
TWENTY PAGES A WEEK

GENESIS - 2 CHRONICLES

THE LAW



HAL HAMMONS

**TWENTY PAGES A WEEK:
THE LAW**

Genesis-2 Chronicles

Hal Hammons

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Published by
Spiritbuilding Publishers
9700 Ferry Road, Waynesville, OH 45068

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ISBN: 9781733850803

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The Bible, in most editions, is about 1,000 pages long. Over 50 weeks, that would amount to 20 pages per week — less than that, accounting for the full year. I don't know why I had never done the math before.

But one day a few years ago I did it. I was stunned. That can't be right. Just 20 pages a week? The math must be off. No, the math works.

Just 20 pages a week. Surely anyone can do that, right? This material is written under the assumption that "Yes, they can," is the appropriate answer to that question — with, perhaps, a little bit of help. "Twenty Pages a Week" attempts to be that "little bit of help."

These are my recommendations for getting the most out of "Twenty Pages a Week":

Stay on pace. Don't speed up, don't slow down. Devote yourself for an entire week to one section of the text, and then move on. For congregational Bible studies, I suggest a Sunday class to cover the first half of the lesson, and a midweek class to cover the rest.

Read the text through multiple times if possible. Most of the readings will take about an hour — short enough to do in a single sitting. I encourage you to do so if you can, or break it up into two or three chunks. Start over again when you finish, but with a different translation this time. You will be amazed at how the text opens up when you hear it in a different voice.

Do not neglect other Bible studies. This plan is in addition to whatever reading you may do in private or in group settings such as worship services.

I pray this will encourage you to build better Bible study habits, which in turn will help you grow in Bible knowledge and wisdom, which in turn will help strengthen your commitment to service and your hope of glory.

Hal Hammons

Pace, Florida

December 2018



Week 1: Genesis 1-25

18 Pages

The first week's reading is in some ways the most challenging — not so much because of its content as because of its scope. More than two millennia of history fits into these 20 pages. In it we find the beginning of virtually everything — from life itself to human civilization to the establishment of the chosen people of God. An entire year could not do it justice. If it seems we are starting way too fast, be comforted; we will not be this rushed again until we reach the New Testament.

God is the creator of everything

The word “genesis” literally means “beginning.” And that's what the book of Genesis is, really — the story of the beginning. And it all begins with God Himself.

There was nothing until God spoke. And whatever He spoke came to pass.

God spoke the world into existence. “Let there be light,” He said (1:3). And similarly He spoke regarding landforms, celestial bodies, plant and animal life, and everything else that came to be. And He did it all in six days. The text goes to great pains to describe “evening and morning” for each “day.” Even before the sun and moon existed to help humans define such concepts, it was so — and since there were no humans anyway, what did it matter? Whatever wordplay might be utilized to justify a different interpretation of God's story, Exodus 20:11 would seem to settle the matter — “For in six days the LORD made the heavens and the earth, the sea and all that is in them, and rested on the seventh day; therefore the LORD blessed the sabbath day and made it holy.” If a “day” referred to thousands and thousands of years of time, would that not make a mockery of the sabbath law?

God spoke us into existence. The terminology of Genesis 1 is striking. All of the plants and



Genesis emphasizes time. Great care was taken to describe exactly how long everyone lived, at what age they had children, how long the flood lasted, etc. I find that interesting because the timeline of Genesis is constantly called into question. People could not have lived that long. The earth could not be that young. It seems to me that the people who were actually telling the story went out of their way to answer those questions very specifically.

What is your initial reaction to the reading?



animals were created in such a way as to permit them to reproduce “after their kind” — that is, like produced like. And then, at the conclusion of this part of creation, God said, “Let us make man in Our image” (1:26). In a very special way, like was producing like again. No, humans are not “miniature gods” in some way. But we resemble God in ways that no other part of His creation can. We are moral, spiritual beings, born for the specific purpose of serving God — from free will, and from love. When we rebel against our divine purpose, we negate the purpose for our place in creation and bring God’s wrath down upon ourselves.

God spoke it all out of existence. After abiding sinful mankind for an indeterminate, but certainly extensive, period of time, He told righteous Noah in Genesis 7:4, “For after seven more days, I will send rain on the earth forty days and forty nights; and I will blot out from the face of the land every living thing that I have made.” In the subsequent months, the entire face of the earth changed. The wrath of God scarred the land forever, leaving traces that can be seen in nature even today by those who would learn the lesson. Such a lesson would never be taught again. God laid down His bow, offering peace to the remnant of mankind that remained. The incredible spectacle in the sky when the rain ceases is God’s reminder: His rain will fall, but it will also cease. This world will never again see a catastrophe like the Noahic flood.

God spoke human society into existence. The powers of the day were content to amass as many people under their control as possible, rather than fulfilling the God-given mandate to Noah and his children to “fill the earth” (9:1). So God visited the place that would come to be known as Babel and confused their languages (11:7), forcing groups of people to scatter throughout the nation. Genesis 10 describes the growth of the societies that resulted — including the empire-building of the great Nimrod. There is also a reference in Genesis 10:25 to the earth being “divided” in the days of Peleg. This may refer to the Babel dispersion; some scholars believe, though, it was a literal “channeling” of the earth that separated the land masses into continents, further forcing human cultures to separate.

God spoke His nation into existence. The “father of the faithful,” Abraham (then known as Abram) left all he knew to embrace the promise of God — a child to carry on his name, a land for his descendants, and a blessing that would be brought into the world through them that would transform mankind forever. Abraham waited 25 years in Canaan for God to even begin to work His promise out — and when Isaac was finally born, God asked Abraham to kill him! But Abraham “considered that God is able to raise people even from the dead, from which he also received back as a type” (Hebrews 11:19). And so Abraham set a standard for obedience that would characterize all the faithful: obey God at all times, and trust Him that all will be well.

The concept of a creator God puts mankind in a “must-worship” sort of situation. Many of the Psalms motivate us to give God everything in view of the creation. It is only natural, then, for selfish, ungrateful mankind to reject the concept of the creator God. It may even be tempting for us to allow the simple, pure message of creation to become diluted with human theories based in agnosticism. But it is dangerous to set a precedent in our Bible study for picking and choosing the parts of the story we believe. Surely if any principle should be held as sacrosanct, it is that of our origin story, as told to us by the Originator Himself.



- **Genesis 1:1 — “In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth.”**

This is the most important verse in the Bible. It puts everything else we read in perspective. If God created us, we owe Him service. If we created ourselves, or if we just “happened,” we owe nothing to anything.

- **Genesis 3:15 — “And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your seed and her seed; he shall bruise you on the head, and you shall bruise him on the heel.”**

The struggle between Satan and mankind begins in the Garden of Eden. The serpent will continue to lead us astray, bringing death; however, through Jesus we can have hope of a decisive blow to the devil’s head in the end.

- **Genesis 6:8 — “But Noah found favor in the eyes of the LORD.”**

Some versions use the word “grace” in place of “favor” here. It is the first appearance of the concept, and it reminds us of our own spiritual shortfall and the mercy God showers down upon us. Noah, a good man, sinned as we all do. But because he believed in God enough to obey Him, he was not punished along with the rest of mankind.



How dogmatic should we be in the church today regarding the age of the earth? Explain.

Could Noah's flood have been regional and not global? Explain.

Can God ever ask of us a service that is unreasonable? Why or why not?

- **Temptation**

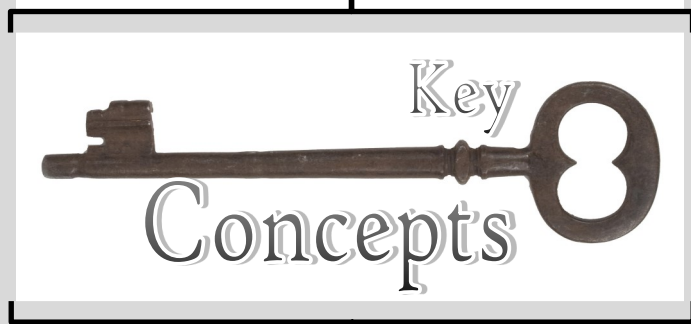
The serpent tempted Eve in that he offered her an enticement to sin. God does not tempt in that way (James 1:13). He puts us to the test, as He did Abraham (Genesis 22:1), but He always seeks our good.

- **Worship**

People began to "call upon the name of the LORD" in Genesis 4:26. The phrase recurs frequently. It refers to expressing adoration toward God and having confidence in His salvation (Acts 22:16).

- **Prophecy**

God's foreknowledge confuses us as finite humans. With the faith of Abraham (Romans 4:16-25), we can have full confidence in God's word regarding the future.





Cain: The man who could not close the door to sin

Cain was the first child ever born. His parents saw him as a blessing, and rightly so. But the joy he brought to Adam and Eve was forever tarnished by a

choice Cain made — and more to the point, how he reacted to God’s response.

Abel lives as an example of faith in Hebrews 11:4, necessarily implying that his sacrifice of “the firstlings of his flock” was preferable to Cain’s offering of “the fruit of the ground” (4:3-4). Since both were acceptable sacrifices later under the Law of Moses, we must assume specific instruction was given — instruction that Cain chose to ignore.

The favor of God was important to Cain — or else, why would he bother becoming angry? But instead of obeying more perfectly, which would have improved his “countenance,” or attitude (Genesis 4:6), he chose to lash out against God by killing his own brother.

God gave him fair warning. He said, “sin is crouching at the door; and its desire is for you, but you must master it” (4:7). It crouches there for all of us, waiting for an opportunity to come in and take control. Surely Adam and Eve told Cain about their own temptation and failure, and the price they had to pay for their weakness. But if they did, their warnings went for naught.

But God still loved Cain. Despite his horrible act, He heard when Cain cried out for mercy. “My punishment is too great to bear!” he said. And so might we all, knowing how guilty each of us is of sin. And because Cain asked, God gave him the famous “mark” — not to distinguish him as one worthy of death, but as one who had already been shown mercy. We would like to think Cain would have received this act of grace thankfully and penitently, and that he would live the rest of his days determined to be stronger. Whether he did or not, certainly we should.

What might I do that would make me more like Cain (for better or worse)?

God told Adam and Eve concerning the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, “In the day that you eat from it you will surely die.” They ate anyway. That would be the end of the story — and a tragic story at that — if ours was not a God of love and mercy. Thankfully, it is not the end of the story. It is only the beginning. The beginning of something truly wonderful.

The apostle Paul writes regarding the consequences of Adam’s sin in Romans 5. Verse 15 reads, “But the free gift is not like the transgression. For if by the transgression of the one the many died, much more did the grace of God and the gift by the grace of the one Man, Jesus Christ, abound to the many.” Paul’s point is not that Adam forced sin upon us any more than that Jesus forced grace upon us.

No, Adam introduced the problem. And we, through our own free will, embraced it. Truly, “all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God” (Romans 3:23). This should instill terror in us all, for “the wages of sin is death” (Romans 6:23) — just as was the case for Adam and Eve. Our sin causes a separation between us and God that can never be bridged by human effort or initiative. We might as well be “dead” (Ephesians 2:1).

But Romans 6:23 does not end with death. It ends with grace. The problem brought into the world through Adam is completely solved in Jesus. Through faith we can reach out to Him for salvation in His appointed way and find for ourselves a salvation we could not hope to find on our own without Him.

*Wonderful Story
of Love*
**“Jesus Christ is the same
yesterday and today and
forever.” — Hebrews 13:8**

Does our heritage in Adam give us an excuse for sin? Explain.

Does salvation by grace mean human works are completely useless? Explain.

The genealogy included in Genesis 5 is remarkable in many ways — the most obvious of which is the extraordinary lifespans of the ancients. But as amazing as it is to read of Methuselah living to the ripe old age of 969, what happened to his father is even more so.



Enoch did not die. At all. At any age.

The text simply says, “God took him.” And since we are specifically told that everyone else in the list “died,” we must conclude that the “walking with God” that characterized Enoch’s life on earth took him straight to glory. Only Elijah seems to have experienced anything remotely similar (2 Kings 2:11).

There is every reason to believe Enoch’s “walks” with God included a level of fellowship unattainable for us today. But that doesn’t mean we can’t go where he has gone. If we “walk” with God through Jesus Christ now (1 John 1:7), that path is sure to take us where He is now, waiting for us (John 14:1-4).

What have we left out that you wish had been included, and why?

God must really love us. If He really sees the future from afar, there must have been a sense in which He saw our rebellion from before the creation. We broke His heart during the days of Noah, and each of us continues to break His heart today — even the best of us. And it would take sending His Son to the cross to make His plan for salvation come together. I cannot imagine loving even the best of mankind that much, let alone the worst. What a God we serve!

What is your takeaway from the reading?

