



Genesis 1 *“In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.”*

How do you press over half the Bible timeline into three pages? Can I cram over 2000 years of history into a one-day study? This is impossible. I took a random look into famous or important verses in the book of Genesis. I quit after ten. My intent was to find one famous verse. Just one controversial or pivotal verse in scripture. Yet, the book of Genesis has countless verses that make a difference in our Christian theology. As a matter of fact, there is no way to avoid the word theology in Genesis. That word means the study of God. We just cannot study God fully in a three-page study. However, let's try!

Narrative

In the very beginning of the Bible, the book of Genesis unfolds with its creation account. God's Holy Spirit bursts on the scene hovering over the waters. The word hovering can also be described as breathing over the water. From then on, the narrative takes a turn by describing the fall of Adam and Eve. The stage is set. These two humans disobey God and are tossed out of Eden. Amazingly enough, in the very next chapter their son kills the other son. Then special angels or super humans called the Nephelium have sex with human women. It is at this time that God has had enough. He sends a flood upon the earth to start over.

God chooses to wash away the sinful earth and begin again with just eight people. The land did not even have time to dry from the flood when Noah is found drunk. From there, God

(yet again) must deal with sin. The people of Babel try and build a tower to heaven. God scatters these people all over the earth confusing their language. There you have the first half of the Bible timeline within eleven chapters.

To this point, the Bible is showing us how God deals with the people he created. It is mostly a story, but (at it's core) it is really about the people in those stories. Starting in Genesis 12 we take a turn towards one man and his descendance: his name is Abraham. His family tree turns into the nation of Israel through his son Isaac. Further to this Abraham fathered the nation of Islam through another son named Ishmael. God sets up several covenants with these two boys and their father Abraham. A theme begins to emerge. Adam and Eve sacrifice their relationship with God for knowledge. Cain sacrifices his brother for his pride. The people of Babel sacrifice their kingdom to be like God. Abraham sacrifices his calling to create two nations that will war against each other throughout history. Esau sacrificed his birth rite for a bowl of soup. Joseph allowed pride to pull him into slavery. The 12 brothers that make up the sons of Israel sacrificed their inheritance to be slaves of Egypt. This Biblical narrative called Genesis is a about a faithful God that is trying to redeem the unfaithful.

Intent

This is the Genesis narrative. The word narrative means *a spoken or written account of connected events*. The book of Genesis is a string of connected events. In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. I agree that if you cannot accept this verse then the rest of the Bible is meaningless. God did it! Another word pops up in God's world: providence. It means divine guidance or care. The divine care of God guides the narrative story of creation to its climax in the book of revelation. Genesis begins that journey with a series of stories or timeline events. This timeline creates a narrative that ultimately lead us to Jesus.

Genesis opens with an extremely short description of creation. There are just over 700 words in Genesis 1. Some smart whip added that another 250 might have solved a few issues. To be fair, not a ton of words are in the Bible describing the birth and childhood of Jesus either. I feel that the intent of the Bible is what God is doing in creation. It can literally be described in just three words: God did it! The book of Genesis is no different. It is the narrative of Adam and Eve's descendants. What happened to humans after their fall from grace? How did God begin to deal with them? That is the book of Genesis.

Characters

The main characters introduced in the Bible are as follows: Adam and Eve; Cain and Abel, Noah, Shem, Ham, and Japheth. From there we have Abraham and Sarah; Isaac and Ishmael, and Hagar. There is Jacob and Esau; Reuben, Simeon, Levi, Judah, Issachar, Zebulun, Gad, Asher, Dan, Naphtali, Joseph, and Benjamin. Over arching in all this is God and the Serpent.

Who wrote this book?

This is a very good question. Tradition says that Moses wrote it. In a few places are lineages called *the Generations of...* Were these lineages and the story written down in a collection of books? How did Moses receive this narrative? There are scholars that believe someone else later than Moses wrote this Genesis account. Either way they would have needed some verbal or written accounts. It makes sense that the accounts (in whatever form) were not that detailed: hence the small creation account.

Famous verses

1. Gen 1:1 "*In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.*"

2. Gen 50:20 *“Even though you intended to do harm to me, God intended it for good, in order to preserve a numerous people, as he is doing today.”*

Controversies, issues, and Questions

1. The issues are simple really. Is Adam and Eve real? Some people like to think the term Adam is a metaphor for humanity.
2. Is the creation account a literal seven days? 2 Peter 3:8 says a day is like a thousand years to God. He is said to exist outside of time.
3. Where did all the people come from if the Flood was universal (the whole earth)? That is why some people think the flood was local.
4. The Genesis time gaps including Gen1-2. Where do dinosaurs fit in the Biblical timeline? Some believe Genesis 2 is a do over of creation.
5. In terms of Muslims, Jewish, and Christian: who owns God? The controversy between Isaac and Ishmael. This controversy is still being played out to this very day.

Connections to the New Testament

Marriage (Matthew 19:8-9, Genesis 2:24); The Flood (Luke 17:26-29, Genesis 7:13-16); Sin (Romans 5:12, Genesis 3:21-24), Melchizedek (Hebrews 7:17, Genesis 14:18-20)