

Genesis

Summary

The story of Genesis is one of beginnings. The entire world is created, humanity is given dominion, sin enters the world, and God begins His redemptive relationship with mankind. The title Genesis literally means "origin," which is an appropriate title for the book that depicts the origins of the world and begins the most important book ever written. The book of Genesis can be thematically split into two parts. The first part of Genesis (Chapters 1-11) details the primeval history of the world, including creation, the fall, and the flood. The second half (Chapters 12-50) gives the Patriarchal history of the Jewish people, tracing the blessing of God through one family. Through Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, God enters into a covenantal relationship with the people that He will use to bring His truth to the world.

Author

The book of Genesis, as well as the rest of the first five books of the Bible, called the Pentateuch, have been attributed to Moses.

Date

The most common date given for the writing of Genesis is the middle of the second millennium B.C. between c. 1446 and c. 1406, depending on the dates that Moses lived.

Primary Characters

God - (The Entire Book of Genesis)

Adam & Eve - (Genesis 1-5)

Noah - (Genesis 6-9)

Abraham & Sarah - (Genesis 11-25)

Isaac - (Genesis 21-28, 35)

Jacob - (Genesis 25-49)

Joseph - (Genesis 37-50)

Historical Moments

Creation (Genesis 1-2)

The Fall (Genesis 3)

The Flood (Genesis 6-9)

The Tower of Babel (Genesis 11)

Abram's Call (Genesis 12)

Abraham's Covenant of Circumcision and Name Change (Genesis 17)

The Testing of Abraham Through His Sacrifice (Genesis 22)

The Birthright and Blessing of Jacob (Genesis 25-27)

Jacob's Name Change (Genesis 35)

Joseph Sold into Slavery (Genesis 37)

Jacob's Blessing to the Tribes of Israel (Genesis 48-49)

Major Theological Themes

God Is All-Powerful - The Creator of the Universe spoke and the world came into being. He humbly interacts with humanity at a personal level but also has the capability to judge and destroy when necessary. He created matter from nothing and there are no limits to His dominion or power.

Sin Entered the World - When Adam and Eve disobeyed the one stipulation of living in the Garden of Eden, everything changed. After sin entered the world, it was not the same place it was before the fall. The punishment for the original sin was that humanity could not be in unrestricted communion with God, they would toil and experience pain for the first time, and they would experience physical death.

God Has a Plan for Redemption - Even in the wake of sin entering the world, God already had a plan in place that He would bring humanity back into communion with Him. Throughout the Old Testament, He enters into a series of covenants with His people to restore the relationship with His people.

Lessons Learned from Genesis

Creation Has a Purpose - God created the world, and all that is contained within it, to bring Him glory. Throughout the process of creation, God blesses His work and is pleased with it. Modern culture would attribute the beginning of the world to matter, chance, and time, but Genesis teaches that there is purpose in the creation of the world and that people matter to Him.

Sin Has a Necessary Consequence - From the first sin in Genesis 3, it is made clear that sin has painful consequences. Though we often falsely think that sin can be swept under the rug, it never ceases to affect our lives in ways we could not imagine. The very act of sin puts us at odds with God's desires and His nature. Because of sin, we can see the psychological, emotional, and physical strain on our lives and relationships. Even more devastatingly, sin created a permanent divide between God and humanity. Though we all inevitably struggle with sin in this life, the divide has been rectified through Christ's sacrifice on the cross, allowing us to be in a restored relationship with Him.

God Works Through Flawed People - From the beginning to the end of the Bible, God has shown that He can work through the least likely people. In Genesis, we see Abram, who came from a family of idol worshippers and who blatantly lied and doubted on multiple occasions. Isaac fell into many of the same traps as his father, and Jacob stole the birthright and blessing from his own brother by deceiving his father. Nevertheless, God worked through these individuals to start the process of reconciliation despite their human frailties. Regardless of our pasts, God can work through each of us to accomplish His work.

God Desires Relationship - In Genesis, we see God interacting with humanity on an intimate and personal level. In the Garden of Eden, God walked with His creation and was in close relationship with them. Despite the effects of the fall, God continued in covenantal relationship through the patriarchs. His work in the world was not simply dictated, but given through those who are in relationship with Him. God is not distant; He wants to be in relationship with us.