

## **Synthetic Bible Studies**

Containing an outline study of every book of the Bible  
with suggestions for Sermons, Addresses and  
Bible Expositions

By

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### **LESSON ONE**

#### **GENESIS, CHAPTERS 1-11**

The object now before us is to get hold of the facts of these chapters of Genesis. We shall not do much in the way of their interpretation, indeed that is not our thought in any of these lessons. The facts must come first and interpretation afterwards. To a great extent if we get the facts the interpretation will take care of itself, for the Bible is wonderfully self-interpretative. Moreover, until the facts are clearly seen, we are not ready for interpretation. This latter also can be gathered from books which will be suggested as we go along perhaps. but the facts, the basis of all Bible study, can only be obtained by the synthetic reading of the Bible itself.

And it is only the great outline facts we are seeking. To have too many of them in our minds would defeat one of the purposes in view, which is not only to obtain, but to retain what we get. And then, too, it will be found that if the reading be done as requested in the introduction, the great facts will easily suggest and bring to mind the lesser ones related to them. Of this we shall be persuaded as we advance.

#### **The Word Outline**

What then is the first great fact in the book of Genesis? At once, you respond, "The creation of the world." What are its chapters? 1 and 2. Now give the next great fact. "The fall," chapter 3. The next "The deluge," chapters 5-9. And the last, so far as this lesson is concerned "The dispersion of the nations," chapters 10, 11.

The following then is our word outline of the lesson:

Creation, 1, 2.  
Fall, 3.  
Deluge, 5-9.  
Nations, 10, 11.

Only four words, but if we have done the reading asked they will suggest to us the general details that group themselves under each one. Let us see if this is not true.

### **The First Great Fact**

What does the word "creation" suggest? Can you state the events of the six days in their order? Here they are:

Light  
Firmament  
The Dry Land  
Light-holders  
Fish and Fowl  
Cattle and Man

Notice, that light was created four days before the sun. Objectors to the Mosaic record used to laugh at that, and say there could have been no light before the sun, since the sun was the source of light. But later scientific discoveries indicate that there is a light separate from the sun - that the earth itself is luminous. This gives authority for the use of the word "light-holders" as applied to the creation of the fourth day.

Notice, that the word "firmament" means the expanse or atmosphere that is around the earth supporting the clouds.

Notice, that in the case of "the dry land" the herb and the tree came first and the seed in each case afterwards, different from what we observe now, and yet as science shows, inevitable at the beginning. Here again we have a comparatively recent confirmation of the authority and inspiration of the Mosaic record.

### **The Law of Recurrence**

But this does not exhaust the word "creation." What have we in chapter 2 different from chapter 1? After referring to the hallowing of the seventh day, the writer describes more in detail one of the acts of creation spoken of only in a general way before. What act is it? "The creation of man."

Here then we meet for the first time a peculiarity of the rhetoric of the HOLY SPIRIT with which it is necessary for us to become acquainted at once.

We shall need to recognize it many times in the course of our work, especially in the more difficult books of the prophets, and to understand it is vital either to get at their facts or the interpretation of them. This peculiarity is defined as the "*law of recurrence*."

Look at the name well, and get it fastened on your mind. Now, what is the law of recurrence?

*It is that peculiarity of the HOLY SPIRIT as an Author by which He gives first the outlines of a subject, and then recurs to it again for the purpose of adding details.*

To quote the language of a great authority on Bible exegesis:

"Many have quite overlooked this, and read Scripture as if the order of narration were always the order of accomplishment, and, as if consecutive chapters were necessarily consecutive as to time. But if Scripture be read so, confusion and mistakes are certain."

In the first chapter then, we have the account of creation in outline, and in the second, part of the same account in detail. The part thus given in detail concerns the creation of man. There is a reason for this detail about man in all that follows, for the Bible is not a history of the world, but a history of man, especially the redemption of man.

But what are these details about the creation of man?

There are at least four:

- (1) the nature of his being, verse 7,
- (2) the location in which he was placed, verses 8-14,
- (3) the moral test laid upon him, verses 15-17, and
- (4) the help-meet given him, verses 18-25.

Notice, that the nature of man seems to be three-fold.

- there was first his body made of the dust of the ground,
- then the breath or spirit of life put into it, and
- finally the combining of these two forming a third, so that "**the man became a living soul.**" (Compare I Thessalonians 5:23).

It is said, Genesis 1:26, that GOD made "**man in his own image,**" and morally that is explained in part by such a passage as Colossians 3:10, but constructively, if one may use such a word in this connection, it is explained by the fact that GOD Himself is a Trinity in unity, and has given us this reflection and proof of Himself in our own nature.

Notice, that the whole description of the location of man in Eden carries on the face of it the idea of historicity. Eden and the story associated with it can hardly be a myth when we see the HOLY SPIRIT laboring, so to speak, to identify its whereabouts not only by the names of the rivers flowing out of it, and the countries they watered, but even the very nature of the soil of those countries.

Notice, that Adam was a highly intelligent man to be able to name every living creature brought before him, and that this fact has a bearing upon the assumption of some that man is a development from a lower animal.

### **The Second Great Fact**

As we have thus divided the word "creation" into its lesser facts, let us do the same for the word "fall." Can you recall the details of the chapter for which it stands?

Name the events in their order, thus:

The temptation of the serpent, verses 1-5.

The fall of the woman and the man, verses 6-8.

The appearance of the Lord GOD, verses 9-13.

The pronouncement of the curse, verses 14-19.

The provision of a covering, verse 21.

The exclusion from the garden, verses 22-24.

Notice verse 15 especially, and familiarize yourself with the language of the first promise of hope and redemption for fallen man, because that promise is historically the source of all the other promises of CHRIST in type and prophecy with which the Old Testament abounds.

Notice, that the "serpent" represented more than a mere "**beast of the field**," judging by his reasoning faculties as well as power of speech, and compare that conclusion with Revelation 12:9, and 20:2, where the HOLY SPIRIT plainly identifies him with Satan.

Notice, the plan adapted in the temptation of the woman as outlined in verse 6, and compare it with 1 John 2:16, which indicates it to be the representative plan by which Satan tempts every man; and then examine the record of CHRIST's temptation in the wilderness (Luke 4), to discover that it signally failed in the case of the second Adam.

Notice, that verse 21 contains a suggestion in miniature of the whole plan of redemption through the shed Blood of a substitutionary victim. The "**coats of skins**" could not have been obtained without the death of an innocent animal, while the covering of our first parents with them naturally suggests such a passage as Isaiah 61:10, or Romans 3:22, or II Corinthians 5:21.

May not such an interpretation of this verse throw light on Hebrews 11:4? What was that as to which Abel had "faith," if not this previous revelation of the necessity of a sacrificial victim and a mediator through whom to approach GOD? Was it not Cain's rejection of GOD's way of access that led to his own rejection?

Notice, that the expulsion of the guilty pair from Eden was not an act of judgment unmitigated by mercy, for as they had now "obtained the knowledge of good and evil without the power of resisting evil," it would have added to their calamity if, by eating of "**the tree of life**," they had rendered that state everlasting.

### **The Third Great Fact**

The third word in our word outline suggesting the third fact is "Deluge," chapters 5-9.

It may be asked, Why include chapter 5? But only those who have not read as they were requested to do will be likely to ask that question, for it will be seen that on the principle of "the law of recurrence" that chapter was written for the purpose of calling particular attention to the genealogy of Noah, whose name is practically synonymous with that of the deluge.

It may be well to read chapters 4 and 5 over again that one or two things may be pointed out.

After Cain is brought conspicuously before us by the murder of his brother, his issue is traced for a little way until the line ends in another murderer, his great-grandson Lamech (vs. 18-23).

Then the HOLY SPIRIT seeks to interest us in another kind of man altogether, the third son born to Adam and Eve, named Seth (vs. 25, 26), in whose line came Noah, Shem, Abraham, Jacob, and by and by, JESUS Himself, the seed of the woman who bruised the serpent's head. In order to fix attention on Seth, and thus on Noah, the divine Author recurs at the beginning of chapter five to the original account of the creation of man, traces the history of Adam briefly, and then gives in detail the line of Seth.

Now we are ready for details under the word "deluge."

What is the rough analysis of chapters 5-9?

The genealogy of Noah, 5.

The building of the ark, 6

The occupancy of the ark, 7.

The departure from the ark, 8.

The covenant with Noah, 9.

Notice, the marked distinction between the Cainites and the Sethites, who, even at that early day, represented the world and the church.

The first built cities, invented arts and devised amusements to palliate the curse on sin (chap. 4), but the second seemed more meekly to follow GOD in His directions for getting rid of sin. It is to the latter the words at the close of chapter 4 seem to apply. The word "LORD," in capitals, indicates the name "Jehovah," the covenant name of GOD, that name which they know and love who believe and have hope in His promise (3:15).

Is it not something more than curious that Lamech, the seventh from Adam in the line of Cain, was "a polygamist, murderer, and worshiper of the GOD of forces," while the seventh in the line of Seth (Enoch), was a man who **"had this testimony that he pleased God"** (Hebrews 11:5)? The Sethites were corrupted by and by through evil associations, but yet their line was preserved in Noah.

Notice carefully the causes leading up to what has been called "the antediluvian apostasy," and observe that the fearful progress of wickedness was coincident with a rapid advance in

civilization (4:16-22), and that the female sex came into peculiar prominence in connection with the disregard of the primal law of marriage (6:1, 2).

For a startling analysis of the conditions of the period the student is recommended to a volume entitled, *Earth's Earliest Ages*, by G. H. Pember.

Interest in such a study is stimulated by the fact that "**as it was in the days of Noah, so shall it be also in the days of the Son of man**" (Luke 17:26, 27).

Notice, that the number of living creatures entering the ark may not have been as large as some suppose, since "it has been calculated that there are not more than three hundred distinct species of beasts and birds."

Notice certain changes made in the covenant with Noah as distinct from that made with Adam:

- (1) Man's dominion over the inferior animals is now based on their dread of him, where probably love ruled before.
- (2) Man is now permitted, indeed commanded, to eat animal food, the blood only restricted. A possible reason for the command is suggested in the volume referred to above.
- (3) Man is now put under human law as well as divine (9:5, 6).

All this seems to be in keeping with man's deterioration from what GOD made him at the beginning.

*Notice the pledge of peace.*

Some think from Genesis 2:5, 6, that it had never rained upon the earth till the flood, and that the rainbow was a new phenomenon. If so, with what joy it would be welcomed whenever, thereafter, showers began to fall!

### **The Fourth Great Fact**

The last word in our outline is "Nations," verses 10, 11, where we again have something corresponding to the law of recurrence. That is, the reading of these two chapters discloses that the first treats of the dispersion of the nations in general, and the second in detail, or the first tells "how" and the second "why" they were divided. Examining chapter 10, on what basis were the nations divided?

According to the sons of Noah. A map will be useful here, and you will probably find one in the back of your Bible. Fasten in mind the names of some of the sons and grandsons of Japheth, and then look at the map in the region of the Black and Caspian seas, and also a little further to the left toward Greece, where the same names occur. Do the same with the names of Ham's descendants and look for them in the region of Canaan, Egypt and Africa. Trace Shem's line in the same way through Assyria, Persia, etc., thus discovering by a comparison of ancient geography an ethnology, that the first-named settled in the north and northwest, the second in the south and southwest, and the third, while remaining near the starting point, diverged a little to the south and southeast.

What are the details of chapter 11? Recall them from memory if possible, and then write them like this:

The unity of speech.  
The settlement in Shinar.  
The building of the city and tower.  
The anger and judgment of GOD.  
The dispersion abroad.

Notice the illustration of the law of recurrence here, and how that according to our style of writing, the contents of chapter 11 would naturally precede those of chapter 10, but that the HOLY SPIRIT reverses the order and tells how the nations were divided to the different points of the compass first, and then explains in detail why the transaction took place.

Notice the prophetic outline of the history of the three sons of Noah (9:19-27).

- the curse on Canaan has been fulfilled in the destruction of the Canaanites, the degradation of Egypt, and the slavery of the Africans.
- the blessing on Shem has been seen in the special watch-care over Israel and the establishment of the church in JESUS CHRIST, while
- the enlargement of Japheth is illustrated in the activity and enterprise of the European nations.

That Japheth should dwell in the tents of Shem is seen politically, in the fact that India, whose people came from Shem, is ruled by Great Britain, and indeed the larger part of Asia is controlled by Europe [1906].

But it is seen religiously, and from quite a different point of view in the further circumstance that Shem has been a benediction to Japheth in giving him his knowledge of GOD. The sacred oracles were committed to the line of Shem, and Europe is indebted to Asia for Christianity. There is a difference of opinion as to which of the two views of this particular prophecy is to be entertained.

Notice the name of the city in this chapter, Babel, or Babylon, which means confusion or mixture.

Observe the name and the worldly spirit of its founder as indicated in 10:8-11. This is interesting in the light of Babylon's subsequent history as told in the books of Kings and Chronicles, and the Prophets, and especially in the light of what we read about it as yet to come to pass perhaps, in Revelation, chapters 17 and 18.

Notice, that as by "one miracle of tongues men were dispersed and gradually fell from the true religion, by another (Acts 2), national barriers were broken down that all might be brought back to the one family of GOD."

~ end of Lesson 1 ~

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