

An Introduction to Genesis

Introduction

a. objectives

1. subject – an introduction and overview of the book of Genesis
2. aim – to cause commitment to study the book and see its implications for us today
3. passage – Genesis 3:8,15

b. outline

1. An Overview of the Book of Genesis
2. An Outline of the Book of Genesis
3. An Objective of the Book of Genesis

c. opening

1. this will be my fifth time teaching through this book (BSF, Westwood, Hebron, Calvary, GFBC)
 - a. i.e. in every teaching venue that I have had the privilege of leading

I. An Overview of the Book of Genesis

Content

a. its title

1. Genesis (Greek) = beginnings; comes from 1:1
 - a. the beginning of the world (e.g. time, the universe, galaxies, stars, the sun, earth, animals, etc.)
 - b. the beginning of the human race (the pinnacle of creation)
 - c. the beginning of rebellion, sin, and the consequences of such (e.g. death, broken fellowship)
 - d. the beginning of civilization, language systems, nations, laws, cultural expression, etc.
 - e. the beginning of the Hebrew people (the seed and God's chosen race)
 - f. the beginning of redemption and the plan of salvation (promised in Genesis 3:15; see below)
2. Pentateuch (Greek) = five books

b. its author (Moses)

1. internal evidences of Mosaic authorship (Exo. 17:14; Numb. 33; Deut. 31:9)
 - a. O.T. evidences of Mosaic authorship (*"written in the law of Moses"*; Ezra 6:18)
 - b. N.T. evidences of Mosaic authorship (Jesus ascribes it to him; Mark 12:26)

"Now about the dead rising-have you not read in the book of Moses, in the account of the bush, how God said to him, 'I am the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob'?"
2. eyewitness details
 - a. places and events only an eyewitness writer would know (Exo. 15:27)

"Then they came to Elim, where there were twelve springs and seventy palm trees, and they camped there near the water."
 - b. Egyptian customs and names only an eyewitness writer would know

c. its date and location

1. written c. 1410BC (just after the Exodus during the Israelite wandering)
 - a. the Exodus is dated c. 1450BC by 1 Kings 6:1 and Judg. 11:26
2. written as a compilation to be taken to the promised land (Josh. 8:34-35)
3. written using antedated materials (records of the patriarchs, oral & written; chap. 5, 6:9, 10:1)

d. its reasons to be written

1. to formalize in writing events that were passed down in verbal form only
2. to correlate the events of the law at Sinai with the events of creation
3. to document the history of the Hebrews and their heritage
 - a. explains who their patriarchs were
 - b. explains why their ancestors went to Egypt
 - c. explains why the promised land was theirs
 - d. explains God's revelation of Himself in the wilderness
 - e. explains God's sovereignty over all of human history (and redemptive history)
 - f. explains the decree of God to create → redeem → consummate this world to his glory
 - g. explains the relationship of Israel to God's plan of redemption

e. its structure

1. the structure of the book of Genesis correlates to a systematic view of soteriology as defined later in the N.T. – it points *forward* to the Gospel of Jesus Christ *in specific and obvious ways*

II. An Outline of the Book of Genesis

Content

a. section 1: the history of creation (chaps. 1-3)

1. key characters: God, Adam & Eve, Satan
2. key events: the creation, the fall, the banishment
3. key doctrine: all inherit from Adam & Eve a fallen nature and the original guilt of Adam
4. key redemptive issue: humanity is morally depraved by virtue of its connection to Adam
5. scope: all of the created order

b. section 2: the history of early man (chaps. 4-11)

1. key characters: Cain & Abel, Seth, Enoch, Noah, Shem
2. key events: Abel's murder, Seth's descendants, Enoch's translation, the flood, the tower of Babel
3. key doctrine: God cannot tolerate human wickedness, and brings judgment against it
4. key redemptive issue: humanity is on a path to condemnation and destruction
5. scope: the human race

c. section 3: the history of Abraham (chaps. 12-25)

1. key character: Abraham
2. key events: the call of Abraham, the covenants, the birth of Ishmael, the birth of Isaac
3. key doctrine: God has a structured plan within his decree of redemption
4. key redemptive issue: God has chosen a people to be rescued from condemnation and destruction
5. scope: one people out of the whole world (i.e. the elect)

d. section 4: the history of Abraham's sons (chaps. 26-36)

1. key characters: Isaac & Ishmael, Jacob & Esau
2. key events: the births of Jacob and Esau, the birthright, the character of Jacob, the sons of Jacob
3. key doctrine: God works out his plan of redemption in spite of human inadequacy
4. key redemptive issue: God works to bring his people out of the world into his redemptive plan
5. scope: one specific people brought out of the whole world

e. section 5: the history of Joseph (chaps. 37-50)

1. key characters: Jacob's 12 sons, including Joseph and his sons
2. key events: the life and times of Joseph, the entry into Egypt by the sons of Jacob
3. key doctrine: God brings his redemption to man through his most inscrutable ways
4. key redemptive issue: God uses one specific man to accomplish the saving of his people
5. scope: one man, who is the agent of the Most High God to accomplish his will

f. conclusion

1. section 5 is the longest section (as most relevant to the wandering Israelites):
 - a. because they carry the bones of Joseph (Genesis 50:25)
 - b. because it tells why they were in Egypt and where they are now going
 - c. because it shows God's sovereignty over the house of Jacob and his descendants
 - d. because it shows the *personal* nature of God relating to these people (i.e. he knows them)

III. An Objective of the Book of Genesis

Content

a. to see the gospel of Jesus Christ in every chapter of the book

1. Genesis shows God's sovereignty over all matters of redemption (from election to glorification)
2. Genesis demonstrates the *personal nature* of God in relation to humanity (Genesis 3:8)
3. Genesis points to *an individual* who becomes the "focus" of God's purpose in redemption
4. Genesis elevates the gospel message, foreshadowing its substance throughout (Genesis 3:15)