

Genesis

History & Precedent Established

1) Introduction:

- a) Just as the New Testament would be incomplete without the Old Testament, the rest of the Bible would be incomplete without the book of Genesis.
- b) Genesis sets the context for the rest of the Bible – All subsequent scripture depends on the foundation laid in Genesis.
- c) Our entire system of Christianity depends on certain statements made in Genesis.

2) What do we know about Genesis?

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| a) The account of creation | Chapters 1 – 2 |
| b) The account of the fall | Chapters 3 – 6 |
| c) The account of the flood | Chapters 6 – 8 |
| d) The account of the new generation | Chapters 9 – 11 |
| e) The life of Abraham (obedient faith) | Chapters 12 – 24 |
| f) The life of Isaac (passive faith) | Chapters 21 – 26 |
| g) The life of Jacob (restless faith) | Chapters 27 – 36 |
| h) The life of Joseph (fulfilled faith) | Chapters 37 – 50 |

3) The purpose of Genesis:

- a) The historical purpose of Genesis is to provide a history of man's creation, fall into sin with the associated consequences, and introduce G-d's redemptive program and G-d's kingdom.
- b) The theological purpose of Genesis is to establish the sovereignty of G-d over all of His creation, His relationship with man, and man's responsibility to G-d. Obedience brings G-d's grace and deliverance; disobedience brings G-d's judgment.

4) Key word – Beginning:

a) **בְּרֵאשִׁית** = "In the beginning"

i) From the root, **ראש** = "head, chief, first, principal" in the absolute form of the word.

(1) The absolute form may take the article or have the article understood. Without the article it doesn't necessarily mean "a", i.e., "a beginning" as opposed to "the beginning." "the beginning" is the correct understanding.

"A beginning" would probably appear as **תְּחִלָּה** (tekh-il-law) =

"beginning" = the first in, or a beginning of, a series of directly related events or activities, i.e., "the beginning of the wheat harvest."

(2) The absolute *may* be understood as imparting emphasis or value. Scholars are split on this.

ii) Add the suffix, **ית** = feminine singular = **רֵאשִׁית** = "the first of it's kind in respect to time, rank and worth."

(1) Indicates a point of departure, i.e., the first occurrence of something in contrast to what was occurring prior.¹

(2) *May* support the emphatic use of the absolute.

iii) Add the prefix **ב** = preposition "in, on, with, by, etc."

5) Genesis tells us the beginning of everything EXCEPT G-d.

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| a) The beginning of the created world | Gen. 1:1-25 |
| b) The beginning of man and woman | Gen. 1:26 thru 2:25 |
| c) The beginning of sin | Gen. 3:1-7 |
| d) The beginning of the promise of redemption | Gen. 3:8-28 |
| e) The beginning of family life | Gen. 4:1-15 |
| f) The beginning of civilization | Gen. 4:16 – 9:29 |
| g) The beginning of nations | Gen. 10 & 11 |
| h) The beginning of a chosen people | Gen. 12 thru 50 |
| i) The beginning of judgment, altars, death, sacrifice | |

6) Genesis contains the foundational truths of science:

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|-----------------|---|
| a) Theology | The science of G-d |
| b) Cosmogony | The science of the origin of the universe |
| c) Anthropology | The science of man |
| d) Sociology | The science of society |
| e) Hamartiology | The science of sin |
| f) Ethnology | The science of the races |
| g) Soteriology | The science of salvation |

Genesis deals with all of these subjects only fundamentally, not finally.

¹ Davidson, *The Analytical Hebrew and Chaldee Lexicon*, **ראש** ppg 671-672.
Unger & White, *Nelson's Expository Dictionary of the Old Testament*, Head/ **ראש** p. 174.)

7) Theology – the science of G-d:

- a) Genesis presents G-d as Creator, King, and Redeemer.
- b) Christian theology depends on these fundamental facts.
 - i) The nature of G-d is not revealed.
 - ii) His methods are not declared.
 - iii) His ultimate purpose is not stated.
- c) If G-d is not Creator, King, and Redeemer, G-d does not exist and man is without hope.

8) Cosmogony – the science of the origin of the universe:

- a) Genesis tells us that the universe came into existence by the will and act of G-d.
 - i) The process of creation is not explained.
 - ii) The period of creation is not revealed.
 - iii) The ultimate purpose of creation is not told.
- b) If G-d did not create the universe, man is compelled to attempt to account for it by some undefined action and interaction without personality.

9) Anthropology – the science of man:

- a) Genesis teaches that man is a mingling of dust and deity by the will and deliberate act of G-d; placed under authority, having rule over creation, and therefore responsible to G-d.
 - i) Man's ultimate destiny is not revealed.
- b) If man is not a product of the will and action of G-d, we are compelled to think of man as simply the last product of animal evolution, as an animal, and nothing more.

10) Sociology – the science of society:

- a) Genesis tells us that the foundation of society is the family, based on the marriage relationship, and that nations are made up of families that recognize their inter-responsibility under a divine government.
 - i) The application of these principles to complex conditions is not found in Genesis.
- b) If we deny that human society is founded on the family, based on the marriage relationship, society becomes chaotic and denies the marriage relationship.

11)Hamartiology – the science of sin:

- a) Genesis tells us that sin in mankind is a failure of faith in the goodness of G-d, resulting in rebellion against G-d's government.
 - i) How individual sin affects individual destiny is not declared.
- b) If we deny the teaching that sin is rebellion against G-d, based on unbelief, then we must modify the terms that Christianity uses to describe sin until eventually sin is declared to be nonexistent, just the under side of good.

12)Ethnology – the science of the races:

- a) Genesis alone records the breakup of the unity of the human race, following a rebellious attempt to create national identity.
 - i) The ultimate effects of this scattering are not given.
- b) Failure to accept the teaching in Genesis that national divisions are the outcome of a false attempt at unity, based on self-sufficient rebellion against G-d, must result in affirming national divisions to be good, even though they have produced all wars and many national evils.

13)Soteriology – the science of salvation:

- a) Genesis tells us that human salvation must come from G-d, through a man.
 - i) Through intimation, symbols, types, and shadows, man is taught that having sinned, our only hope is that G-d will send a redeemer.
 - ii) Nothing is clearly stated regarding the method or finality.
- b) To deny that human salvation is possible only through the intervention of G-d is to ultimately abandon the idea that salvation is either possible or necessary.

14)The central message of Genesis to us is that of our relationship to G-d.

- a) We need Genesis because it is sometimes difficult to believe that any such relationship exists.
 - i) If we are without G-d, we are without hope.
 - ii) If we believe the truth that we are related to G-d we have hope.
- b) Genesis draws us back to this relationship.
 - i) Man is related to G-d by creation and government.
 - ii) The basis of life is faith in G-d.
 - iii) Faith is expressed in obedience.