

GENESIS OUTLINE

How the Creator Relates to Man

Wayne Spencer

I. **The First Judgement Cycle - The Fall of Man and its Consequences**

- A. Global Focus: The Origin of Man and his fall from perfection
[Gen. 1:1 - 3:24]
1. The Creation Week
 - a) Days 1-3, Gen. 1:1 - 1:13 preparation
 - b) Days 4-7, Gen. 1:14 - 2:4a filling
(*Toledot of the universe in 2:4a*)
 2. God's Provisions and Directions for Adam
[Gen. 2:4b - 2:25]
 3. The Fall and its Consequences. God's first cursing of Man-on Adam and Eve and their descendents
[Gen. 3:1 - 3:24]
2. Family Focus: God deals with the Cainites and the Sethites [Gen. 4:1 - 6:8]
1. The consequences of sin: Cain [Gen. 4:1 - 4:26]
 2. Sethite Chronology, from Adam to the Sons of Noah
(*Adam's Toledot in 5:1a*) [Gen. 5:1 - 6:8]

II. **The Second Judgement Cycle - The Flood and its Consequences**

- A. Global Judgement of the Ungodly [Gen. 6:9 - 8:19]
The Flood Account; God's Second Cursing of Man-on all the unrighteous
(*Noah's Toledot in 6:9*)
- B. Family Focus: God deals with Noah and his sons [Gen. 8:20 - 9:29]
1. Post-Flood Commissioning and Covenant [Gen. 8:20 - 9:17]
 2. Sin and the Reactions to Sin in the Sons of Noah [Gen. 9:18 - 9:29]

III. **The Third Judgement Cycle - Mankind's Dispersal and God's Redemptive Plan**

- A. Global Focus: God scatters peoples across the world [Gen. 10:1 - 11:9]
1. Families and the Origin of Nations
(*Toledot of the sons of Noah in 10:1*) [Gen. 10:1 - 10:32]
 2. Origin of the World's Languages; God's Third Curse - on organized sin
[Gen. 11:1 - 9]
- B. Family Focus: God deals with Abraham and his descendants
[Gen. 11:10 - 50:26]
1. Semite Chronology, from Noah's Sons to Abram (*Shem's Toledot in 11:10, Terah's Toledot in 11:27*) [Gen. 11:10 - 11:32]
 2. Abraham's call and God's covenant with him. God begins preparing man for redemption from the curses. [Gen. 12:1 - 25:11]
 3. Abraham's descendents; Isaac, Jacob, and Esau (*Ishmael's Toledot in 25:12, Isaac's Toledot in 25:19*) [Gen. 25:12 - 35:29]
 4. Genealogical origins of unbelieving Kings from the descendents of Esau
(*Esau's Toledot in 36:1*) [Gen. 36:1 - 55]
 5. The descendents of Jacob and the Life of Joseph (*Jacob's Toledot in 37:1*) [Gen. 37:1 - 50:26]

Introduction to Genesis

Lesson Notes

Recommended Reading:

Introduction to Genesis by Wayne Spencer
pp 133-162 in book, Creation Compromises, by Bert Thompson

Recommended Handouts for the Group:

Introduction to Genesis
The Significance of Origins

Recommended transparencies:

Genesis Outline – Major & Minor Sections

Comments:

Explain that there is a purpose behind how Genesis has been written. Thus we need to understand the major level and the minor level structure. This structure is not arbitrary but is designed in by the writer for a purpose. The structure can be seen in the mechanical layout. The literary structure of the book of Genesis is an important guide to interpreting it correctly. Make note especially of the alternating focus of the major units between global and family levels. The God of ALL people CHOSE the descendants of Abraham to be His representatives in the world as a nation. Genesis is relevant both to all people and to the Jews in particular because of this structure. This structure determines how Genesis will be understood and applied. The book of Genesis develops the origin of the Hebrews as a people and shows how God as Creator of all relates to human beings. He relates in a very personal way to individuals, especially those who believe him. But he also judges the unrighteous and lays down consequences of sin, both for individuals and for all men. Reading Acts 7:20-22 about the life of Moses may be helpful as well.

Discussion Questions on Genesis as a whole:

1. How did the creation account in Genesis 1 refute Egyptian thinking? What about the religious ideas of other nations of the time?
2. List some Scriptures that emphasize that the God of the Bible is the only true God, the only Creator-God.
3. In what ways does Genesis speak to all people all over the world?
4. In what ways did Genesis speak to the Hebrews of ancient times?
5. How are the books of Genesis and Exodus related?

Discussion Questions on Genesis 1

1. What are some important truths about the nature of God we can learn from the first four words of Genesis 1, "In the beginning God?"
2. What do you think are one of the most important principles of interpretation for understanding Genesis chapter 1?
3. How are the first three days of the creation week related to last three days of the creation week?
4. Give some examples of phrases or ideas that are restated or repeated in Genesis 1 multiple times.
5. What are some of the interpretations of Genesis 1 you have heard or read?
6. Read Exodus 20:11. Considering the surrounding context of this verse, what significance do you think it has in understanding Genesis 1?

Discussion Questions on Genesis 1 continued:

1. What are some of the clues from Genesis 1 of what is meant by the word "yom" or "day?"
2. Following the Day-Age Theory, do you think the sequence of events of Genesis can be reconciled with the sequence of events in biological evolution?
3. Can Exodus 20:11 allow for the Day-Age theory or the Gap Theory?
4. In "Why God would not use Evolution," G. Richard Bozarth is quoted from the magazine, The American Atheist. What do you think he meant by this statement, in your own words?

Mr. G. Richard Bozarth from the magazine The American Atheist, Feb. 1978:

"Evolution destroys utterly and finally the very reason Jesus' earthly life was supposedly made necessary. Destroy Adam and Eve and the original sin and in the rubble you will find the sorry remains of the Son of God."

5. How do you think the harsh violent struggle to survive in the animal world relates to God's description of his creation (Gen. 1:31) as "behold it was very good?"

Common Interpretations of Genesis 1

A. The Day-Age Theory

1. II Peter 3:8 used to support this, and the Hebrew “yom.”
2. The “days” in Genesis overlap with the 7th day a continuing day.
3. The order of events supposedly follows evolution.

B. The Gap Theory

1. The Genesis days said to be days of re-creation, not the first creation.
2. There would be a great gap of time between Genesis 1:1 and 1:2, which are meant to include the geological ages of evolution.
3. A great catastrophe occurred in this gap of time that supposedly connected with the fall of Satan (see Ezekiel 28:11-19).

C. The Literal View

1. Creation by fiat command ex nihilo
(Psalm 33:6-9, Hebrews 11:3, Romans 4:17)
2. Earth formed out of water (II Peter 3:5)
3. Light before Sun or stars (Gen. 1:3, 14-15)
4. Six literal solar days (**Exodus 20:11**, Gen. 1:5)
5. Fixed Biblical kinds of living things (Gen. 1:11,21, 24; I Corinth. 15:39)
6. Vegetarian nature of Man and animals (Gen. 1:29-30 and Gen. 9:3)
7. Adam and Eve real people in history (I Corinth. 15:45, I Timothy 2:13)
8. Ideal environment in the beginning (Gen. 1:6-8, Gen. 2:5-6)
9. Created maturity (Gen. 1:11-12, 24-25, 27-28; Gen. 2:7, 22)
10. Men and women created in God’s image (Gen. 1:26-31, 2:20-24, 9:5-6)

Comments on the Creation Week

by
Wayne Spencer

1. Creation by fiat command ex nihilo

“Ex nihilo” is a Latin phrase meaning “out of nothing.” Genesis 1 presents God giving commands, similar to a King giving a royal decree. As soon as the King of the Universe gives the decree, it happens. Thus, when it says “let there be light, and there was light,” this shows the reality-determining authority of the word of God. Unlike with us as finite human beings, things happen in this universe just because God says so!

2. Earth formed out of water

This is an interesting aspect of God’s initial creation of the Earth. He did not snap the Earth into existence in a complete form, though He could have. God created it as apparently a sphere of water or a solid object covered with water. Then He made changes that prepared it to be an environment for life and especially for mankind. This fact about Earth’s creation is inconsistent with what evolutionary planetary science says about the origin of the Earth. In the origin of the Earth from a solar nebula, the Earth would form as a rocky object first and the oceans would form later. See II Peter 3:5 and Genesis 1:2, 6, 9-10. Here, Scripture puts the oceans first before land.

3. Light before Sun or stars

In the time of Moses, the polytheistic-animistic beliefs of the Egyptians included worship of the Sun god. Genesis 1 makes the point that God did not need natural light producing objects such as our Sun in order to give light on the Earth. There was light on the Earth from a point in space that made a day-night cycle even before our Sun existed. The God of the Bible is well able to do this, though we don’t know exactly how it was done in physical terms. This point from Genesis 1 establishes God as the ultimate source of everything good.

4. Six literal “solar” days

The word for day, “yom,” is apparently used in a couple of senses in Genesis 1. One is in verse 5 where it says “God called the light “day.” This seems to use the word similar to how we would use the word “daytime.” But when Genesis uses the phrase “first day”, “second day” and so on, it seems to use it in the 24 hour sense. The way Genesis 1 proceeds is chronological through the creation week. God did His creative activity in the daytime, then evening passed then morning came again and God continued with His creative activity again. Thus we have the formula from Genesis, “And there was evening, and there was morning—the first day” in 1:5. This “formula” follows God’s creative work on each day. Today modern science defines a solar day as the time for the Sun to come to the same position in the sky as on the previous day. This is very much like how Genesis 1 uses the word day, though instead of it being based on the Sun’s position it seems to be based more on what we would now call sunrise. Prior to the fourth day of creation, we could more correctly call it “lightrise” perhaps rather than sunrise.

5. Fixed Biblical kinds of living things

Genesis 1 repeatedly makes statements about living things multiplying “according to their kinds.” This word “kind” does not correspond to the biological term “species.” In Genesis 1 this type of statement is made for plants, sea creatures, birds, and land animals. This phrase seems to emphasize in Genesis that though living things can reproduce abundantly, they are limited in that they cannot become a totally different type of living thing. But it does allow for significant variation and adaptation, so that living things can adapt to their environment to a degree. Limits have been set on how much living things can change and this rules out macroevolution from modern science. It may be that the emphasis on this “according to their kind” phrase in Genesis may be a deliberate thing to refute evolutionary ideas and naive superstitions about the natural world. In ancient times there were a variety of myths and bizarre origins stories. The “according to their kinds” phrase may have been refuting some of these stories that were believed at the time of Moses.

6. Vegetarian nature of men and animals

Genesis indicates in chapter 1 verse 30 that in the beginning plants were used for food, both for animals and humans. Not until after Noah’s Flood did God officially allow Noah to eat meat (Gen. 9:3). This and the description of God’s original creation as “very good” in Genesis 1:31 imply that animals did not kill each other to eat from the beginning of creation. Genesis 1:29-30 first stipulates that seed-bearing plants and fruit would be food for humans, and that all plants were provided for food for animals. Though this raises many questions about how animals lived prior to man’s sin, the Bible implies that the world as it was first created was a less violent and more peaceful place where animals did not have to kill each other for food. Animals may not have killed each other at all, though that is not clear. Creationists continue to research questions about how the animal world lived at creation.

7. Adam and Eve were real people in history

I Corinthians 15:45 and I Timothy 2:13 explicitly refer to Adam as the first man. I Timothy and Genesis 3:20 indicate Eve was the first woman and the second human on Earth. Jesus commented on marriage and divorce by quoting from Genesis, treating it as a true narrative. The Apostle Paul also treated Genesis as a true history by saying in his message in Athens (Acts 17:26) that “From one man he made every nation of men (NIV).” A number of other New Testament passages refer to Adam and the Genesis account as a true historically accurate account of real people and real events. See Luke 3:38, Romans 5:14, and I Timothy 2:13-14.

8. Ideal environment in the beginning

Scripture gives us some interesting hints that the Earth was different before Noah’s Flood and before mankind’s Fall into sin. Exactly how it was different has been and continues to be the subject of much debate among creationists. Genesis 1:6-8, Gen. 1:31, and Gen. 2:4-6 are some of the relevant passages. Though there would have been seasons, I suspect there were not such extreme variations of temperature as there are today. Tornados, earthquakes, and other dangerous weather and natural disasters would not have taken place before Noah’s Flood, since these things are consequences of God’s judgement on the Earth at that time. God may have sustained life in a way that no longer occurs today, making lifespans longer for

both animals and man. Genesis states that people lived roughly ten times as long before Noah's Flood as today's lifespans. Then in the post-flood period lifespans dropped off very dramatically. It's likely there was less radiation from space, and foods grown from plants may have been more nutritious. Though we do not know all the details, Scripture gives the general picture that God gave mankind a wonderful environment to live in at Creation. There was tremendous variety in the living world, far beyond the variety we see today in the living world. God's provision for mankind was extravagant and abundant. But man sinned against God and the moral and spiritual decay in the antediluvian society was bad enough that God judged the entire world and thereby took away some of the wonderful things about how the Earth was first created. Then after the Flood mankind started over in an Earth that was a much more harsh environment than it had been before. Those who trust in God's promises today in Christ can look forward to a new heavens and Earth in the future.

9. Created maturity

When God created supernaturally in the beginning, at least some things He created were made mature and fully-functional. Adam and Eve were created as adults, not as children. Looking at Adam a day after he was created, one could easily assume that he was of some age, say 20 or 30 years, but he was actually a day old. It was not deceptive for God to create in this way. Rather it is merely a consequence of God's supernatural intervention in creating Adam. This has sometimes been referred to by creationists as "appearance of age." Note that we tend to assume concepts related to age that would not apply when God had miraculously acted in creation. It is instructive to consider what Genesis 1 and 2 say regarding plants (Gen. 1:11-12, 2:5-17). Adam and Eve could eat from the fruit trees in the Garden of Eden, apparently immediately. But Genesis 1 mentions the land producing vegetation, implying that plants were started in some state and then they grew naturally from that point forward. So, apparently it is not that all plants both within and outside the Garden of Eden were created in the same stage of maturity. The Garden of Eden was a special place that had mature plants ready for food for Adam and Eve and which also served as an example for how they could manage plants in other areas. Caution is in order here because the concept of created maturity or "appearance of age" has sometimes been applied inappropriately.

10. Men and women created in God's image

An extremely important doctrine that comes directly from Genesis is that humans, both male and female, are created in God's image. God is our Creator and He is infinite and spirit in nature, but we are finite creatures. Yet we are made with intelligence, creativity, and with a moral-spiritual nature so that we can know God in a personal relationship. Human beings are finite intelligent creatures essentially made to know and obey God. In many ways we imitate God on a very finite and limited level. We are also given charge over the Earth, all its resources and all life on Earth (Genesis 1:26). The concept of man evolving from lower animals contradicts this Biblical teaching as being made in God's image. Human life is of uniquely high value in God's sight because we are made in His image. Some of the relevant passages are Gen. 1:26-31, 2:20-24, 9:5-6, Romans 1:21-23, I Corinth. 15:49, Colossians 3:10, and Acts 17:24-31.