

Bible Study Course

GENESIS

Introduction

The name “Genesis” means “origin” or “generation” (Greek, from LXX). The Hebrew title is taken from Gen 1:1, “In the beginning”

Genesis is also called “The First Book of Moses”, or “The First Book of the Law”. The Law (Hebrew “Torah”) consisted of the five books of the Pentateuch. The five books were meant to be read as one volume.

Genesis has been called the “seed-plot of the Bible” – all that is developed later, right through to The Revelation of Jesus Christ is found here in embryo.

Genesis has been subjected to much destructive criticism from unbelieving sources. If Satan can undermine faith in this first book of the Bible, then, to a large extent faith has been undermined in the whole Word of God. This book is fundamental in every sense and it is not surprising that Satan, the father of lies (John 8:44) should seek to destroy it.

Authorship and Date

It would be more strictly correct to use the term “editorship” rather than authorship. From the evidence it would seem that Moses edited or compiled, Genesis.

Moses obviously used very old sources for Genesis. These were possibly records brought by Abraham from Babylonia, records written by the patriarchs themselves, on clay tablets, which later came into the possession of Moses. These ancient records are separated by the recurrent phrase: “These are the generations of...” e.g. 2:4, 5:1, 6:9, 10:1, 11:10, 11:27, 25:12, 25:19, 36:1, 37:2. (Compare also The Documentary Theory, which tries to explain the combination of different records, i.e. the E tradition using the Name Elohim, and the J tradition using the Name Yahweh etc.).

It is also interesting to note that there are many Babylonian type names in the first eleven chapters and many Egyptian type names in the last fourteen.

All this probably means that Moses edited and compiled the documents written by eyewitnesses in to a single history.

It should be noted that nowhere in the OT is there cause to doubt that Moses was responsible for this and the other books of The Pentateuch being brought into existence. The NT writers state clearly that this is so, e.g. Acts 7:37-38 and above all we have the testimony of Jesus Christ himself to this fact.

It was compiled between 1400BC (Garstang) and 1300 BC (Albright), and covers the following periods: -

- Adam – Abraham – 19 generations
- Abraham – Joseph – 14 generations

Style

The style of Genesis is simple and concise. It is so written as to give specific truth, prophetic teaching and historical content, in a readable fashion, enriched by details of geography, biology, and ancient law and custom.

Key to the Book

Genesis is the book of beginnings. It reveals to us the cause of everything, the generating dynamic, the origin. Remember origin determines destiny.

Thus we have the beginning of the universe, natural life, man, marriage, family, sin, social evil, immorality, corruption, death, the Good Seed, the Bad Seed, redemption, sacrifice, covenants, altar, languages, nations, human government, cities, the people of God. Also included is music, art, literature, agriculture, etc.

We find in Genesis the beginnings of the great themes of the Bible: - God's Eternal Purpose, Election, The Cross (salvation, atonement, justification, identification, sanctification, etc.), The Church, The Inheritance, etc.

It marks also the beginning of so much that is Antichrist: - The Bad Seed - ch4, Babylon - ch10, Ishmaelites - ch16, Moabites - ch19, Ammonites - ch19, Philistines, Egypt, Assyria, Jebusites, Amorites, Gergashites, Hivites, all in Chapter 10, and the Edomites ch36.

Outline of the Book

It is divided into two main sections: -

- Gen 1 – 11: Creation, fall and dispersal of man and the emergence of a godly remnant.
- Gen 12 – 50: Ancestors of the chosen people, a people for God – Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph.

“Genesis shares with the whole Bible the characteristic that the narratives are selected, not for their interest, or political importance, but for the relation they bear to God's redemptive purpose... From the first hint of a coming Saviour and Conqueror in 3:15, we see God preparing a people to be the vehicle of His ultimate revelation of Himself to the world in love. The covenant with Abraham concerns not only his descendants, but blessing to all mankind through Abraham's seed (12:2-3, Gal 3:16)”. G.T.M.

Message of the Book

Genesis reveals God's original purpose for man (1:26), made in the image of God, and qualified to have dominion. Qualification is a matter of life relationship to God and obedient dependence upon God. Adam, the first man is tested upon these two matters, but Satan brings about his downfall, and dominion is lost to the Adamic creation.

Christ, the Second Man (1 Cor 15: 45, 47), the promised seed of the woman (3:15), secures in Himself all the purpose of God for man, and embodies the features found in the spiritual seed of Seth, which features He imparts to those who, on eating of the Tree of Life (John 14:6) become incorporated into the Heavenly Man.

Man's fall, with consequent moral collapse and the loss of communion with God, is countered by The Seed of the Woman, giving Himself to be The Lamb of God.

The sin of man is thus met by the intervention and salvation of God (Rom 5:20), and he is brought back gloriously into God's original purpose for him.

Summary of Contents

- I. Beginnings 1- 4
 1. Creation 1:1 – 2:3
 - a) The process – work – 6 days 1:3-31
 - b) The end – rest – Sabbath 2:1-3
 2. The First Man 2:4 – 3
 - a) His probation 2:4-25
 - b) His fall 3

3. The first children 4
 - a) Abel – the first blood sacrifices
 - b) Cain – the first murderer
 - c) Seth – the promised Seed
- II. Race developments 5 - 11
1. Growth and Corruption 5 -11
 - a) Line through Seth – death. Enoch – translation 5
 - b) Mixture of Seeds 6: 1 - 8
 - c) Divine intervention 6: 9 – 12
 2. Destruction and Preservation 6:13 – 9
 - a) The ark 6:13-22
 - b) The judgment by water 7 - 8:14 (2 Peter 3:5-7)
 - c) The new beginning 8:15 – 9
 - i. The new covenant – Rainbow
 - ii. The old poison
 3. Multiplication and distribution 10 – 11
 - a) The three families – the earth re-peopled 10
 - b) The Tower of Babel – confusion, scattering 11:1 – 9
 - c) The promised Seed – Shem – Abram 11:10 – 32
- III. The Chosen Race 12 – 50
1. Abraham – the life of faith 12 – 23
 - a) The obedience of faith – his call 12 - 14
 - b) The covenant of faith – the inheritance 15 - 16
 - c) The tests of faith 17 - 20
 - d) The fruit and triumph of faith 21 - 22
 - e) Possession by faith – a burying place 23
 2. Isaac – sonship in resurrection 21 - 26
 - a) The birth of the son – “Laughter” 21
 - b) The sacrifice of the son – “Where is the lamb??” 22
 - c) A bride for the son – Rebekah 24
 - d) Sons by the son – Esau and Jacob 25 – 26
 3. Jacob – discipline unto Service 27 -36
 - a) Jacob – the supplanter 25 – 31
 - b) Israel – a prince with God 32 – 33
 - c) The House of Israel 34 – 36
 4. Joseph - “reigning in life” 37 – 50
 - a) Loved by his father 37: 1 -3
 - b) Betrayed by his brethren 37:4 -38
 - c) Trained for dominion 38 – 40
 - d) Exalted to the throne 41
 - e) Preserver of life (41:45) 42 – 50

Recommended books

New Discoveries in Babylonia about Genesis
Notes on Genesis
Changed into His likeness

P.J. Wiseman
C.H. McIntosh
W. Nee

Halford House Tapes

BS 159	Genesis 1-3	General Survey
BS 162	Genesis 1	Detailed Study
BS 160	Genesis 2	Detailed Study
BS 161	Genesis 2	Detailed Study
BS 5	Genesis 3	Detailed Study
BS 5a	Genesis 3	Detailed Study

Questions

1. What is the key word in the book of Genesis?
2. Look up the passages which begin with the phrase “These are the generations of...” make a list of the men whose genealogies are recorded.
3. Sum up the principal message of the book in one sentence and couple with it one Scripture from the New Testament.
4. What do you learn in Ch 1 – 4 about the Character of God and the character of Satan?
5. What is God’s interest in man, and what is Satan’s interest in man?
6. What is the outstanding prophecy concerning Christ?
7. What differences can you find between the following: -
 - a) Cain & Abel Ch 4
 - b) Noah and his generation Ch 5:28 -9
 - c) Shem & Ham Ch 9:18 – 10:32
 - d) Abraham & Lot Ch 13
 - e) Isaac & Ishmael Ch 15:1 - 6, Ch 16 – 17, Ch 21:1 - 13, Gal 4:21 – 31
 - f) Jacob & Esau Ch 25:19 - 34, Ch 26:34 – 28:9
 - g) Joseph & his brothers Ch 37, 39 – 41
8. How many covenants between God and man can you find in Genesis? Make a list of these covenants.
9. What do you learn about God from the following passages: -
 - a) Gen 6:5-8
 - b) Gen 18:22-32, 19:15-23
 - c) Gen 21:1-7
 - d) Gen 45:4-15, 50:15-21
10. Name the outstanding men of faith whom you read in Genesis who are mentioned in Hebrews 11.
11. Why is Shem important in Genesis?