

God of Creation | Genesis Ch. 1-11

Session One: Introduction

Big Pictures Questions

Why should we study Genesis?

Why should we study chapters 1-11?

Why should we study the Old Testament?

This study will demonstrate clearly and finally the importance of the Old Testament

Why are we here in Genesis Ch. 1-11?

- To study the primeval history- the first 11 chapters
 - Describes the first years of the whole world's existence
 - The rest of Genesis is known as the "patriarchal history"
- ...But also, that you would know better how to study any passage of Scripture
- "Never do for your students what your students can do for themselves." Howard Hendricks from DTS
 - Think critically about the text yourself
 - Draw your own conclusions of a text
 - Flex muscles of how you would read *any* book

The Bible is a book

- Often, we would not treat the Bible with the same respect we would give to a common textbook
 - Ex. algebra textbook
 - you don't read a few paragraphs out of random chapters every day and then ask, "How should it change my life today?"
 - You would do horrible on a final exam about it, because you didn't read the textbook in the way it was intended to be read
- How you read any book
 - It was written in a particular way, by a particular person, at a particular level, at a particular time, for a particular purpose
 - We start at the beginning and read to the end
 - We understand that what is said at the beginning will in fact be built upon until it reaches a conclusion at the end
- The Bible is much *more* than just a book, but it is certainly a book
 - We will learn better tools for honoring the Bible as a book

We are gathered here to study Genesis Ch. 1-11 so that we can...

- Learn who God is
- ...And be changed by that knowledge
 - Because there is no true knowledge of self apart from the knowledge of God
 - God reveals himself from Scripture- when we see who He is, we can better to understand ourselves
 - It is the only way to get accurate knowledge of ourselves
 - When we have a vision of God high and lifted up, and see ourselves in relation to that, the result will always be repentance, not just a confession of sin, but a genuine desire to be *changed*

- How can we study in a way that we will be changed? How can we study in a way that will be transformative?
 - Yes, we do need help- that's why God gives teachers and preachers to the Church
 - But we do have a responsibility to renew our minds
 - Romans 12:2 & Luke 10:27

We are going to study with a process of 3 key phrases

- **Comprehension- What does the text say?**
 - ***Don't skip this step*** Though it is the most tempting to skip!
 - The goal: You could answer factual questions about the text if you were given a pop quiz on it
 - We aren't even aware of how much awareness we lack
 - Comprehension is a huge guard of falling prey to false teaching
 - The false teacher relies on you not knowing what the text says. Then he or she can twist it to where you're not quite sure what happened.
 - The best way to tell a lie is to make it mostly the truth.
- **Interpretation- What does the text mean?**
 - Allow yourself to dwell in the "I don't know."
 - Part of moving through this process in flexing muscles you haven't flexed in a while (that is teaching you to do for yourself what you are capable of doing) is to allow yourself to dwell in the "I don't know."
 - The dissonance of suddenly feeling lost is not your enemy, it's your friend- it is a sign that learning is about to happen!
- **Application- How should it change me?**
 - The questions in this particular Bible study will consist of all three of these steps but will mostly be comprehension.
 - These will help you to ask better questions of the text on your own
 - This will take repetition to get into this cycle instead of skipping to the application
 - Commentaries are for Application
 - Don't consult commentaries before you have sat in the scripture yourself
 - You need to appeal to your firsthand knowledge of the text when using commentaries
 - You might choose the wrong commentary, but the only way we get better in finding the right interpretation and application, is to learn from mistakes
 - We are still called to love God with our own minds. It's ok if we don't do that perfectly, as long as we make the effort.

Tips to dwell in Comprehension and Interpretation

- Just print a double-spaced version of the text out
- Put your study Bible and all commentaries away for a while
- Compare different translations
 - Translations vs. paraphrase
 - The message is a paraphrase.
 - It is a helpful tool that tells you what someone said the bible said, but is best regarded as a commentary
- Use color pencils
- Paraphrasing
 - Write this in your own words
 - We have to write bad paraphrases in order to learn write better ones

- Summarizing/ Outlining

Layout of Weekly Bible Study Homework

- First section of high level thinking for whole week
 - Summarize
 - Look for main ideas
 - Mark repeated words/phrases
- The next 4 sections of the homework will break it down to smaller increments
 - Asking strategic questions that are both pulling you toward the meaning of the text and learning better question-asking skills
- There is a Summary/Wrap-up section at the end of each week
 - Ask, “what did I learn that is true about God this week?”
 - List of attributes at the back of book helps give you a starting language for this.
 - How does seeing what He is like that change the way that I live my life?
- Because...
 - We are here to become better students, not just of the first 11 chapters, but of the whole bible
 - We are here to learn better tools and to learn how to use them

Why study Genesis/Old Testament?

- The new testament actually tells us why
 - 1 Corinthians 10:6
 - That we would have good memories
 - The OT provides examples of destructive patterns before we fall into them ourselves, that we might learn from them
- It gives us the context we need before we study the rest of the Bible
 - 1 Corinthians 9:10
- It is written for our sake- it still applies to us under the new covenant
 - Romans 15:4 it is written for our instruction, that we might have hope
- Genesis is the seed plot of the Bible- all of the themes of redemptive history are planted and begin to sprout and spread throughout the rest of Scripture from Genesis.

Introduction page in the workbook: Reading the envelope

- **Who wrote the book of Genesis?**
 - Moses
 - He possibly had some help. It is a part of the first 5 books of the bible (Pentateuch/Torah)
 - There is no bigger name in Israel's history.
 - Deliverer- leads them out of Egyptian bondage
 - Law giver- brings the 10 commandments
 - Prophet
 - Judge
 - Author
 - Spiritual father of the newborn nation of Israel
 - He wrote them during the 40 years they were wondering in the wilderness
 - Luke 24:44
 - Jesus attributes authorship to Moses

- He used existing oral traditions as references when he put together his account, all under the sovereign hand of the Holy Spirit
- **When was it written?**
 - Sometime between 1600 and 1400 BC
 - during time of Israel wandering in the wilderness
- **To whom was the book written?**
 - The generation of Israelites who had wandered in the wilderness for 40 years and were finally ready to enter the promised land under the leadership of Joshua
 - When Moses sins in the wilderness, he was unable to go into the promised land, but he still has to send this generation into the promised land (Canaan). This land was full of pagan worship.
 - He wants to provide them of a history and a future, he wants to give them roots and chutes.
 - He writes these books in such a way that he will tell them, “This where you came from, this is where you will live, and this is the environment that may oppose everything that you hold dear.” He is deeply concerned for their welfare.
 - Moses was adopted- he has a heightened sense of the influence of origins.
 - This isn’t just an origin story of the people he is writing to, but of the very world they live in- of the entire cosmos.
 - They must understand who they are in light of who God is.
 - It is miraculously written for you and me as well.
- **In what style was the book written?**
 - As a historical narrative- meant to be taken as fact
 - Both factual and archetypal in nature
 - Historical narrative is never completely unbiased. These authors were writing with a purpose and an agenda. So we interpret by asking,
 - “What was the point they were trying to make?”
 - “What conclusion did they want us to reach”
 - Has some poetry interweaved into the narrative?
 - They are familiar stories, and deceptively simple stories. We will begin to understand them with more depth than we have in the past.
- **What is the central theme of the Book of Genesis?**
 - “Genesis”= beginning, a starting point of time
 - Genesis is the book of beginnings, beginnings of:
 - the world itself
 - history as we know it
 - Sin
 - Redemption
 - God’s chosen people
 - Moses foreshadowed Jesus
 - John 5:39 - You won’t listen to Jesus if you don’t listen to Moses, because Moses was foreshadowing Jesus
 - Jesus IS the complete fulfilment of the entire Old Testament