier*, or *peacemaker*; used in a concrete sense, he who is *peaceful*, *secure*. Three things are predicted in this verse. First, the tribe of Judah will remain until the Redeemer should appear. Second, the Prince of Peace (Eph 2:14) would come from Judah. Third, His rule will extend over the nations (Rev 5:5).

Types:

Adam (Ge 1:-3:); Ro 5:14; 1Co 15:45

Melchizedek (Ge 14:18ff); Ps 110:4; Heb 6:20-7:28

Isaac (Ge 21:12); Heb 11:18-19

Jacob’s Ladder (Ge 28:10-17); Jn 1:51

Why Did God Speak To Men Through Prophecy?

1. If their views had been limited to the present, the covenant people would have been in danger of becoming selfish.
2. The promise of the Messiah was a means of retaining the allegiance of the people to the Lord during times of calamity.
3. The promise of the Messiah was a means of promoting genuine piety and true devotion to God. Only the righteous would receive the blessings.
4. Prophecy prepared the way for Christ, so that, when He did come, He might be identified by a comparison of the prediction with the fulfillment.

Major Lessons

1. Election

Abel, Noah, Abraham, Jacob and Joseph are all called by God and chosen for their place in the history of God’s people. Sometimes, as in the case of Jacob, the choice flies in the face of traditional ways of doing things.

2. Salvation

As soon as man committed sin, God made it plain that He was concerned to rescue man. Ge 3:15, 4:4, and 22:8 may all refer to the work Christ was to do.

3. Work

Even before the fall, man had a task to do in the world (1:28). Man was made to work. After the fall, it became less enjoyable (3:17-19).

4. Rest

The idea of one day in seven being a rest day comes from these earliest chapters of the Bible (2:2, 3). This notion precedes the command given to Moses.

5. Satan

An evil influence is introduced into the world. Satan, active and lying and scheming, is shown at work in God’s creation.

6. Death

Death is threatened (3:3), overcome (5:24), and often encountered (e.g. 49:1-50:3). It is one of the chief fears of man. There are two deaths encountered: physical and spiritual.

7. Marriage

Marriage is instituted by God as an honorable and holy state (2:18-25). It forms the thread from which the entire fabric of human society is woven.

8. Worship

From the very beginning, man has had the privilege and responsibility to worship God (4:1-7).

9. Soul

It is during the creation of man that God breathes into his body both life and the eternal soul. The eternal spirit or soul distinguishes man from animal life (2:7).

10. Providence

God’s activity in the events of history is an ever present reality as demonstrated in the life of Joseph (37:1-36; 39-50).

Outline

- I. The History of the Primitive World (1-11)**
- A. The Creation (1-2)
 - 1. Creation in general (1)
 - 2. Creation of man in particular (2)
 - B. The Fall (3-6)
 - 1. Fall of man; expulsion from paradise (3)
 - 2. History of Adam and descendants (4-5)
 - 3. Increase of wickedness and the flood (6)
 - C. The Flood (7-8)
 - D. The New World (9-11)
 - 1. Intoxication of Noah (9)
 - 2. Distribution of peoples (10)
 - 3. Dispersion of mankind (11)
- II. The History of the Patriarchs (12:1-50:26)**
- A. Abraham's Life: Covenant Promise (12:1-23:20)
 - 1. Covenant faith begins (12:1-14:24)
 - a. God's promise to Abraham (12:1-4)
 - b. wanderings of Abraham (12:5-13:1)
 - c. dispute and division of the land (13:2-18)
 - d. kings of the east capture Lot (14:1-24)
 - 2. Covenant faith tested (15:1-21:21)
 - a. an heir promised (15:1-20)
 - b. Ishmael not the heir (16:1-15)
 - c. circumcision a sign of the covenant (17:1-27)
 - d. son promised to Abram and Sarah (18:1-15)
 - e. Sodom and Gomorrah (18:16-19:38)
 - f. Abraham visits Abimelech (20:1-19)
 - g. Isaac born and Ishmael driven out (21:1-21)
 - 3. Covenant faith perfected (22:1-23:20)
 - a. offering of Isaac (22:1-19)
 - b. death of Sarah (23:1-20)
 - B. Life of Isaac: Covenant Passed On (24:1-26:33)
 - 1. Marriage to Rebekah (24:1-67)
 - 2. Isaac and his sons (25:19-26)
 - 3. Sale of the birthright by Esau (25:27-34)
 - 4. Covenant Given to Isaac (26:1-5)
 - 5. Deception of Abimelech (26:6-33)
 - C. Life of Jacob - Covenant Pursued (27:1-36)
 - 1. Secures physical blessing by deceit (27:1-45)
 - 2. The flight to Haran (27:46-29:14)
 - 3. Life in Haran (29:31-30:43)
 - 4. Laban Pursues Jacob (31:1-55)
 - 5. Peace with Esau and life in Canaan (32:1-36:43)
 - D. Joseph's Life: Covenant Practiced (37:1-50:25)
 - 1. His training by trials (37:1-40:23)
 - a. Joseph the dreamer (37:1-11)
 - b. sold into Egypt (37:12-40:23)
 - c. Judah and Tamar (38:1-30)
 - 2. His triumph by testing (41:1-50:25)
 - a. preparation for famine (41:1-57)
 - b. confrontation with his brothers (42:1-45:28)
 - 3. His death (50:22-26)

Small Group Study

Warm-up:

Share a time in your life when you spent a great deal of money for something of little value.

Look at the Book

Genesis 25:21-34

1. What significance has Jacob's name and his holding to Esau's heel with Jacob's personality in this story?
2. Do you think Jacob was being cold and hard when Esau asked for "a swallow of that red stuff" and he would not give it to him until Esau sold his birthright?
3. How desperate do you think Esau was when he asked for the food? Do you think he was really about to die, or that he just *thought* he was about to die?
4. Why was the birthright so important?
5. Why do you think Esau "despised" his birthright?

Looking Closer:

1. If you were Jacob, how would you react to Esau despising his birthright?
 - a. It's mine now!
 - b. I didn't think he would do it!
 - c. I knew he didn't want it.
 - d. He didn't deserve it anyway.
2. If you possessed a great spiritual blessing, what would it take for you to sell it?
 - a. Very little. They are not worth much.
 - b. Not much. They can be purchased again.
 - c. A great deal, but it has got to be the right price.
 - d. I would not sell it for any price!
3. What would cause you to despise your spiritual blessing?
 - a. The example of an unfaithful Christian.
 - b. My own faithless action.
 - c. Nothing.
 - d. Not valuing my "birthright" sufficiently.
4. What do you think about the moral implications in Jacob's deception? Was he right or wrong? Why?
5. Do you think we can be deceptive and please God? If there was one thing in the world that you really wanted, would you use deception to get it? What would it be? How do you think God would react?

Look Around:

Go around the group and share with them two of your greatest spiritual blessings.