

The Beginning of The Story

Genesis 1-9

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Introduction to the Big Story and our first session

- A. "Now that's a 'story!'"
- B. The BEGINNING of EVERYBODY'S story: Genesis & Exodus
- C. The GREATEST story ever told.
- D. Comments on the book, *The Story: The Bible as One Continuing Story of God and His People*.
- E. Some things NOT to expect.
- F. Some things TO expect.

I. The Big Picture of Genesis and Exodus (through Ex. 14)

- A. Included in the book, *The Story*.
 - 1. Gen 1-9 Creation: The Beginning of Life as We Know It.
 - 2. Gen 12-22 God Builds a Nation.
 - 3. Gen 37-50 Joseph: From Slave to Deputy Pharaoh.
 - 4. Exodus 1-14 Deliverance.
- B. Bird's Eye View
 - 1. God's creation of everything in the universe [Gen 1-2].
 - 2. Humanity's separation from God because of the craftiness of Satan and the consequences of sin [Gen 3-ff].
 - 3. God's saving strategy through a FAMILY and then a NATION.
 - a. **Abraham** and his "seed" [Gen 12:1-3; 22:15-18; Galatians 3:16].
 - b. **Isaac** (from Sarah, rather than Ishmael from Hagar) [Gen 16-22; cf. Galatians 4:21-31].
 - c. **Jacob** (also known as "Israel" [Gen 32:28]; favored over Esau [Gen 25-36]). Note New Testament references to the God of "Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob" (e.g. Matt 22:32; Lk 22:37; Acts 3:13; 7:32).
 - d. **Joseph**
 - (1) Sold into slavery by his 12 brothers, sent to Egypt [Gen 37-38].
 - (2) Becomes a trusted household servant of Potiphar [Gen 39].
 - (3) Imprisoned because of a false charge [Gen 39-40].
 - (4) Made Egyptian 2nd in command [Gen 41:37-57].
 - (5) Joseph's family (father and 12 brothers) come to Egypt [Gen 42-46], are reunited, and settle in Goshen [Gen 47].
 - (6) The deaths of Jacob [Gen 49] and Joseph [Gen 50].
 - (7) The Israelites (from the 12 sons of Jacob) multiplied [Ex 1].
 - (8) Israelites enslaved by a new king (pharaoh) [Ex 1].
 - e. **Moses**
 - (1) Born an Israelite but raised in Pharaoh's palace [Ex 2].
 - (2) Flees Egypt because of murdering an Egyptian [Ex 2].
 - (3) Called by God to return to Egypt to free his people [Ex 3-6].
 - (4) Administers the 10 plagues to prompt release of Israelites [Ex 7-11].
 - (5) The Israelite departure from Egypt [Ex 12-18].
- C. Let's refocus on the beginning of it all (Gen. 1-2).
 - 1. Moses, traditionally the author.
 - 2. Date of Moses.
 - 3. Context of ancient Mesopotamia and Egypt.
 - 4. A main objective: To proclaim the unique historical identity of God's people (Israel) who have been called by THE God of the universe to be His representatives to the world.

- D. The classic interrogatives of investigation.
 - 1. Who?
 - 2. What?
 - 3. Why?
 - 4. Where?
 - 5. How?
 - 6. When?

II. GENESIS 1-2: THE BEGINNING OF THE BEGINNING

- A. Gen 1:1 “In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.”
- B. Seven days (*yom*).
- C. Gen 1:26-27 “So God created mankind in his own image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them.”
- D. Gen 2:4 “⁴This is the account of the heavens and the earth when they were created, when the LORD God made the earth and the heavens.” (NIV)

Genesis 1:3-31

Day 1: Light created (day); separated from darkness (night). [vs. 3-]	Day 4: Two great lights (sun and moon) and stars—signs for days and years. [vs. 14-]
Day 2: An “vault” or “expanse” (sky) in the midst of the waters; waters separated. [vs. 6]	Day 5: Living creatures in waters; birds; sea monsters; every living creature ... with which the waters swarmed. [vs. 20-]
Day 3: Dry land appears (and seas); “let the land produce vegetation”; plants; trees. [vs. 9]	Day 6: Living creatures on the ground; man. [vs. 24-]

III. God is GREAT [Gen 1-2]

A. CREATOR of all.

- 1. *Barah* (“created”) only used of God.
 - a. Gen 1:1 “In the beginning God **created** the heavens and the earth.”
 - b. Gen 1:21 “So God **created** the great creatures of the sea and every living and moving thing with which the water teems, according to their kinds, and every winged bird according to its kind.”
 - c. Gen 1:27 “So God **created** human beings in his own image, in the image of God he **created** them; male and female he **created** them.” (Cf. Gen 5:1-2).
 - d. Cf. John 1:1-3 “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. ²He was with God in the beginning. ³Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made.”
 - e. Cf. Hebrews 11:3 “³By faith we understand that the universe was formed at God’s command, so that what is seen was not made out of what was visible.”
- 2. *Asah* (“made”): purposeful construction.
 - a. Gen 1:7 The vault (“expanse” in NASV; “firmament” in KJV)
 - b. Gen 1:16 Heavenly bodies
 - c. Gen 1:25 Land animals
 - d. Gen 1:26 Man
 - e. Gen 1:31 and 2:2-3 Creation period

B. UNIQUE creator of all. (A clash over different “worldviews”)

- 1. Vs. Babylonian Creation Myth (*Enuma Elish*), the Babylonian Epic of Atrahasis (*Atrahasis Epic*), and Egyptian myths.
- 2. Examples:
 - a. Egyptian: After defeating the god of the underworld, the sun-god, Re, creates man from his tears.
 - b. *Atrahasis*: Man created when Nintu mixes clay with the blood of another god. Another account: Humans were created from mixed clay on which the gods spit.
 - c. *Enuma Elish*:

- (1) The gods Tiamat & Apsu exist.
- (2) Younger gods are born but are so noisy, Apsu tried to kill them.
- (3) The god Enki killed Apsu.
- (4) Enki's son, Marduk, cuts Tiamat in half to create heavens and the earth.
- (5) Markuk creates man to do daily tasks for the gods.

3. Contrasts to Genesis

Alternative Accounts	Genesis
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Multiple gods worshipped (often the heavenly bodies—sun, moon, etc.) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ONE God
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Struggle among gods 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No struggle
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deceitful gods 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No deceit
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dying gods & sleeping gods 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • God does not sleep or slumber
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promotes a local god (or place) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Universal God
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nature & purpose of humanity: To take care of menial tasks for the gods. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Humanity: Image of God (1:27); blessed and encouraged to multiply (1:28) given dominion over creation (1:29; 2:19-20); given ample provisions (1:29-30) and pleasure (2:9; 3:6); originally pure (2:25).

4. Poem: “God I am”

C. Genesis: Masterful UNDERSTATEMENTS!

1. Gen 1:1 “In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.”
2. Gen 1:16 “God made two great lights—the greater light to govern the day and the lesser light to govern the night. He also made the stars.” [Literally, “the stars also”]
3. What we understand (and see) NOW about the heavens and the earth.
4. Ps. 100:3 “Know that the Lord Himself is God; It is He who has made us, and not we ourselves ...”

IV. God is GOOD

A. God Himself is Good.

1. God grants human freedom. (Gen 2:15-16 “¹⁵The LORD God took the man and put him in the Garden of Eden to work it and take care of it. ¹⁶And the LORD God commanded the man, “You are free to eat from any tree in the garden; ¹⁷but you must not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, for when you eat from it you will certainly die.”)
2. God is righteous and demands righteousness.
 - a. The forbidden fruit.
 - (1) God warns (Gen 2:16-17).
 - (2) God reacts to disobedience.
 - b. The flood of Noah (Gen 6).
 - (1) Nearly universal human disobedience (6:5,11-12).
 - (2) God warns (for 120 years).
 - (3) God punishes disobedience.

B. What God made was “GOOD.”

1. The light was good (1:4).
2. The dry land and seas were good (1:10).
3. The vegetation was good (1:12).
4. The sun, moon, and stars were good (1:18).
5. Land, sea, and flying creatures were good (1:21).
6. The beasts of the earth were good (1:25).
7. “Everything” was “very good” (1:31).
8. Trees/Fruit were pleasing to the eye and good for food (2:9; 3:6).
9. The gold of Pishon was good (2:12).

C. God's creation was (and is) good FOR US: For example ...

1. Our galaxy.
2. Our planet.
3. The physical constants and ratios among them (e.g. the strength of gravity).
4. Liquid water.
5. Our ears.
6. Our eyes.

V. God is Full of Grace

- A. Satan's deceit: A clash over different worldviews.
- B. Consequences of sin
 1. For the serpent (Gen 3:14-15).
 2. For the woman (Gen 3:16).
 3. For the man (Gen 3:17-19).
 4. The "Fall": There is separation from:
 - a. God
 - b. Yourself (conscience)
 - c. Others
 - d. Nature
- C. A promise involving the seed of the serpent and the seed of Eve.
 1. Gen 3:15.
 2. The seed of Abraham (Gen 12:1-3; 22:15-18).
 3. The promised "seed" of woman: Christ (Gal. 3:16).
- D. A covenant (agreement) with Noah (Gen 6:20; 9:9): God's patience and protection.
 1. A covenant (6:20; 9:9)
 2. 1 Peter 3:20 God waited patiently in the days of Noah.
 3. 2 Peter 2:4-10 If God protected Noah ..., then the Lord knows how to rescue the godly from trials and to hold the unrighteous for punishment on the day of judgment."
- E. A tree of life (Gen 2:9; 3:22-24; Rev. 2:7; 22:2,14,19).

VI. An Addendum: How Long Did Creation Take?

- A. Seven "days."
- B. General considerations.
 1. What was most important to the writer of Genesis?
 2. The author radically differs from other ancient creation accounts on the WHO, WHAT, and WHY. The issue of WHEN (or how long) was not in contention.
 3. Genesis is not a *science* text.
 4. Various biblical interpretations are plausible. Avoid dogmatism!
- C. Different views on the length of creation.
 1. Young Earth Creationism: Days are consecutive, 24-hour solar days.
 2. Gap Theory: A large gap between Gen 1:1 and Gen 1:2.
 - a. "The earth became [rather than "was"] formless and void."
 - b. A prior creation that was destroyed; so God started over.
 3. Day-Age View: Day (*yom*) means indefinite periods of time: Gen 1:5 "light" was called "day" (*yom*); Gen 2:4 *Yom* refers to entire creation period; Gen 2:7 "In the day (*yom*) you eat, you will die"; Isa 2:12; Ps 95:8-9; Ps 90:4 and 2 Peter 3:8 a day is a "thousand years."
 4. Analogical Day View: The "days" of creation are an analogy to the familiar workweek (see Ex. 20:8-11; Ps 104:23). "There was evening and morning" highlight a *pause* in the creation activity.
 5. Literary Framework View: (Refer to Gen 1:3-31 table in section II above.)
 - a. Days are NOT sequential (1-6).
 - b. Days 1/4, 2/5, 3/6 are correlated in a literary way.
 - c. On days 1-3, God creates the "container" or "form."
 - d. On days 4-6, God creates things to go *in* the container (e.g. Day 1: light; Day 4: Sun and moon).