

Introduction to the Book of Genesis



~ Our Spiritual Safari expedition through the entire Word of God finally reaches the Book of Genesis where we will begin a very long but thrilling adventure; and we are going to take this entire report to get a birds-eye view of this first book of the Bible. We need a basic background of understanding that covers the entire spectrum of Holy Writ in order to comprehend the Genesis account properly, correctly and completely. To accomplish that, there are quite a few things that need to be recognized as foundational precepts. Certain factual tenets of truth must be known, understood and agreed with in order to read Genesis accurately and fruitfully. This first book in the Bible, right from the very first verse, is germane to the entirety of Scripture. Many things we will see throughout the Word of God are stated here for the first time. Genesis is also the book of generations. We will meet all the families in the Bible here. You and I are members of the human family - and our family begins right here.

This so called safari has two mission objectives: (1) to take the entire Word of God to the entire world in sound doctrine – every chapter and every verse, and (2) to locate the Lord Jesus Christ on every page of Scripture. Now, I cannot promise that I can point Christ out to you on every page; but what I can promise you is that He is there on every page! If you incorporate those two objectives into your own thinking as you study the Bible with us, then the Spirit of God is going to make Himself known loud and clear to you, friends; because the Word of God liveth and abideth forever.

Studying the Bible is the only way to discover the answers that believers will have concerning living the Christian life. Living the Christian life isn't a bunch of rules and regulations from some sterile spiritual contract by which God says, "...if you do x,y and z, then I'll save you." No, living the Christian life is loving, knowing, obeying and serving the Lord Jesus Christ in our

everyday home, workshop, office and classroom because we love Him! The only possible way to ever know Christ Jesus and come to love Him is to know His Word. The only way to know His Word is to have the Holy Spirit open the book and teach us. That is when, where and how we see Jesus! The Spirit of God takes the things of Christ and shows them unto us, just as Jesus said He would. Jesus also said, "...this is life eternal: that they might know Thee the only True and Living God in Jesus Christ Whom Thou hast sent!" The apostle Paul said, "...that I may know Him and the power of His resurrection, the fellowship of His sufferings, and being made conformable unto His image."

We will meet a number of very interesting characters along this first leg of our safari. Genesis has been called a book of biographies. Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, and the eleven other sons of Jacob, besides Joseph, with whom makes twelve, are all introduced here. We will see that God is continually blessing Isaac, Abraham, Jacob and Joseph – and everyone who came into contact with them and their descendants. Lot was blessed, Abimelech, Potiphar, Pharaoh, Nebuchadnezzar, Naaman, Hiram - and many others – all blessed. We also find the mention of the first covenant in Genesis. With that covenant is found the frequent appearance of the Lord to the patriarchs, especially in regards to Abraham. The altar becomes another very prominent figure that is developed and mentioned frequently in Genesis. There will be pictures of jealousy within the home. Egypt comes before us, also; as it does nowhere else in the Bible, in terms of developing a mental picture of it. We will locate the judgments upon sin here in Genesis. Lastly, the leadings of God's providence will be revealed.

There are two ways we can study the Bible to get the full picture. One way is with a telescope and the other is with a microscope. It is critical to know which to use in any particular application. Right now we have our telescope out; and with it we can see two major divisions. We will start with those; but, before we do, I want to throw in one quotation from a very great man of the past just for good measure. The quote is from Robinson, an English preacher, and specifically from his book entitled *The Personal Life of the Clergy*. The chapter that this quote is from is entitled, *Devotion to Our Lord*. "...we live in the age of books. They pour out from us and off of the press in an ever-increasing multitude. We are always reading: manuals, articles,

textbooks, reports, other books of devotion, criticism, books about the Bible, books about the Gospels – all are devoured with avidity. But what amount of time do we give to the consideration of the Gospels themselves? We are constantly tempted to imagine that we get good more quickly by reading some modern statement of truth, which we find comparatively easy to appropriate, because it is presented to us in a shape and from a standpoint with which our education – or it may be partly association – has made us familiar. But the good that we acquire readily is not that which enters most deeply into our being and becomes an abiding possession. It would be well if we could realize, quite simply, that nothing worth the having is to be gained without the winning. The great truths of nature are not offered to us in such a form that makes them easy to grasp. The treasures of grace must be sought with all the skill and energy that are characteristic of the man who is searching for goodly pearls.”

I urge you to indelibly stamp that statement on your heart as we move into the thick of the jungle right around the next bend – and then on into eternity. This Spiritual Safari is not entertainment, my beloved; and I am not promoting anything. I am trying to realize, with you, the Word of God. We are not dealing in sensationalism, although we have seen some sensational things in our safari Guidelines - and will have more sensational moments to come in the Bible - because it is a sensational book; but not in these reports – because that’s just not what they’re for. I will try to keep this as interesting as possible; but you will find that what I am interested in dealing with is the Word of God and the Word of God only. Period. Because, see, I believe that the Word of God will speak to our hearts, with or without me, and in a way that no other book on the face of this earth can; and we are going to need exactly that as we learn about creation, man, woman, sin, suffering, Sabbath, marriage, family, labor, civilization, culture, murder, sacrifice, race, languages, tongues, redemption – not to mention cities becoming a place to dwell.

There is really only one major division in the book of Genesis, not multiple divisions. The first eleven chapters constitute a whole; and then, beginning in chapter twelve through fifty, we have an altogether different section. *Those* two sections are divided in several different ways. For instance, in the first section we find creation - and that runs up to Abraham. In the

second section we have from Abraham to Joseph. The big difference between the two is that in the first section we deal with major, heavyweight, controversial subjects - those things that have really divided man from man throughout the ages - subjects that engage the minds of reasonable, thinking and thoughtful men to this very day. The second section concerns the total depravity of mankind.

Subdivisions

I / Creation

Chapter 1-2: *Creation*

Chapter 3-4: *The Fall*

Chapter 5-9: *The Flood*

Chapter 10-11: *The Tower of Babel*

II / Personalities

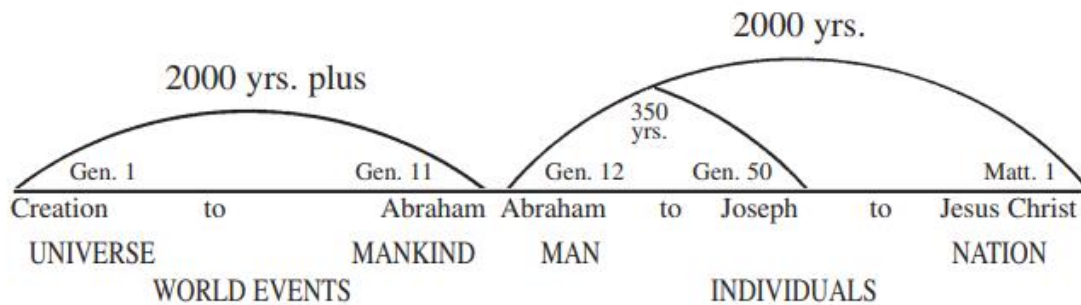
Chapter 12-23: *Abraham – the man of faith*

Chapter 24-26: *Isaac – the beloved son*

Chapter 27-36: *Jacob – chastened, but chosen*

Chapter 37-50: *Joseph – suffering and glory*

Now, there is another much-overlooked division of Genesis that I feel is tremendous. It is actually a time-relevant division. In the first eleven chapters we will cover a minimum of two thousand years. Personally, I say two thousand years *plus*. Candidly, you can add whatever number you want to onto that; meaning, I am prepared to estimate that first number from two thousand years up to several million groups of millions and billions of trillions of years multiplied to the eighty-ninth power – or more. The fact of the matter is I believe this first period of eleven chapters covers any quantity of time that you need to fill in whatever particular purpose you are hoping to achieve. Chances are, you are still coming up woefully short with the numbers you can grasp in your mind; and we're going to be putting all of that under a very powerful microscope in the first two chapters of this book.



Interestingly, while we have in chapters one through eleven a minimum of two thousand years, from chapter twelve through fifty is only about three hundred years or so. In fact, from chapter twelve of Genesis through the end of the New Testament man can only account for a maximum of another two thousand years. So, as far as God's program of time is concerned, we will be halfway through the Bible when we complete chapter eleven of Genesis! I hope you find that as remarkable as I do. All of this ought to suggest something to our minds and to our hearts - and that something is that God had a very definite purpose and plan in mind when He laid out this first section of His Word. Moses is the writer of the first five books of the Bible, which are often referred to as the Pentateuch. I will waste no words with evidence to the authentication of authorship – but an abundance of evidence can easily be obtained if you need it.

To continue on safari here, you must accept that Moses wrote these first five books of the Bible as a fact. What section of this book do you think Moses – or let's say God – is emphasizing: the creation or the personality section? – Judging from the balance and the lengthy number of chapters in Genesis, not to mention other indicators, my estimation is that the emphasis is placed on the second half and on man and his character. God doesn't waste a lot of time with the universe and creation and where we came from and all of that. He didn't need to because it is really simple; it is man that over-complicates all things always. It is man, nations and the person of the Lord Jesus Christ – although not necessarily in that order – on which the focus of our telescope will first be placed. Have you ever told your children that you love them more than anything in the world? – Well, that's what God is saying to us from the very start of His Blessed Words.

While our Spiritual Safari does not typically divide the books of the Bible as a normal Bible study would, let's take the time here to widen out this division of Genesis that we have made. The four Gospels total eighty-nine chapters. Four little chapters cover the first thirty years of the earthly life of the Lord Jesus. Eighty-five chapters are devoted to the last three years of His earthly life with a whopping twenty-seven chapters covering the last *eight days* of His earthly life. Where do you think the Spirit of God wants to place the emphasis now? – Write *those* answers down, friends – the major emphasis in the Gospel record is upon the death, burial and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ! So, considering all of that, our reasonable conclusion is that this was all given to tell us that Christ died for our sins and that He was raised again from the dead for our justification.

The first eleven chapters of Genesis are an introduction that informs us of half of what God wants to say to us in the Bible. My personal opinion is that if Moses was alive on earth with us today and sat in on some of the present day discussions with scientists and other researchers about, for instance, creation and other records that he brought us, I think Moses would make one simple statement; and that would be, “....you missed the point entirely.” See, Moses is only going to give us a few basic facts as a premise in Genesis. The Bible is about God dealing with man and his sinful, ugly, needy – self. The story Moses will tell is the story of redemption; which, by the way, there is only one place you will find that promise. If you are looking for a scientific book on creation – you can take your pick from hundreds of thousands of different theories and suggestions and speculations. If you do that, then you have also missed the point. The Bible is a spiritual book on redemption, friends.

Alright, with that preliminary commentary, the seed plot has been staked and we are ready to approach the first verse of Genesis. The source - the beginning, birth and the start of everything - is right here. Like the bud of a beautiful rose – this will bloom out into the rest of the Bible. What we have now is the truth in a seed. We are going to see the generations of the Heaven and the earth; the generations of Adam; the generations of Noah; Noah's sons; sons of Ham, Shem and Japheth; of Ishmael; of Isaac – all start right here. Genesis is an amazing book of families - your family – and mine.

Interestingly, as Christians, our family is those who obey the commandments of the Lord Jesus Christ....

1 In the beginning God created the Heaven and the earth ~

~ Most of you know this verse. In just ten simple words, with seven of them being monosyllabic, God tells us the creation of the universe. There is no mistake about that. This chapter still causes more comment, research, and more money is spent trying to disprove its reality, than is spent on any other program today. From bioethical research to the re-examination of the theory of relativity that statement holds true. In the beginning, God created the Heaven and the earth. After all of these years, that is still one of the most profound statements that have ever been made. All challenges to the Bible begin with a direct challenge or a total dismissal of this three phrase sentence of the first verse in the Bible. The door by which we must come to Christ is right here in the very first sentence of the Word of God.

Our schools still go back and forth on which theory they think they should teach. Take science textbooks, for example, they taught creation at one time. Some people think that it would be a wonderful idea to have the Bible taught in school again. I, quite frankly, am not so sure about that. See, the school system is run by liberals. The liberal will never permit the proper, correct and complete teaching of the Gospel of the death, burial and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ according to the Word of God. If the Bible is taught wrong – the liberal doesn't care; because that error literally breeds atheism. When presented unerringly - the liberal will never permit it. The apostate has no hope; and presenting the Bible in error will make our children search other hopeless religions - mainly Mohammedanism. When children see Scripture espoused by lives that do not back up their profession of faith they despise it. That's the way it is; always has been – and always will be. Any program teaching the Bible properly, correctly and completely would be terminated in a nanosecond; and the teacher teaching sound doctrine would immediately be fired - on the grounds that they weren't teaching it properly, of course. No, friends, teaching the Bible in school is, actually, a horrible idea.

Further, the creation account can only be taught properly depending upon the character of the teachers who teach it. I am afraid we don't have teachers in our schools with the proper ethics and background to teach it correctly and fully contextually. A cursory review of the Bible is utterly worthless. Very few of the teachers in this country are really ready to teach anything at all - and that is the brutal truth – but particularly not the account of creation. Moreover, our school teachers – or educational professionals as they like to be called – including many theological professors who claim to have mastered the Bible - have no real Bible background. I know they usually go to church, but true learning starts at word one of the Bible.

School science books change completely every few years. Children today would laugh at what I learned in High school science. Learning never becomes complete with the Bible *BECAUSE* it does not change. That is another external indicator how we can know the Bible is the Word of God, by the way. All theories and books of human learning have been amended, changed, altered - or are ultimately abandoned completely – but not the Word of God; because the Word of God can not change. The primary reason teachers are not prepared to teach Scripture is because they have accepted that an alternative theory must be provided in regards to creation. That's just never going to work; not to mention that God's Word must be taught from the Bible itself – not from a science book.

So, as we end this very first leg of our Spiritual Safari expedition through the entire Word of God we have already reached an extreme hot button, controversial subject. There's more: nations that allow the worship of every religion under the sun are not following the plan of God. Perhaps more divisions and differences have been drawn from creation than any other topic contained in the Bible – or even in man's philosophical library of knowledge. Will you get your Bible and read this first chapter right now? Not once – not twice – read it three times. What a blessing it will have on your life. If you will just pray that the Holy Spirit will bring true wisdom, judgment and discernment to your heart – He will ~

