

THE IMPORTANCE OF GENESIS

Genesis 1:1

INTRODUCTION

- Are we related to the apes? Some say yes, some say no
- How we view our origins affects every area of our lives
- One of the distinctives of humanity that sets us apart from the animals, is that we question our existence
- Consider the great and profound questions that probe into the very essence of our beings:
 - ✓ Where did I come from?
 - ✓ Who am I?
 - ✓ Why am I here?
 - ✓ How should I live?
 - ✓ Where am I going?
- These are questions that every person ought to devote themselves to, and not cease until they are answered – but few people bother, and those who do are satisfied with poor answers
- In understanding our existence, people will either choose atheism or theism
- The atheistic world-views
 - ✓ Existentialism – life has no inherent meaning and that you create your own meaning through your choices and actions.
 - ✓ Nihilism – There is no objective meaning to life, and no objective morality
 - ✓ Humanism – we must try to find meaning through our relationships, experiences, and contributions to society
- The theistic world-views
 - ✓ Monotheism –The belief in one singular God, who is all-powerful and the creator of the universe

- ✓ Polytheism – This belief system features multiple gods and goddesses, who may have different areas of influence or power
- ✓ Deism – Deists believe in a God who created the universe but doesn't intervene in its daily operations
- ✓ Pantheism believes that God is everything and everything is God, blurring the lines between the divine and the physical world
- Note that a wrong theistic belief leaves a person no better off than an atheistic belief – they are both idolatry and both leave man dead in his sins and condemned to the lake of fire for eternity
- This is why we need to believe not only that there is “a god”, but believe in the true God who is revealed in Genesis if we are to be saved
- God has indeed made us and he has revealed all that we need to know about him and about ourselves in the Bible
- Genesis is the beginning and foundation of all of God's special revelation – all the rest flows from it and builds upon it
- *“Besides being introductory, Genesis is explanatory. The other writings of the Bible are inseparably bound up with it inasmuch as it gives us the origin and initial explanation of all that follows. The major themes of Scripture may be compared to great rivers, ever deepening and broadening as they flow; and it is true to say that all these rivers have their rise in the watershed of Genesis. Or, to use an equally appropriate figure, as the massive trunk and wide spreading branches of the oak are in the acorn, so, by implication and anticipation, all Scripture is in Genesis. Here we have in germ all that is later developed. It has been truly said that “the roots of all subsequent revelation are planted deep in Genesis, and whoever would truly comprehend that revelation must begin here.” (J. Sidlow Baxter, Explore the Book)*
- Genesis is quoted over 260 times in the New Testament
- Knowing how vital the book of Genesis is, Satan has focussed his attacks upon it, particularly the opening three chapters
- It is derided as unscientific and contradictory to evidence
 - ✓ It is called a “myth”, similar to the other “creation myths” found in other religions
 - ✓ It is regarded as “poetry”, not a literal account of the manner of creation

- ✓ It is corrupted by the so-called “gap theory” which places a lengthy period of time between the first two verses
- ✓ It is corrupted by the “day-age theory” which teaches the days of the creation week were long periods of time
- Satan knows if he can destroy the foundation of our faith, he can destroy our faith altogether
- Today we consider the vital importance of the book of Genesis

I. THE FIRSTS IN GENESIS

In Genesis we find many firsts

- The first blessing (1:28)
- The first marriage (2:21-24)
- The first lie (3:4)
- The first sin (3:6)
- The first divine curse (3:14-19)
- The first Messianic prophecy (3:15)
- The first pain of childbirth (3:16)
- The first labour (3:17)
- The first thistles (3:18)
- The first sweat 3:19)
- The first clothes (3:21)
- The first baby (4:1)
- The first religious offering (4:3-4)
- The first animal sacrifice (4:4)
- The first murder (4:8)
- The first death (4:8)
- The first farm (4:2)
- The first sheep herd (4:2)
- The first city (4:17)
- The first cattle herd (4:20)
- The first music (4:21)
- The first metal works (4:22)
- The first boat (6:14)
- The first rain (7:12)
- The first altar (8:20)
- The first eating of meat (9:3)
- The first capital punishment (9:6)
- The first covenant (9:9)
- The first rainbow (9:12-17)
- The first case of drunkenness (9:21)

The first world unity movement (10:10)
The first languages (11:6-9)
The first king (14:1)
The first war (14:1-2)
The first priest (14:18)
The first tithing (14:20)
The first animosity between the Arabs and the Jews (cf. 16)
The first meeting between angels and men (18:1-3)
The first intercessory prayer (18:23-32)
The first homosexuality (19:4-5)
The first incest (19:30-38)
The first answered prayer (20:17)
The first twins (25:24)
The first dream (28:12)
The first prison (39:20)
The first famine (41:27)
The first coffin (50:26)

II. THE FOUNDATION IN GENESIS

All the great doctrines of the Bible find their foundation in Genesis

A. The names of God revealed in Genesis

1. Elohim – The mighty one
2. Jehovah – the self-existent one
3. Adonai – Master, Lord, or Owner
4. El Elyon – The Most High God
5. El Shaddai – The all-powerful God
6. Jehovah-Jireh – The Lord will provide

B. The attributes of God revealed in Genesis

1. The omnipresence of God – Having the ability to be at all places at the same time
2. The omnipotence of God – Having unlimited power
3. He made all things of nothing, by the word of his power
4. The omniscience of God – Having infinite knowledge

5. The self-existence of God – Needing nothing outside of Himself
6. The holiness of God – Pure, undefiled, separate from sinners
7. The righteousness of God – All God's actions are moral, He always does right.
8. The wisdom of God – the complexities of creation testify to his infinite wisdom
9. The beauty of God – the beauty of nature is a reflection of God's infinite beauty
10. The personality of God – He speaks and can be known. The phrase "And God said" occurs 10 times in Genesis chapter 1. This refutes the Deist position that God exists but He is unknowable and distant from His creation.
11. The grace of God – God provides unmerited salvation to people who do not deserve it in the face of their hatred towards God
12. The mercy of God
13. The justice of God – the judgment of the worldwide flood upon sinful mankind and the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah reveals the mind of God towards sin
14. The sovereignty of God – Joseph is an excellent example of the Providential workings of God.

C. Jesus Christ in Genesis

1. Christ is the Creator of all things (John 1:3)
2. Numerous prophecies point to Christ
 - a. The *protoevangel* (first Gospel) presents Christ as the seed of the woman who will bruise the serpent's head (Genesis 3:15)
 - b. He is Abraham's seed who would bless all nations (Genesis 12:3)
 - c. He is called Shiloh, the peaceful one, who will one day come and reign (Genesis 49:10)

3. Numerous types represent Christ
 - a. Melchizedek (Genesis 14:18; Hebrews 6:20)
 - b. The substitutionary lamb (Genesis 22:8; John 1:29)
 - c. Jacob's ladder (Genesis 28:12; John 1:51)
 4. Christ appears numerous times in human form as the “angel of the LORD”, called *theophany* (Genesis 18:1-3; 32:24-25, 28-30)
- D. The Holy Spirit in Genesis
1. He was active in the creation (1:2)
 2. He strives against sin (6:3)
- E. The doctrine of man in Genesis
1. Man's creation in God's image
 2. The creation of man and woman
 3. Man is comprised of both body and soul
 4. Man's role to exercise dominion over the earth, to procreate and fill the earth (Genesis 1:28)
 5. Man's fall into sin, bringing the curse upon the creation (3:1-8)
 6. The subsequent history of man generally (chapters 4-11), then specifically the Hebrew race (chapters 12-40)
 7. The origin of the nations, particularly the Gentiles (Ch. 10).
 8. The origin of the main language families at Babel (11:1-9).
 9. The origin of the Jewish nation (10:21-31, 11:10-50:26).
- F. The doctrine of sin in Genesis
1. The original creation was “very good” (1:31), untainted by sin or death
 2. Genesis shows clearly that death entered the world by man's sin (Genesis 3; Romans 5:12-21)

3. All those who are in Adam are in sin and subject to eternal death
 4. Only those who are in Christ are saved from sin and death (1 Corinthians 15:21-22)
- G. The doctrine of salvation in Genesis
1. God showed that man is incapable of covering his nakedness and sin – it requires a divine covering made by sacrifice (Genesis 3:21)
 2. The requirement of blood atonement is established even as Abel's sacrifice of the flock was the only acceptable one before God (Genesis 4:4)
 3. In contrast, Cain's sacrifice represents human efforts of righteousness which God will not accept (Hebrews 11:4; Jude 11)
 4. The only way of salvation is like Noah, to find grace in the eyes of the Lord (6:8)
 5. Justification by faith alone is demonstrated by Noah (Hebrews 11:7) and Abraham (Genesis 15:6)
 6. Substitutionary atonement is shown in the ram that was offered in the place of Isaac, a picture of Christ who is the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world (John 1:29)

III. OUR FAITH IN GENESIS

- A. Genesis is not a mere book of facts, but a revelation of God to mankind
1. Genesis contains a great deal of historical and scientific information which is entirely accurate
 2. But if this is all a person gets from the book, they have profited little
 3. We must read Genesis with the goal of knowing God personally, of knowing ourselves as we truly are, and knowing God's will for our lives
- B. Genesis is trustworthy
1. Historically, the numerous references to historical people and nations accord with the archaeological record

2. Scientifically, the Genesis account does not contradict a single proven scientific fact
 3. The Lord Jesus Christ repeatedly confirmed the accuracy of the Genesis account
- C. Genesis must be received by faith
1. A person's acceptance of the Genesis account is not by mere academic study into the details recorded
 2. The truths recorded here must be received by faith – a faith that is generated by the Holy Spirit in the heart as the word of God is read and heard (Romans 10:17)
 3. “Through faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that things which are seen were not made of things which do appear.” (Hebrews 11:3)
 4. Genesis is a continual account of men and women of faith who trusted in God – their names are recorded in the “Hall of Faith” in Hebrews 11 – Abel, Enoch, Noah, Abraham, Sarah, Isaac, Jacob

CONCLUSION

1. Satan is active today, trying to destroy Genesis and cast doubt upon its truth
2. Where do you stand when it comes to the vital truths recorded in Genesis?
3. Do you know them well enough to answer those who criticise them?
4. Do you firmly believe in them, knowing that they are God's inspired truth?
5. Most importantly, do you know and trust in the God who made all things, and to whom you must give account on the day of judgment?