

GENESIS

A Suggested Outline of Genesis

- I. History of Humanity in General (1-11)
 - A. Creation of the heavens and earth (1-2)
 - B. Adam and his family (3-5)
 - The Fall of man (3)
 - C. Noah and his family (6-11)
 - The Flood (6-10)
 - The Babel rebellion (11)

- II. History of Israel in Particular (12-50)
 - A. Abraham—The father who gave his son (12:1-25:18)
 - B. Isaac—The son who took a bride (25:19-26:35)
 - C. Jacob—The flesh vs. the Spirit (27:1-36:43)
 - D. Joseph—The providence of God (37:1-50:26)

Introductory Notes to Genesis

I. Name

"Genesis" is from a Greek word meaning "beginning" or "generation." The word "genesis" is translated "generation" in Matt. 1:1. Genesis is the book of generations, or beginnings. There are ten generations noted in the book: the heavens and earth (2:4); Adam (5:1); Noah (6:9); Shem (11:10); Terah (11:27); Ishmael (25:12); Isaac (25:19); Esau (36:1); and Jacob (37:2). As the seed-plot for the entire Bible, Genesis records for us the momentous beginning of the universe, human history, civilization, sin, salvation, sacrifice, marriage, and the family.

II. Author

It is generally agreed that Moses is the author of the first five books of the Bible, called "the Pentateuch" (from the Gk., *penta*, "five" and *teuchos*, "the case books were kept in"). Of course, Moses was not alive when the events in Genesis occurred, but the Spirit directed him in his writing (2 Peter 1:20-21). Christ believed that Moses wrote the books assigned to him (see John 5:45-47), and that is good enough authority for us.

III. Purpose

As you read Genesis, you cannot help but note that the first eleven chapters are general and without extensive detail; while the rest of the book, starting with chapter 12, gives the lives of four men in great detail: Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and Joseph. As you will note in our suggested outline of Genesis, the first section (1-11) deals with humankind in general and explains the origin of man and sin, while the last section (12-50) deals with Israel in particular. This suggests that the purpose of the book is to explain the beginnings of man and his sin and Israel and God's plan of salvation. In fact, one of the key themes in Genesis is divine election.

We begin with "the heavens and the earth," but then God chooses to deal with the earth, not the heavens; the theme from then on is God's program on earth. Having chosen the earth, God now bypasses the angels (fallen angels included) and elects to deal with man. From Adam's many sons, God chooses Seth (4:25). Of

Seth's many descendants (Gen. 5), God chooses Noah (6:8), and from Noah's family, He chooses Shem (11:10), Terah (11:27), and finally Abraham (12:1). Abraham has many children, but Isaac is the chosen seed (21:12). Isaac has two sons, Jacob and Esau, and God chooses Jacob to be the recipient of His blessing.

All of this reveals God's gracious divine election. Not one of those people chosen deserved the honor; as is true for all believers, their election resulted fully from God's grace. Along with the electing grace of God, Genesis illustrates the wonderful power and providence of God. Men would disobey and doubt Him, yet He would rule and overrule to accomplish His purposes. Had His program failed in Genesis, there could have been no Messiah born in Bethlehem centuries later.

IV. Genesis and Revelation

The beginnings recorded in Genesis have their fulfillment in Revelation. God created the heaven and the earth (Gen. 1:1) and will one day create a new heaven and new earth (Rev. 21:1). Satan first attacked man (Gen. 3) yet will be defeated in his last attack (Rev. 20:7-10). God made darkness and light (Gen. 1:5), but one day there will no longer be night (Rev. 21:23; 22:5). There will be no more sea (Gen. 1:10; Rev. 21:1), and the curse will be lifted from creation (Gen. 3:14-17; Rev. 22:3). God drove man out of the garden (Gen. 3:24), but God's people will be welcomed into the heavenly paradise (Rev. 22:1 ff), and the tree of life will be restored to man (Rev. 22:14). Babylon will be destroyed (Gen. 10:8-10; Rev. 17-19) and the promised judgment of Satan fulfilled (Gen. 3:15; Rev. 20:10).

V. Christ in Genesis

According to Luke 24:27, 44-45 Christ is found in "all the Scriptures." Following are but a few of the references to Christ in Genesis.

1. The creative Word-Gen. 1:3; John 1:1-5; 2 Cor. 4:3-7
2. The Last Adam-Rom. 5; 1 Cor. 15:45
3. The Seed of the woman-Gen. 3:15; Gal. 3:19; 4:4
4. Abel-Gen. 4; Heb. 11:4; 12:24
5. Noah and the flood-Gen. 6-10; 1 Peter 3:18-22
6. Melchizedek-Gen. 14; Heb. 7-10
7. Isaac, the child of promise—Gen. 17; Gal. 4:21-31 (Isaac pic-

tures Christ in his miraculous birth, his willingness to die, his "resurrection" [Heb. 11:19], and his taking of a bride. Of course, Jesus actually died and arose from the dead. In Isaac, these events were only symbolic.)

8. The Lamb-Gen. 22:7-8; John 1:29

9. Jacob's ladder-Gen. 28:12ff; John 1:51

10. Joseph—Gen. 37-50 (Rejected by His brothers; beloved of the Father; made to suffer unjustly; exalted to reign. Joseph's brothers did not recognize him the first time they saw him, but they did recognize him the second time. So with Israel is their recognition of their Messiah.)

GENESIS 1

We will confine ourselves to some major truths found in this important passage.

I. The Creator

No scientist or historian can improve upon, "In the beginning God. . . ." This simple statement refutes the atheist, who says there is no God; the agnostic, who claims we cannot know God; the polytheist who worships many gods; the pantheist, who says that "all nature is God"; the materialist, who claims that matter is eternal and not created; and the fatalist, who teaches that there is no divine plan behind creation and history. God's personality is seen in this chapter, for He speaks, sees, names, and blesses. The scientist may claim that matter just "came into being," that life "happened," and that all complex forms of life "gradually evolved" from lower forms, but he cannot prove his claim. That there are changes within species (such as the development of the horse or the house cat) we admit, but that there are changes from one kind of creature into another, we will not accept. Why did God create the universe? Certainly not to add anything to Himself, since He needs nothing. Actually, creation limits God, since the Eternal must now confine Himself to work in time and human history. The Word makes it clear that Christ is the Author, Sustainer, and Goal of creation (Col. 1:15-17; Rev. 4:11). Christ, the Living Word, reveals God in the written Word and in the book of nature (John 1:1-5; also see Ps. 19).

What does creation reveal about God? Creation reveals: (1) His wisdom and power (Job 28:23-27; Prov. 3:19); (2) His glory (Ps. 19:1); (3) His power and Godhead (Rom. 1:18-21); (4) His love for insignificant man (Ps. 8:3-9); (5) His providential care (Isa. 40:12ff)- Our Lord, when on earth, saw the gracious hand of the Father even in the flowers and fowl (Matt. 6:25ff).

The Hebrew name for God in Gen. 1 is *Elohim* —the name of God that links Him with creation. The basic root of the name is *El* which means "mighty, strong, prominent." In 2:4 we have "LORD God" which is *Jehovah Elohim*. *Jehovah* is the covenant name of God and links Him to His people. This is the name He gave when He spoke to Moses: "I AM WHO I AM" (Ex. 3:14-15, NKJV). It means that He is the self-existing, unchanging God.

II. The Creation

The existence of the angels and the fall of Satan antedated the Creation, for the angels ("sons of God") sang at Creation (Job 38:7). Lucifer was the highest of God's created beings in this original Creation (see Ezek. 28:11-19) and wanted to take the place of God (Isa. 14:12-17). We find Satan already on the scene in Gen. 3, so that his fall must have taken place earlier.

The earth was formless, so on the first three days, God formed what He wanted. The earth was empty, so God filled up what He had formed. He made the expanse of the heavens ("firmament") and filled it with stars and planets. He made the land and filled it with plants and animals. He made the seas and filled them with fish and water mammals. God brought light into being before He placed the lights into the heavens. Note the principle of separation illustrated in Creation; for God divided light from darkness and seas from land (see 2 Cor. 6:14-18). Note too that each living thing was to reproduce "after its kind"; there is no suggestion here of gradual evolution. We may breed different kinds of cattle, but we cannot breed a cow into a reindeer!

Man is the crown of Creation. There is a "divine conference" among the members of the Godhead before man is created, something not seen at any other step of the Creation. Some of the angels had already rebelled against God, and He certainly knew what man would do. Yet, in His love and grace, He molded the first man "in His image," referring to man's personality—mind, will, emotions, freedom—rather than his physical appearance. (See Eph. 4:24; Col. 3:10.) Man was given the place of dominion over the earth, the highest position in Creation. This explains the attack of Satan; for Satan (Lucifer) had once held this position and had wanted an even higher one! If Lucifer could not have the place of God in the universe, then he would try to take the place of God in human's lives. And he succeeded! Man lost his dominion through sin (Ps. 8 and Heb. 2:5-18), but this dominion has been regained for us by Christ, the Last Adam (see Rom. 5). When on earth, Jesus proved that He had dominion over the fish (Luke 5; Matt. 17:24ff), the fowl (Matt. 26:74-75), and the beasts (Matt. 21:1-7).

Man's diet was originally vegetarian, but this was changed in Gen. 9:3-4. The Jews were given dietary restrictions (Lev. 11), but there are no such restrictions today (Mark 7:17-23; Acts 10:9-16; 1 Tim. 4:1-5).

III. The New Creation

Second Corinthians 4:3-6 and 5:17 make it clear that, in Christ, God has a new creation. Paul uses imagery from the Genesis creation account to illustrate this new creation. Man was created perfect but was ruined through sin. He is born a sinner, "without form and void"; his life is purposeless and empty and dark.

The Holy Spirit begins His work of conviction "moving" in men's hearts (Gen. 1:2). Indeed, salvation always begins with the Lord (Jonah 2:9); it is of His grace that any sinner is ever saved. The Spirit uses the Word to bring light (Ps. 119:130), for there can be no salvation apart from the Word of God (John 5:24). And Heb. 4:12 says that the Word has the power to "divide," calling to mind God's earlier dividing of light and darkness, waters and land.

Like the created beings in Genesis, believers have the responsibility of being fruitful and multiplying "after their kind." In a parallel to Adam's position of dominion, the believer is part of royalty under God's rule and can "reign in life" through Christ (Rom. 5:17ff).

Just as Adam was the head of the old creation, so Christ is the Head of the new creation; He is the Last Adam (1 Cor. 15:45-49). The OT is the "book of the generations of Adam" (Gen. 5:1), and it ends speaking of a curse (Mal. 4:6). The NT is the "book of the generation of Jesus Christ" (Matt. 1:1), and it ends with "no more curse" (Rev. 22:3).

GENESIS 2

I. The First Sabbath (2:1-3)

The word "Sabbath" simply means "to cease." God did not "rest" because He was weary, since God does not become weary (Ps. 121:4). Rather, He ceased from His creative works; the task was now finished. He had blessed the creatures (1:22) and man (1:28). Now He blessed the Sabbath by setting it apart as a special day. There is no commandment here for people to observe the Sabbath. In fact, since Adam was created on the sixth day, the Sabbath Day was actually the first day for him.

The Sabbath does not appear again in the OT until Ex. 20:8-11, where God gave the Sabbath to Israel as His special covenant sign (Ex. 31:12-17). There is no evidence in Scripture that God ever

told the Gentiles to observe the Sabbath; in fact, Ps. 147:19-20 makes it clear that the OT Mosaic Law was given only to Israel. One reason why Israel went into captivity was that the people profaned the Sabbath (Neh. 13:15-22). While on earth, Christ observed the Sabbath since He lived under the dispensation of law. Of course, He did not follow the man-made rules of the Pharisees (Mark 2:23-28).

In the early years of the church, Christians did meet on the Sabbath in the synagogues, until Jewish believers were persecuted and driven out. However, the first day of the week (Sunday, the Lord's Day) was their special day for fellowship and worship (Acts 20:7; 1 Cor. 16:1-3; Rev. 1:10). The first day commemorates Christ's resurrection (Matt. 28:1; John 20:1), the completion of His work in bringing about the new creation. See 2 Cor. 5:17. These two special days—the Sabbath and the Lord's Day—commemorate different things and must not be confused. The Sabbath Day relates to the old creation and was given expressly to Israel. The Lord's Day relates to the new creation and belongs especially to the church. The Sabbath speaks of law as six days of labor which are followed by rest, but the Lord's Day speaks of grace, for we begin the week with rest that is followed by works.

Hebrews 4 indicates that the OT Sabbath is a type of the future kingdom of rest, as well as the spiritual rest we have through faith in Christ. Colossians 2:13-17 makes it clear that the Sabbath belongs to the "shadows" of law and not the full light of grace. If people want to worship on the Sabbath, they certainly may, but they must not judge or condemn believers who do not join them (Col. 2:16-17). Galatians 4:9-11 indicates that the legalistic keeping of Sabbaths is a return to bondage. Romans 14:4-13 suggests that Sabbath-keeping can be the mark of an immature Christian who has a weak conscience. Certainly various groups of professing Christians may worship on Saturday if they prefer, but they must not condemn those who give special emphasis to worship on Sunday, resurrection day.

II. The First Garden (2:4-14)

Bible history can be summarized with four gardens: (1) Eden, where sin entered; (2) Gethsemane, where Christ yielded to death; (3) Calvary, where He died and was buried (see John 19:41-42); and (4) the heavenly "paradise garden" (Rev. 21:1ff). Moses de-

scribes the first home God gave to the first couple. Further details given here are not included in the creation account of chap. 1; these are complementary, not contradictory. Verse 5 indicates that God needed man to help till the ground. Man was "formed" as the potter forms the clay (same word in Jer. 18:1ff). Man was responsible to dress the garden (tend it) and keep it (guard it, suggesting the presence of an enemy). God gave Adam and Eve all they needed for life and happiness, all that was good and pleasant, and He allowed them to enjoy it in abundance.

The two trees are important. The text in 3:22 suggests that the tree of life sustained life for humankind (see also Rev. 22:2). Had Adam eaten of the tree of life after he sinned, he could not have died, and then death would not have passed upon all men (Rom. 5:12ff) and Christ could not have died to redeem men. The tree of knowledge symbolized the authority of God; to eat of that tree meant to disobey God and incur the penalty of death. We do not know what these trees were, yet it is certain that Adam and Eve understood their importance.

III. The First Law (2:15-17)

Adam was a perfect creature, one having never sinned, but he had the ability to sin. God made Adam a king with dominion (1:26ff). But a ruler can only rule others if he can rule himself, so it was necessary for Adam to be tempted. God has always wanted His creatures to love and obey Him of their own free will and not out of compulsion or because of reward.

This test was perfectly fair and just. Adam and Eve enjoyed liberty and abundant provision in the Garden and did not need the fruit from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.

IV. The First Marriage (2:18-25)

Everything in Creation was "very good" (1:31) except the loneliness of Adam. "It is not good for man to be alone" points to the basis for marriage: (1) to provide companionship; (2) to carry on the race; (3) to help one another and bring out the best. The word "helpmeet" (v. 18) refers to helper: one that meets his needs. This companion was not found anywhere in animal creation, thus showing the great gulf that is fixed between brute creatures and human beings made in the image of God. God made the first woman out of the flesh and bone of the first man, and He "closed up the flesh in

its place" (v. 21, NKJV). The verb "made" in v. 22 is actually the word "built," as one would build a temple. The fact that Eve was made from Adam shows the unity of the human race and the dignity of woman. It has been remarked that Eve was made, not from the man's feet to be trampled by him, or from his head to rule over him, but from his side, to be near his heart and loved by him.

Adam had named all the animals that God had brought him (v. 19), thus showing that the first man had intelligence, language, and speech. Now he names his bride "woman" (in the Heb. *ishshah* which is related to *ish* meaning "man"). Thus, in name and nature, man and woman belong to each other. How wonderful it would be if every wedding were performed by God. Then every home would be a paradise on earth.

Of course, this event is a beautiful picture of Christ and the church (Eph. 5:21-33). Christ, the Last Adam, gave birth to the church as He slept in death on the cross and men opened His side (John 19:31-37). He partook of our human nature that we might be partakers of His divine nature. Eve was the object of Adam's love and concern, just as the church receives Christ's love and his ministry. First Timothy 2:11-15 points out that Adam willingly ate of the forbidden fruit and was not deceived as was Eve. He was willing to become a sinner that he might stay with his bride! So Christ was willing to be made sin for us that we might be with Him forever. What love and grace! Note too that Eve was formed before sin came on the scene, just as we have been chosen in Christ "before the foundation of the world" (Eph. 1:4).

If we look closely, we can see three pictures of the church in these verses, just as the church is pictured in Ephesians. Eve was the bride (Eph. 5:21-33); she was also part of Adam's body (Gen. 2:23; Eph. 5:29-30); and she was made or "built," which suggests the church as a temple of God (Eph. 2:19-22).

GENESIS 3

I. Temptation (3:1-6)

A. *The tempter.*

God is not the author of sin, nor does He tempt people to sin; this is the work of the devil (James 1:13). We have already seen that Satan fell into sin prior to the work of Gen. 1:3ff. He was a beauti-