

OLD TESTAMENT SURVEY

Genesis 1-11

Genesis

- "Beginnings" or "Origins"
 - 1st book of both Hebrew & Christian Bibles
 - speaks of the beginnings of
 - the universe and the earth
 - mankind
 - God's people, and in particular, the nation of Israel
 - spans Creation (>4000 B.C.) through the life and death of Joseph (~1800 B.C.)
 - introduces many themes and concepts that will run through the rest of the Scriptures

- Authorship
 - traditionally ascribed to Moses, together with the rest of the Pentateuch (~1400s B.C.)
 - a range of modern theories beginning in the 1700s A.D. reject Mosaic authorship and claim later authorship (~1000-400 B.C.) from a variety of sources

- Structure of the book
 - Various ways Genesis may be structured, including
 1. **Genealogical** - '*Toledoth*' formula
 - starts with a 'prologue' describing Creation (1:1-2:3), followed by a focus on God's dealings with humanity, divided into 10 sections
 - each section starts with Hebrew phrase '*elleh tole dot*' - "These are the generations of..."
 - 2:4-4:26 - "...of the heavens and the earth" - 'offspring' of the Creation, culminating in Adam & Eve and their descendants
 - 5:1-6:8 - "...of Adam" - descendants of Adam, and description of slide into sin
 - 6:9-9:29 - "...of Noah" - account of Noah (and the Flood), and Noah's 3 sons
 - 10:1-11:9 - "...of the Sons of Noah, Shem, Ham, and Japheth" - descendants of Noah's sons
 - 11:10-26 - "...of Shem" - descendants of Shem down to Terah and his sons
 - 11:27-25:11 - "...of Terah" - account of Terah and his sons, in particular, of Abram
 - 25:12-18 - "...of Ishmael" - descendants of Ishmael
 - 25:19-35:29 - "...of Isaac, Abraham's son" - account of Isaac and his sons, Jacob & Esau
 - 36:1&9-37:1 - "...of Esau" - descendants of Esau (2 lists)
 - 37:2-50:26 - "...of Jacob" - account of Jacob's sons, in particular, of Joseph

 2. **Historical**
 - Genesis 1-11 - 'ancient' history - pre-patriarchal
 - from Creation to Abraham (>4000 B.C. to ~2100 B.C.)

 - Genesis 12-50 - patriarchs (~2100-1800 B.C.)
 - Abraham (2166-1991 B.C.) (Genesis 12-25)
 - Isaac (2066-1886 B.C.) (Genesis 24-26)
 - Jacob (Israel) (2006-1859 B.C.) & Esau (Genesis 25-36)
 - Joseph (1915-1805 B.C.) and the sons of Israel (Genesis 37-50)

Genesis 1-11

Summary & Storyline

1:1-2:3 Introduction - Creation of heavens & earth and everything in them

- 1:1 - "In the beginning, God created..." - God created everything in 6 days
 - 2 parallel sets of 3 days, involving "dividing/separating" and "filling":

Dividing	Filling
<i>Day 1</i> (1:3-5) - Light from Dark; Day from Night	<i>Day 4</i> (1:14-19) - Sun, moon, and stars
<i>Day 2</i> (1:6-8) - Waters above (sky/heavens) from waters below (seas)	<i>Day 5</i> (1:20-23) - birds (sky) and fish (seas)
<i>Day 3</i> (1:9-13) - Land from the seas, with plants to cover the land	<i>Day 6</i> (1:24-31) - land animals and Man

- everything created perfectly good - emphasized by 7-fold pronouncement of God that "it was good" (1:4, 10, 12, 18, 21, 25, 31), culminating in "it was very good" (v.31)
- Man created as the pinnacle of Creation
 - created in the image of God (1:26-27) - sharing in some of the attributes of God, and reflecting His glory
 - created to fill the earth and to rule over it, but under the rule of God (1:26-30)
- God rested from His work of creating on the 7th day (2:1-3) - blessed the 7th day and made it holy

2:4-25 "the generations of the heavens and the earth" - speaks of the 'offspring' of the heavens & earth, with a focus on the creation of man & woman

- parallel account of Creation, focusing the creation of man and woman
- God "planted" a garden in Eden, in the east and placed the man He had created into it
- an abundance of trees in the garden, including the tree of life and the tree of the knowledge of good & evil
 - God permits the man to eat of any tree in the garden, but not the tree of the knowledge of good & evil - eating of that tree would result in death
- God creates woman out of the side of man and unites them as one - the institution of marriage

3:1-24 The Fall

- The serpent (i.e. Satan; cf. Rev. 12:9) tempts and deceives the woman to eat the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good & evil ("Did God actually say...")
- She eats, and gives some to Adam, who also eats
- God calls them to accounts and pronounces judgment on the woman, then man, and the serpent
 - pronounces curses on each
 - serpent: a promise of defeat and ultimate destruction - enmity with the seed (offspring) of the woman
 - woman: pain in childbirth; oppressive rule by husband - enmity with her husband
 - man: painful toil in subduing the earth, and death - enmity with the creation

- yet, in the midst of judgment, God shows mercy and promises redemption
 - speaks of a seed (offspring) of the woman who would crush the head of the serpent
 - speaks ultimately of Jesus Christ, who would crush Satan through His death on the Cross
 - the "proto-Gospel"
 - kills some animals to provide a covering for the man & woman
 - first hint of the taking of life to cover over Man's sin
- God drives the man & woman out of the Garden of Eden, to the east, and prevents them from returning

4:1-24 Cain & Abel - emergence of two lineages of Mankind

- Adam & Eve have 2 sons, Cain & Abel
- Abel offers a offering that is pleasing to God, but Cain's offering is rejected
- Cain is angry, and murders Abel
- God pronounces judgment on Cain, but in mercy spares his life
- Story of Cain ends with a genealogy of his descendants, culminating with Lamech
 - Lamech not only kills a man, but has 2 wives, and boasts to them about killing the man
 - As the 7th generation from Adam, shows the 'perfection' of sinfulness of the descendants of Adam through Cain

4:25-5:32 The generations of Adam through Seth - emergence of a Godly line

- after Abel dies, Adam & Eve have another son, Seth, whose offspring "call on the name of the Lord" (4:26)
- account given in Genesis 5 of the descendants of Adam through Seth, ending in Noah
- genealogy is striking not only for the longevity of those in this line, but also in the repetition of the phrase, "and he died"
 - stark reminder of the effect of sin on mankind
- Enoch, 7th from Adam in Seth's line, stands in stark contrast to Lamech, 7th from Adam in Cain's line
 - walks with God, until God took him away - the 'perfection' of those who walk with God
 - speaks of the hope of eternal life, even in the face of the grim reality of death

6:1-9:29 Noah and the Flood - Judgment/Destruction and Re-Creation - and Re-Fall

- the line of Seth (sons of God) intermarries with the line of Cain (daughters of men), resulting in a proliferation of evil and violence over the earth
- God regrets creating mankind and purposes to wipe them out with a flood
- but Noah finds favor in the eyes of God
- God instructs Noah to build a large ark (~150 yards long) in which he and his family will be saved, along with a pair of every animal (7 pairs of clean animals)
- Noah obeys God and builds the ark; enters the ark with his wife, 3 sons and their wives, and the animals
- God sends a flood that submerged the entire earth with water, such that everything that had the breath of life in it died
 - a "de-creation" of sorts - returning the earth back to its original state 'without form and void' (1:2)
- After the Flood, Noah and his family and the animals re-emerge from the ark
- Noah makes a sacrifice to God, who blesses Noah and his sons, and makes a covenant never again to destroy the earth by a flood
 - commissions Noah and his family to multiply and fill the earth (9:1) - a 're-creation' of sorts, echoing God's commission to the first man and woman (1:28)
- after the flood, Noah plants a vineyard and gets drunk --> lies naked in his tent

- a second 'Fall' after the second creation following the Flood
- is mocked by his son Ham, but his other 2 sons, Shem & Japheth, cover over his nakedness
 - results in a curse on Ham's son Canaan, and an blessing on Shem and Japheth and their offspring
 - foreshadows the destruction of the Canaanites by the Israelites later in the OT

10:1-11:9 Descendants of Noah - Descent & Rebellion of Man

- The descendants of Noah multiply and spread out over the earth
- but at the same time, mankind once again rebels against God, culminating in the building of the Tower of Babel and God's judgment on them
 - tried to build a tower to reach to heaven (to put themselves in the place of God) and not be scattered across the face of the earth (contrary to God's command to fill the earth and subdue it)
 - God confused their languages and scattered them over the face of the earth

11:10-32 Descendants of Shem - A Continued Hope

- the genealogy of Noah's descendants through Shem to Abram, through whom God would work His promised redemption (to be continued in Genesis 12-50!)

Major Themes and Concepts Introduced in Genesis 1-11

- God - who He is and His attributes, for example,
 - His eternality - "In the beginning, God..." (1:1)
 - God as Creator
 - the power, wisdom, goodness, omniscience, perfection, loving kindness of God
 - the holiness of God - his wrath & judgment on sin
 - the justice and the mercy of God
- Sin and its effects - both in terms of its impact on mankind and of God's hatred & judgment of it
- Salvation/Redemption
 - begins with God's promise of the Seed (offspring) of the woman who would crush the head of the serpent - delivering God's people from their sin
 - the rest of the Bible develops the theme of this Seed (Jesus Christ) and the redemption that comes through Him
- God's people
 - God calls a people for Himself, out of a humanity that has turned away from God (idea of 2 lineages)
 - God's people typically outnumbered by ungodly people around them - constant danger of becoming like them and themselves turning away from God
 - despite this, God saves and preserves a remnant of people for Himself, who serve and follow Him
- Covenants
 - more on this in future classes
- Sabbath
 - patterned after Creation, seventh day of the week is holy, set apart for rest and for God
 - developed in the 4th commandment, and further in Sabbath years & Year of Jubilee

- points forward to the rest we have in Jesus Christ (Hebrews 4)
- Creation, Fall (and Judgment), Redemption, Re-Creation (or Consummation)
 - concepts that recur in various forms throughout Scripture (e.g. in the account of Noah)
 - recurring cycles, looking forward to Christ's redemption and ultimately to the day when the heavens and the earth will be re-made completely new (Revelation 21-22)
 - for example, God's design for mankind
 - Creation
 - mankind created in God's image, to reflect His glory and to have communion with God
 - created to fill the earth and have dominion over it (i.e. rule over it)
 - placed in the garden of Eden, where they had unbroken fellowship with God and with one another
 - Fall
 - Adam & Eve fell into sin by eating of the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good & evil
 - sin results in judgment by God - in Adam & Eve's case, banished from the Garden of Eden and barred from access to eternal life (tree of life)
 - as a result, mankind alienated from God and from one another
 - mankind tends to slide farther and farther into sin and away from God, as the image of God in Man is distorted by sin - many additional 'falls' to come
 - Redemption
 - God promises redemption after Adam & Eve's fall, through on offspring (seed) of the woman who will crush the serpent's head, pointing forward to Jesus Christ
 - redemption from sin and its consequences figure prominently through the rest of the OT
 - emergence of various 'saviors' who deliver God's people and restore them to right relationship with God
 - demonstrate God's ability to save and preserve His people, even as he judges the ungodly
 - necessity of blood sacrifices to make atonement for sin
 - redemption has implications for how the redeemed should live - in holiness and fear of God
 - Re-creation
 - re-establishing an environment in which the redeemed can live according to God's Creation mandate to fellowship with Him and rule with Him
 - 're-creation' events through the OT include, for example
 - emergence of Noah from the ark into a 'new world' after the flood
 - entry into the promised land by the nation of Israel, after their redemption from slavery in Egypt
 - return of the exiles from Babylon to rebuild the Temple
 - redemption and 're-creation' often portrayed in shades of a return to the Garden of Eden, for example

- Garden imagery - Noah's vineyard; the Promised Land as a land flowing with milk and honey; prophetic pictures of God making the desert into a well-watered garden (e.g. Isaiah 41:17-20, 51:3)
- east to west movement - Man banished to the east of Eden; re-entry would be from east --> west; reflected, for example, in
 - Abram's journey from Mesopotamia to Canaan (east --> west)
 - Israel's entry into Canaan across the Jordan, from E-->W
 - entry to the Tabernacle was from the east side, moving west, with the Holy of Holies on the west side
 - return of the exiles from Babylon, from E-->W
 - coming of wise men from the East, to see the child Jesus
- points forward to the New Creation in Christ, and to final consummation when there will be a new heavens and a new earth
- concepts that form the foundations of the Christian worldview
 - Creation - what was God's original intent/design in Creation, for example,
 - for the Creation?
 - for the way mankind relates to the Creation?
 - for the way mankind relates to God?
 - for the way people relate to one another?
 - for the way men and women relate to each other?
 - Fall - how has sin and its effects transmitted in the Fall of Adam impacted on and distorted God's original design, and what implications does this have on the world in which we now live?
 - Redemption - how does God's promise to crush the Serpent's head play out, and how does this impact on how God's people should live?
 - Re-Creation/Consummation - how should we live in light of God's redemption, and in light of the hope that God will one day make all things new? What things can we expect "now" and what things are "not yet", i.e. are meant for the final consummation, when everything will be made new?

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