

Second Baptist Church of Doylestown

Bible Study Notes

5-15-19

Overview Book of Genesis

BEGIN . . . start . . . commence . . . open. . . There's something refreshing and optimistic about these words, whether they refer to the dawn of a new day, the birth of a child, the prelude of a symphony, or the first miles of a family vacation. Free of problems and full of promise, beginnings stir hope and imaginative visions of the future. *Genesis* means "beginnings" or "origin," and it unfolds the record of the beginning of the world, of human history, of family, of civilization, of salvation. It is the story of God's purpose and plan for his creation. As the book of beginnings, *Genesis* sets the stage for the entire Bible. It reveals the person and nature of God (Creator, Sustainer, Judge, Redeemer); the value and dignity of human beings (made in God's image, saved by grace, used by God in the world); the tragedy and consequences of sin (the Fall, separation from God, judgment); and the promise and assurance of salvation (covenant, forgiveness, promised Messiah).

God. That's where *Genesis* begins. All at once we see him creating the world in a majestic display of power and purpose, culminating with a man and woman made like himself (1:26-27). But before long, sin entered the world, and Satan was unmasked. Bathed in innocence, creation was shattered by the Fall (the willful disobedience of Adam and Eve). Fellowship with God was broken, and evil began weaving its destructive web. In rapid succession, we read how Adam and Eve were expelled from the beautiful garden, their first son turned murderer, and evil bred evil until God finally destroyed everyone on earth except a small family led by Noah, the only godly person left.

As we come to Abraham on the plains of Canaan, we discover the beginning of God's covenant people and the broad strokes of his salvation plan: Salvation comes by faith, Abraham's descendants will be God's people, and the Savior of the world will come through this chosen nation. The stories of Isaac, Jacob, and Joseph that follow are more than interesting biographies. They emphasize the promises of God and the proof that he is faithful. The people we meet in *Genesis* are simple, ordinary people, yet through them, God did great things. These are vivid pictures of how God can and does use all kinds of people to accomplish his good purposes—even people like you.

Read *Genesis* and be encouraged. There is hope! No matter how dark the world situation seems, God has a plan. No matter how insignificant or useless you feel, God loves you and wants to use you in his plan. No matter how sinful and separated from God you are, his salvation is available. Read *Genesis* . . . and hope!

VITAL STATISTICS

PURPOSE: To record God's creation of the world and his desire to have a people set apart to worship him

AUTHOR: Moses

ORIGINAL AUDIENCE: The people of Israel

DATE WRITTEN: 1450-1410 B.C.

WHERE WRITTEN: In the wilderness during Israel's wanderings, somewhere in the Sinai peninsula

SETTING: The region presently known as the Middle East

KEY VERSES: "So God created mankind in his own image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them" (1:27). "I will make you into a great nation, and I will bless you; I will make your name great, and you will be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you, and whoever curses you I will curse; and all peoples on earth will be blessed through you" (12:2-3).

KEY PEOPLE: Adam, Eve, Noah, Abraham, Sarah, Isaac, Rebekah, Jacob, Joseph

THE BLUEPRINT

THE STORY OF CREATION (1:1-2:3)

God created the sky, seas, and land. He created the plants, animals, fish, and birds. But he created human beings in his own image. At times, others may treat us disrespectfully. But we can be certain of our dignity and worth because we have been created in the image of God.

THE STORY OF ADAM (2:4-5:32)

1. Adam and Eve
2. Cain and Abel
3. Adam's descendants

When Adam and Eve were created by God, they were without sin. But they became sinful when they disobeyed God and ate some fruit from the tree. Through Adam and Eve we learn about the destructive power of sin and its bitter consequences.

THE STORY OF NOAH (6:1-11:32)

1. The Flood
2. Repopulating the earth
3. The tower of Babel

Noah was spared from the destruction of the Flood because he obeyed God and built the ark. Just as God protected Noah and his family, he still protects those who are faithful to him today.

THE STORY OF ABRAHAM (12:1-25:18)

1. God promises a nation to Abram
2. Abram and Lot
3. God promises a son to Abram
4. Sodom and Gomorrah
5. Birth and near sacrifice of Isaac
6. Isaac and Rebekah
7. Abraham dies

Abraham was asked to leave his country, wander in Canaan, wait years for a son, and then sacrifice him as a burnt offering. Through these periods of sharp testing, Abraham remained faithful to God. His example teaches us what it means to live a life of faith.

THE STORY OF ISAAC (25:19-28:9)

1. Jacob and Esau
2. Isaac and Abimelek
3. Jacob gets Isaac's blessing

Isaac did not demand his own way. He did not resist when he was about to be sacrificed, and he gladly accepted a wife chosen for him by others. Like Isaac, we must learn to put God's will ahead of our own.

THE STORY OF JACOB (28:10-36:43)

1. Jacob starts a family
2. Jacob returns home

Jacob did not give up easily. He faithfully served Laban for over 14 years. Later, he wrestled with God. Although Jacob made many mistakes, his hard work teaches us about living a life of service for our Lord.

THE STORY OF JOSEPH (37:1-50:26)

1. Joseph is sold into slavery
2. Judah and Tamar
3. Joseph is thrown into prison
4. Joseph is placed in charge of Egypt
5. Joseph and his brothers meet in Egypt
6. Jacob's family moves to Egypt
7. Jacob and Joseph die in Egypt

Joseph was sold into slavery by his brothers and unjustly thrown into prison by his master. Through the life of Joseph, we learn that suffering, no matter how unfair, can develop strong character in us.

MEGATHEMES

Beginnings

EXPLANATION: *Genesis* explains the beginning of many important realities: the universe, the earth, people, sin, and God's plan of salvation.

IMPORTANCE: *Genesis* teaches us that the earth is well made and good. People are special to God and unique. God creates and sustains all life.

Disobedience

EXPLANATION: People are always facing great choices. Disobedience occurs when people choose not to follow God's plan of living.

IMPORTANCE: *Genesis* explains why people are evil: They choose to do wrong. Even great Bible heroes failed God and disobeyed.

Sin

EXPLANATION: Sin ruins people's lives. It happens when we disobey God.

IMPORTANCE: Living God's way makes life productive and fulfilling.

Promises

EXPLANATION: God makes promises to help and protect people. This kind of promise is called a "covenant."

IMPORTANCE: God kept his promises then, and he keeps them now. He promises to love us, accept us, forgive us.

Obedience

EXPLANATION: The opposite of sin is obedience. Obeying God restores our relationship to him.

IMPORTANCE: The only way to enjoy the benefits of God's promises is to obey him.

Prosperity

EXPLANATION: Prosperity is deeper than mere material wealth. True prosperity and fulfillment come as a result of obeying God.

IMPORTANCE: When people obey God, they find peace with him, with others, and with themselves.

Israel

EXPLANATION: God started the nation of Israel in order to have a dedicated people who would (1) keep his ways alive in the world, (2) proclaim to the world what he is really like, and (3) prepare the world for the birth of Christ.

IMPORTANCE: God is looking for people today to follow him. We are to proclaim God's truth and love to all nations, not just our own. We must be faithful to carry out the mission God has given us.