

Through the Bible Book by Book

Old Testament

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Genesis

Theme. The Book is well described by its title, Genesis, which means "*beginning*," for it is a history of the beginning of all things - the beginning of heaven and earth, of all life and of all human institutions and relations. It has been called the seed-plot of the Bible from the fact that the germs of all the great doctrines concerning GOD, man, sin and salvation are found there.

The very first verse suggests the purpose of the Book. "**In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth.**" The Israelites, to whom the message of the Book was first addressed, would learn that the GOD of Palestine was also the GOD of all lands, and that the GOD of one nation - Israel - was also the GOD of all nations. Since He was the GOD and Creator of all the earth, He must ultimately become the Redeemer of all the earth. The Book describes how redemption became necessary because man had sinned and fallen into darkness; and how GOD prepared to choose one nation to take the light of Divine truth to the other nations.

Author. Moses.

Scope. From the Creation to the death of Joseph, covering a period of 2,315 years, from about 4004 B. C. to 1689 B. C.

CONTENTS

The contents of Genesis center around nine outstanding subjects.

1. The Creation (Chapters. 1, 2).
2. The Fall (Chapter. 3).
2. The First Civilization (Chapter. 4).
4. The Flood (Chapters. 5-9).
5. The Dispersion of Nations (Chapters. 10, 11).
6. Abraham (Chapters. 12-25).
7. Isaac (Chapters. 17-35).
8. Jacob (Chapters. 25-35).
9. Joseph (Chapters. 27-50).

We shall now analyze the chapters covering each point of the above outline and in so doing we shall be able to fix in our minds the most important facts.

I. The Creation (Chapters 1 and 2)

The great Architect of the universe completed His work of creation in six days, and rested on the seventh. The following is the order of the creation:

Preparation and Separation - Completion and Filling

1st Day - Light	4th Day - Day Lights (heavenly bodies)
2nd Day - Air	5th Day - Birds
2nd Day - Water	5th Day - Fish
3rd Day - Land	6th Day - Animals
3rd Day - Plants	6th Day - Man

On the seventh day He ceased, setting man an example of laboring six days and resting on the seventh.

II. The Fall (chapter 3)

After creating man, the crown of creation, GOD pronounced everything VERY good. Chapter two tells how GOD prepared man's first home, performed the first wedding ceremony and placed two trees in the garden, that taught the following lessons: if Adam and his wife chose the GOOD and refused the EVIL, they would always eat of the tree of LIFE; otherwise, they would die.

In chapter 2. we find a repetition of the account of Creation. On comparing the two chapters, however, we shall see that chapter 1 gives us a general account of the event, while chapter 2 gives the same account with the addition of extra details and with the emphasizing of some particular part of the story. This peculiarity of the Holy Spirit in giving two accounts of one event is called the "*law of recurrence*" and is found all through the Bible.

What does chapter 2 tell concerning the Creation that chapter 1 omits? What is meant by man being created in the image of GOD? (See Ephesians 4:24; Colossians 3:10). To whom does "Us" refer in the expression, "**Let us make man**"? (Read Job 35:10; Colossians 1:16; Job 33:4).

Notice:

1. The possibility of temptation. The tree of the knowledge of GOOD and EVIL was left in the garden in order that man might be tested and learn to serve GOD from a willing heart.
2. The author of the temptation. The serpent represents, and is an agent of, "**that great serpent the devil.**"
3. The subtlety of the temptation. The serpent succeeded in injecting a question mark in the mind of Eve.
4. The success of the temptation. Adam and Eve disobeyed GOD and became conscious of guilt.
5. The first judgment:
 - a. On the serpent: degradation.
 - b. On the woman: pain, and subjection to man.

c. On the man: hard labor on a thorn-bearing ground until his death.

d. On man and his descendants: exclusion from the tree of life in the paradise of GOD.

6. The first announcement of redemption.

a. Redemption promised: Genesis 3:15. "**I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed.**" That is, there will be a struggle between mankind and the power that caused his fall. "**It shall bruise thy head**" - mankind will be victorious, through its representative, the Son of Man. See Acts 10:38; I John 3:8. "**And thou shalt bruise his heel**" - but the victory will be through suffering, through the death of the Seed of the woman, CHRIST. See also Gal. 4:4; Isaiah 7:14; Matt. 1:21.

b. Redemption pictured. The Lord slew the first sacrifice in order to clothe the guilty pair - a picture of the covering of a guilty conscience through blood sacrifice.

Note: the Book of Genesis is the record of the development of this promise of redemption, showing how it passed through different individuals and families.

III. The First Civilization (Chapter 4)

1. The story of Cain shows how sin became hereditary, and led to the first murder. See I John 3:12.

2. The story of Abel teaches us how those sharing in Adam's guilt and sinfulness may be accepted in GOD's sight - through the offering of an atoning sacrifice.

3 The first civilization. Cain became the founder of a civilization that included a city, agriculture, manufactures and arts. In character it was marked by violation of the marriage law and by the spirit of violence. 4:19-24.

4. The birth of Seth. Abel was dead; Cain was rejected; the promise of redemption passed on to Adam's third son - Seth. 4:25, 26.

IV. The Flood (Chapters 5-9)

There were now two classes of people in the world - the ungodly Cainites and the godly Sethites. See 4:25, 26. The chosen line of Seth lost its separation and inter-married with the Cainites. Result: a condition of wickedness on the earth that called for GOD's judgment. Of Seth's descendants only the family of Noah remained true to GOD. Noah becomes the chosen one through whom the promise of redemption continued its journey toward fulfillment. 5:29; 6:8.

Note the genealogy in chapter 5. (*Genealogy is the record of descent from some ancestor.*) It begins with Adam and ends with Noah. We shall find many of these genealogies in the Bible. The main purpose of most of them, as of the one in this chapter, is to keep a record of the line through which the promised Seed (CHRIST) was to come (Genesis 3:15).

Let us sum up the main events of these chapters. Learn these.

1. The genealogy of Noah (Chapter 5).
2. The building of the ark (Chapter 6).
3. The entrance into the ark (Chapter 7).
4. The departure from the ark (Chapter 8).
5. The covenant with Noah (Chapter 9).

Notice the high state of civilization at the time of the Flood (Chapter 4:16-24). The descendants of Cain were the builders of the first city and the originators of the first arts. What are those days to remind us of? (See Matthew 24:37-39).

GOD destroyed the world with a Flood, and started a new race with the family of Noah. He promised that the earth should never again be destroyed by a Flood, and made the rainbow the seal of that covenant. The Lord renewed the charge made to Adam; namely, to replenish the earth. There is a solemn prohibition of murder with this addition that "**whoso sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed.**" This marks the delegating of authority to man to govern his fellows and visit punishment upon crime. Before this, it was GOD alone who punished evildoers.

Later Noah predicted the future of his three sons (9:18-27), and appointed Shem as the chosen seed through whom GOD will bless the world.

V. The Dispersion of the Nation. (Chapters 10, 11)

As an introduction of the study of the nations, read again carefully Noah's prophecy concerning his three sons (Chapter 9:24-27).

Dr. Pinnock writes of its fulfillment as follows: "These prophecies have been wonderfully fulfilled. In respect of Ham's posterity: the Egyptians were afflicted with various plagues; the land of Canaan eight hundred years afterwards was delivered by GOD into the hands of the Israelites under Joshua, who destroyed great numbers, and obliged the rest to flee, some into Africa, and others into various countries; their present condition in Africa we now know.

"In respect of Japheth: '**God shall enlarge Japheth,**' has been fulfilled in the vast extent of country possessed by him - all the isles and countries westward; and when the Greeks, and afterwards the Romans, subdued Asia and Africa, they then occupied the dwellings of Shem and of Canaan.

"In respect of Shem: '**Blessed be the Lord God of Shem**' - that is, He and His church should dwell in the tents of Shem; from him should spring the Messiah; and the worship of the true GOD should be preserved among his posterity; the Jews being the posterity of Shem."

Notice the relation of chapter 10 to chapter 11. Chapter 10 indicates the separate locations of the races and chapter 11 explains how the separation occurred.

After the Flood, the descendants of Noah, led by Nimrod (10:8-10), rose in rebellion against GOD, as an outward sign of which they erected the Tower of Babel. Their purpose was to

organize a "league of nations" against GOD.

GOD spoiled their plan by confounding their speech and scattering them in different countries.

We may speculate in vain as to the exact purpose of the tower itself, but this we may know - that their project was an act of rebellion against GOD. It was evidently GOD's purpose that the descendants of Noah should spread abroad and occupy the different countries of the earth. (See Acts 17:26 and Deuteronomy 32:8). But they said, "**Let us make us a name, lest we be scattered abroad.**" Who was the probable instigator of this rebellion? (See Chapter 10:8, 9.) What was his kingdom? (Chapter 10:10). Of whom is he a type? (II Thessalonians 2:3-11; Revelation 13). Who, in rebellion, will gather the nations together in the last days? (Revelation 16:13-15). Will Babel (or Babylon) again be prominent in the last days? (See Revelation 17, 18).

Learn the following simple outline of chapters 10 and 11:

1. The unity of race and speech.
2. The location of the event - the land of Shinar.
3. The purpose of the tower of Babel - to be a center of rebellion against GOD.
4. GOD's judgment - the confusion of tongues.
5. The result of the judgment - dispersion.

VI. Abraham (Chapters 12-25)

It will be interesting to observe that the first eleven chapters of Genesis cover about 2,000 years - about equal in length to that time covered by all the rest of the Bible. Why does the SPIRIT hurry so over the events of the dawn of history? Because, as we found out in our earlier study, the Bible is mainly a history of redemption, and the history of nations is only incidental to that subject. The SPIRIT hurries over all these events till He comes to Abraham. Then He stops and devotes more space to that one person than He does to 2,000 years of human history. The reason is obvious. The "*Father of the Faithful*" plays an important role in the history of redemption.

By way of review turn back to chapter 5. We called attention there to the genealogy of Noah beginning with Adam.

Now turn to chapter 11:10-26, and you will find that this list is continued. GOD is still keeping a record of the ancestors of the "**Seed of the woman.**" With the name of what one important person does this list end (v. 26)? Why? (See Genesis 12:2,3).

The promise of Genesis 3:15 passed on to Abraham. GOD separated him from his heathen surroundings, and besides personal promises, made the following national and universal promises: (See 12:1-3).

- a. That he should be given a land (Canaan).
- b. That he should be the father of a nation (Israel).
- c. That through this nation in this land all nations of the earth should be blessed.

In other words, the Redeemer promised in 3:15 should come from a nation descended from Abraham.

A study of the life of Abraham will reveal that it is a life of faith - a faith that was tested from the time that he was called to the time when he was commanded to sacrifice his son, Isaac. His life is an illustration of the type of person who would receive the blessing promised in 12:3, and a prophecy of the truth that salvation should be through faith. See Galatians 3:8; Romans Chapter 4.

In this study we shall have time to give only the bare outline of the life of this patriarch. Since you have read the chapters, the details will suggest themselves. Learn the following facts:

1. His call to go to Canaan (Genesis 12:1-5).
2. His descent into Egypt and happenings while there (12:10-20).
3. His separation from Lot and his subsequent deliverance of the latter from captivity (13:5-11; 14:14).
4. His reception of GOD's covenant and his justification by faith (15:6, 18).
5. His circumcision as a sign of the covenant (17:9-14).
6. The annunciation of Isaac's birth. (17:15-19; 18:1-15).
7. His intercession for Sodom (18:23-33).
8. His dismissal of Hagar and Ishmael (21:14).
9. His offering up of Isaac (22).
10. His choice of a bride for Isaac (24).
11. His children by Keturah (Chapter 25: 1-4).
12. His death (Chapter 25:8).

VII. Isaac (Chapter 17-35)

To Abraham were born two sons - Ishmael and Isaac. Of these, Isaac was chosen as the inheritor of the promise.

The life of Isaac is quiet and uneventful, and it seems to be a mere echo of his father's. Yet, like his father he is a man of faith, and a channel of blessing. Notice that the promise is repeated to him. Ch. 26.

Learn the following six facts concerning Isaac:

1. His birth promised to Abraham and Sarah (Chapter 15:4; 17:19).
2. Bound upon an altar of sacrifice (Chapter 22:9).
3. Abraham's choice of a bride for him (Chapter 24).
4. GOD appears to him and renews the covenant made to his father (Chapter 26:2-5).
5. His deception by Jacob (Chapter 27:18).
6. His death (Chapter 35:28, 29).

What was Isaac's birth a type of (Genesis 18:9-15 and Matthew 1:21)? His going to Mt. Moriah to be sacrificed (Compare Genesis 22 and Matthew 27:22, 23)? His deliverance from death (Genesis 22; Matthew 28:1-6)? His father's sending his servant to seek a bride for him (Genesis

24; Acts 15:14; I Corinthians 12:13; Ephesians 5:25, 26, 32).

VIII. Jacob (Chapters 25-35)

To Isaac were born two sons - Esau and Jacob. Esau was rejected, and Jacob was chosen as the channel of blessing (25:23). The character of these two sons is revealed by their attitude toward this promise. See 25:29-34.

Learn the outstanding events of Jacob's life.

1. His purchase of his brother's birthright (25:33).
2. His deception of his father (27:18-27).
3. His flight to Padan-aram (27:43 to 28:5).
4. His vision and vow (28:10).
5. His dealings with Laban (Chapter 31).
6. His wrestling with an angel (32:24).
7. His reconciliation with Esau (Chapter 33).
8. His descent into Egypt and his meeting with Joseph (Chapter 46).
9. His death and burial (49:33 to 50:13).

Jacob is the true father of the chosen people, for to him were born the twelve sons that became the fathers of the twelve tribes.

And notice that he is a remarkable type of the nation in its character and experiences:

- a. Notice the combination of shrewd business ability and the desire for the knowledge of GOD. Consider how these two characteristics are revealed in Jacob's attempts to gain possession of the birthright and blessing. And remember that the Jews have been the religious nation, and also the business nation.
- b. Jacob was an exile from his own land for about twenty years. The Jews as a whole have been exiled from their land about nineteen hundred years.
- c. Jacob went into exile with a promise that the Lord would bring him back, in order to fulfill the promise made to Abraham. So Israel's restoration has been assured. They are beloved for the sake of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. Romans 11:28.
- d. GOD's plan was fulfilled through Jacob in spite of the defects of his character. So shall it be with Israel as a nation. As Jacob's character was transformed, so will that of his descendants.

Some important lessons may be learned from the life of Jacob.

1. The power of the grace of GOD. Jacob was all that his name meant - a supplanter, a deceiver.

The sacred ties of family were no bar to his scheming, for his father and his brother fell victims to his deceit. But through the dross of Jacob's sinfulness, GOD saw the glint of that which has

been likened to fine gold-faith. At the brook Jabbok, the Grace of GOD engaged in battle with him, and in the struggle which ensued, the sinful Jacob died, but from his grave rose a new creature Israel, an overcomer with GOD and man.

2. GOD's high estimate of faith. Though the scheming of Jacob to obtain his brother's birth right is inexcusable, yet his earnest desire for it showed an appreciation of spiritual things. To him, the birthright carried with it the honor of being the progenitor of the MESSIAH, and his longing for that honor we may well regard as an expression of faith in the Coming One. It was this faith that gave him preference before GOD over his brother, Esau, who, though in many respects a more noble man than he, showed an utter lack of appreciation of spiritual values by selling for a mess of pottage the right of becoming the progenitor of the "**Desire of all nations.**"

3. "**Whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap.**" Jacob's uncle, Laban, was in the hands of GOD an instrument of retribution for the disciplining of Jacob. Jacob had cheated others; he in turn was cheated. He found in his uncle a mirror that reflected back upon him his own deceitfulness.

IX. Joseph (Chapters 30-50)

The story of Joseph, a boy of seventeen, favored by his father, Israel, who outwardly manifested his affection and esteem, and so caused jealousy on the part of the other sons. Joseph was also favored by the Lord, who revealed to him through dreams that he would be ruler over the other members of his family. This enraged his brothers, who sold him into Egypt, where after much adversity and temptation, and years of waiting for the fulfillment of the promise, he was exalted as the second ruler of the land of Egypt. When his brothers came down for grain and bowed before him, his dreams were fulfilled.

The meaning of the story. Joseph's experiences were connected with the plan of redemption that we have already mentioned. GOD permitted him to be sold into Egypt and to suffer, in order that he might be exalted and thus have an opportunity to nourish the chosen family during famine and settle them in a territory where they could grow into a great nation and undergo certain experiences, until the Lord was ready to lead them to the conquest of the Promised Land. See Genesis 45:7, 8; 50:20.

Learn the following brief outline of the life of Joseph:

1. Loved by his father (37:3).
2. Envied by his brethren (37:4).
3. Sold to the Ishmaelites (37:18-36).
4. Favored by his master (39:1-6).
5. Tempted by his master's wife (39:7-19).
6. Imprisoned by Potiphar (39:20 to 41:13).
7. Exalted by Pharaoh (41:1-44).
8. Unrecognized by brethren at first meeting (42:7 to 44:34).
9. Revealed to brethren at second meeting (45:1-15).
10. Re-united to his father, Jacob (46:28-34).

11. His death (50:22-26).

The life of Joseph presents some striking types of CHRIST. Of what is his father's love for him a type (Genesis 37:3; John 5:20)? The hatred of his brethren (Matthew 27:1, 22, 23)? His temptation (Matthew 4:1)? His patience in suffering (James 5:11)? His promotion by Pharaoh (Mark 16:19)? His marrying a Gentile bride during his rejection by his brethren (Acts 15:14)? His revelation of himself to his brethren the second time (Zechariah 12:10)?

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