

The Book of Genesis

General introduction

The word “genesis” comes from a Greek word that means ‘origin’ or ‘beginning’.

In the Hebrew Scriptures it’s called “Bereshith” (sounds like ‘versheth’) and means ‘*in the beginning*’—Genesis is the book of beginnings.

In Genesis we have recorded the beginning of the sun, the moon, the planets and the stars.

In the book of Genesis we see the beginning of human life, animal life and plant life upon the earth.

In Genesis we see the beginning of marriage, family, nations, culture, language and government.

In Genesis we not only see the beginning of life but also the beginning of death which came about through the beginning of sin which led to the beginning of God’s plan of redemption for mankind.

In fact every major doctrine in the Bible gets its start in the book of Genesis—

That’s why to refute Genesis—is to compromise the rest of the Bible since the book of Genesis is the foundation for the rest of God’s Word—is it any wonder the devil hates this book so much and is trying so hard to undermine its credibility and authority?—

“If the foundations are destroyed, what can the righteous do?” (Ps.11:3)

The book of Genesis can be divided into two main sections: The Human Race; and The Chosen Race.

I. The Human Race—chapters 1-11

- A. The Creation
- B. The Fall
- C. The Flood
- D. The Tower of Babel

II. The Chosen Race—chapters 12-50

- A. Abraham
- B. Isaac
- C. Jacob
- D. Joseph

As I've already said, the book of Genesis not only records for us the beginning of life on planet earth—it also records for us the beginning of death.

Death came to the earth—in fact to all of God's creation (Romans 8:20-21) through the sin of one man—Adam.

This then put into operation God's plan of redemption for mankind through the 'second Adam'—God's redeemer, the Lord Jesus Christ—

Romans 5:12, 17 (NLT)

¹² When Adam sinned, sin entered the world. Adam's sin brought death, so death spread to everyone, for everyone sinned....¹⁷ For the sin of this one man, Adam, caused death to rule over many. But even greater is God's wonderful grace and his gift of righteousness, for all who receive it will live in triumph over sin and death through this one man, Jesus Christ.

However the Savior wouldn't be born on the earth until roughly 4000 years after the Fall.

And so God began His plan of redemption for the human race by choosing one man whom He would use to start a new race upon the earth—a chosen people through which the Redeemer would be born.

That man's name was Abram whom God later renamed Abraham.

And so after God gives us the first eleven chapters in Genesis which deals with the creation, the Fall, the Flood, and the confounding of language which brought about the beginning of cultures—

In the midst of all of this confusion and chaos God called a man named Abram to separate himself from his family, friends and homeland to begin a walk of faith that would lead him to the land of Canaan.

It was the land Canaan that God promised to give Abram (Abraham) and his descendants by covenant as a perpetual possession.

And so the second main section of Genesis begins where God would now focus on Abraham and his descendants as the instrument of His divine grace to this fallen world—a chosen people through whom He would someday bring the promised Messiah and Savior of the world, Jesus Christ.

Now long before the Deliverer of mankind would be born—God raised up a ‘forerunner’, a deliverer of God’s chosen people Israel—his name of course was Moses.

Moses would be used by God to deliver Israel out of the bondage of Egypt even as Jesus would someday deliver mankind out of the bondage of sin and death.

Now it is fairly well accepted by Jewish and conservative Christian scholars that Moses was the writer of the first five books of the Bible called the Pentateuch or the Torah.

Liberal scholars have tried to say that Moses wasn’t the writer (the Author of course is the Holy Spirit—2Tim. 3:16)—but liberal scholars attribute the first five books of the Bible to four different sources which they represent with the letters J, E, P, and D.

I’m not going to waste your time explaining it because the Lord Jesus said that the Pentateuch was written by Moses and that’s good enough for me!

Now understand that even though Moses wrote the Pentateuch—he was only personally involved in the last four books of it—Exodus through Deuteronomy.

Genesis is a compilation of written documents and oral traditions that happened long before Moses came on the scene.

These were written, collected and passed down from family to family in the form of historical records and family genealogies that eventually came into the possession of Noah.

These documents were preserved through the Flood as Noah and each family after him added to them—eleven generations of documents that were collected and eventually given to Moses who compiled and edited them into the book of Genesis.

Now the big debate that has raged among liberals for centuries but has of late started to affect evangelicals is—can we take the book of Genesis literally—and in particular the first three chapters?

And so for many centuries it has been debated as to whether or not Adam and Eve were real people.

Is there a literal devil who took the form of a serpent and caused Adam and Eve to sin in a paradise setting called the Garden of Eden.

Liberals say “*No*”. They claim that this was nothing more than an allegory; a literary device used by the writer to explain evil in the world but can’t be taken literally.

They contend that the whole creation account, the story of Adam and Eve and the Fall of mankind; Satan, Noah and the Flood are all myths and fables designed to teach spiritual truths but were not historical events.

Fortunately Jesus comes to our rescue once again—you see Jesus took all of these as historical fact and taught them as such.

He talked about the creation of God (not the big bang); He mentioned Adam, Eve, and Noah by name teaching them as historical figures.

Skeptics say, “*Just because He called them by name doesn’t mean He wasn’t using allegory*”.

Here’s the problem with that. Jesus taught using allegories all the time—they’re called *parables*.

But whenever Jesus taught a parable He never used names—He always said, “*A man went out to sow seed in his field*” or “*A certain king went on a journey*”.

Whenever He used historical events to teach from—that’s when He would use names—for example:

Luke 17:26-27 (NKJV)

²⁶ And as it was in the days of Noah, so it will be also in the days of the Son of Man: ²⁷ They ate, they drank, they married wives, they were given in marriage, until the day that Noah entered the ark, and the flood came and destroyed them all.

Matthew 12:39-40 (NKJV)

³⁹ But He answered and said to them, "An evil and adulterous generation seeks after a sign, and no sign will be given to it except the sign of the prophet Jonah. ⁴⁰ For as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of the great fish, so will the Son of Man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth.

Luke 16:20-25 (NKJV)

²⁰ But there was a certain beggar named Lazarus, full of sores, who was laid at his gate, ²¹ desiring to be fed with the crumbs which fell from the rich man's table... ²² So it was that the beggar died, and was carried by the angels to Abraham's bosom. The rich man also died and was buried. ²³ And being in torments in Hades, he lifted up his eyes and saw Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom. ²⁴ Then he cried and said, 'Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus that he may dip the tip of his finger in water and cool my tongue; for I am tormented in this flame.' ²⁵ But Abraham said, 'Son, remember that in your lifetime you received your good things, and likewise Lazarus evil things; but now he is comforted and you are tormented.

Whenever Jesus used a name in a story He was teaching, it signified that it was not an allegory but a literal historical person and event.

Besides if Adam wasn't a real person what's his name doing in the real genealogy of Jesus Christ? (Luke 3:38)

As we've already seen, Paul the apostle mentions Adam in Romans 5 telling us that death came into the world through Adam's sin and that Jesus became the 'second Adam' whose death on the cross has made payment for sin.

If Adam was a myth and sin didn't come into the world through him then Paul got it wrong which would mean the Scriptures are not infallible nor inspired by the Holy Spirit.

Genesis is *history* not allegory.

Everything lost in Genesis is regained in Revelation—paradise lost is paradise regained.

Genesis records man starting in a paradise on earth—the book of Revelation ends with redeemed mankind living in paradise in heaven.

What begins in Genesis is developed throughout the Bible and then finds its fulfillment in the Book of Revelation, as you can see from this summary:

Genesis

Revelation

The first heaven and earth

The new heaven and earth

The first garden; the Tree of Life guarded

The “garden city” and the Tree of Life available

The first marriage

The last marriage, the marriage of the Lamb

Satan tempts Eve to sin

Satan thrown into the lake of fire

Death enters the scene

“No more death”

Babylon built

Babylon destroyed

The Redeemer promised

The Redeemer reigns

Genesis 1:1 (NKJV)

¹In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.

In the first verse of the Bible we have the basis for a theistic worldview—that everything in the natural realm was created by a supernatural Deity.

This stands in direct opposition to another very popular worldview—in fact it has become the dominant worldview in the world today—the naturalistic worldview which says that in the beginning nothing produced everything all by itself.

Naturalism believes that everything in the universe came about by natural processes without any supernatural input.

“Naturalism has now replaced Christianity as the main religion of the Western world, and evolution has become naturalism’s principal dogma.”

The Bible says that God made man a little lower than the angels and crowned him with glory and honor. (Ps.8:5)

But modern man has rejected the Creator and has embraced evolution which teaches that man evolved “*a little higher than the apes*”. (Comment)

Of course evolution is amoral, so by rejecting the God of the Bible, Who is a moral God, and replacing Him with the god of naturalism—man is free to live anyway he likes.

Romans 1:18-25 (NKJV)

¹⁸ For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who suppress the truth in unrighteousness, ¹⁹ because what may be known of God is manifest in them, for God has shown *it* to them. ²⁰ For since the creation of the world His invisible *attributes* are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, *even* His eternal power and Godhead, so that they are without excuse, ²¹ because, although they knew God, they did not glorify *Him* as God, nor were thankful, but became futile in their thoughts, and their foolish hearts were darkened. ²² Professing to be wise, they became fools, ²³ and changed the glory of the incorruptible God into an image made like corruptible man--and birds and four-footed animals and creeping things.

²⁴ Therefore God also gave them up to uncleanness, in the lusts of their hearts, to dishonor their bodies among themselves, ²⁵ who exchanged the truth of God for the lie, and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever. Amen.

John MacArthur

“To put it simply, evolution was invented in order to eliminate the God of Genesis and thereby to oust the Lawgiver and obliterate the inviolability of His law. Evolution is simply the latest means our fallen race has devised in order to suppress our innate knowledge and the biblical testimony that there is a God and that we are accountable to Him (cf. Romans 1:28). By embracing evolution, modern society aims to do away with morality, responsibility, and guilt. Society has embraced evolution with such enthusiasm because people imagine that it eliminates the Judge and leaves them free to do whatever they want without guilt and without consequences.”

These two different worldviews—theism and naturalism inevitably lead to two entirely different ways of looking at and living one’s life.

Many people who have embraced the naturalistic worldview don't realize the implications and ramifications this has had on society.

If there is no God, if man is just a cosmic accident, the result of countless genetic mutations then there is no purpose or ultimate value to life and no afterlife.

This leads to a philosophy of life that is nihilistic and hedonistic the motto of which being, *“let's eat, drink and be merry for tomorrow we die and that's it!”*

Dr. George Marsden, an evolutionist said,

“Creation scientists are correct in perceiving that in modern culture evolution often involves far more than biology. The basic ideologies of our civilization including its entire moral structure are at risk. Evolution is sometimes the key mythological element in a philosophy that functions as a virtual religion.” (Comment)

You see if you remove God from society and you substitute evolution as god, you remove the uniqueness of man from the animal kingdom.

The Bible says that man was made in the image of God, but if there is no God then man couldn't have been made in His image and is therefore no different from any other animal that evolved on this planet.

This is the doctrine that has become the foundational teaching in Western society.

But you see, if we teach our children they came from animals it shouldn't surprise us when they act like animals.

We see kids growing up in our society without God and without morals who place little or no value on human life.

We see gangs that have taken over the inner city and have turned it into a war zone battling each other over drug turf and killing innocent people who get caught in the crossfire.

We see kids bringing guns into their schools and wiping out class mates simply because they didn't like the way someone looked at them or talked to them or about them on Facebook—but what do we expect?

From the time these kids started kindergarten they have been taught a humanistic, naturalistic worldview—a philosophy of life void of God, where they evolved from animals.

A world view where everything came about by chance and accidents and where there is no purpose for life, no life to come and no God to answer to—what do we expect when they act as if human life doesn't mean anything?

You see, any philosophy of life that's based on the idea of the survival of the fittest, the strong eliminating the weak as the basic means of evolving from lower forms of life to higher more complex forms—

If that's the ideology that's governing man's thinking and shaping his world view—guess what, it's going to produce a lot of evil consequences—and it has.

If evolution is true and we are just animals that have evolved higher than the other animals in the animal kingdom, then why should we bother helping the weak, the handicapped, the elderly and the sick?

Let's do away with them—let's embrace infanticide and euthanasia.

Why keep these people around if they're just keeping the rest of us down and draining the resources needed to strengthen the strong.

I mean if evolution is true then Hitler was right!!

Hitler was a big fan of Charles Darwin and a big proponent of evolution.

He tried to hasten the process of evolution on human beings and bring about a master race by exterminating all those whom he considered genetically inferior and less evolved—the strong killing the weak—his version of natural selection—and who could have argued with him if evolution was true?

But of course it isn't true—and here's why.

Where does compassion and mercy come from?

The evolutionist would say, “*They evolved as we evolved.*”

Evolution doesn't produce compassion and mercy because evolution is based on the survival of the fittest—the strong preying upon the weak.

If the strong start showing mercy to the weak it would undermine the very foundation upon which evolution is built—if it were true.

Why is it when a tsunami or an earthquake or a plague of some kind hits some third world country, that the rest of the world mobilizes and sends workers, food and medicine?

Why do we worry about a little baby born 4 or 5 months premature and spend thousands of dollars to save its life—isn't it a tremendous drain on our resources—why not just let the child die—I mean they're not a productive member of society yet?

We do it because life is precious—all life.

And why do we believe that life is precious—because we have been made in the image of God, a merciful and compassionate God who created us and put the sanctity of life in our hearts.

Folks, there is no mercy and compassion in the jungle, it's just survival of the fittest—man is unique and he's unique because our Creator made us unique.

Only man has the capacity to reflect the glory of his Creator in the way of love, compassion, mercy and kindness.

The only explanation for morality is the existence of God who is a moral God and Who made us in His image and put His moral law into our hearts.

Creationism is the only thing that answers the question of origins and makes sense of life.

Hopefully now you see how important the first verse in the Bible is—it doesn't just introduce the book of Genesis—it becomes the foundation for understanding and living our lives on the earth.

Without the first verse in the Bible life is nothing more than a meaningless exercise in futility.