

BIB103 OT1: Creation and Covenants

Unit 2a Creation to the Patriarchs

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When we look at the Book of Genesis, we see a vast amount of information that's going to be hard for us to accomplish in one session. We may take not only a couple of sessions, but we're going to be giving you some resources as well as some direction to be able to dig a little further into things. We could spend a lot of time talking about creation, and we're going to be hitting on that, but we're also going to be probably giving you some opportunities to dig yourself a little bit to see the richness that's there. We're going to talk about the flood. We're going to talk about different aspects of Genesis that have broad perspectives and yet have very specific applications to our life.

So Genesis, as we talked in an earlier session about, it was talking that the author again is Moses. It was written right around 1407 BC. The timespan for this book covers a little over 2300 hundred years. And it starts with Adam and Eve, and it ends with Joseph. The theme of the Book of Genesis is really a book of beginnings. And there's three purposes to that book of beginnings. The first, the account of all the beginnings. The second being the origin of the nation of Israel. And the third, the history of man, which is really a little bit more about the redemption of man, which we'll be spending some time talking about as we move on.

Genesis is the foundational book of God's revelation. No other book is quoted or referred to so frequently in any other book as the Book of Genesis is. There's four outstanding events that we're going to see in Genesis which we referred to just a moment ago. The first again being creation which is in chapters 1 and 2. Then we see the fall of man which is in chapters 3 to 5; the flood, chapters 6 to 9; and then the dispersion of the Israelites, or I should say, the dispersion of mankind in chapters 10 and 11. And this showed man's rejection of God and that redemption was necessary. We're also going to see that there's four outstanding people in the Book of Genesis. There's Abraham, chapters 12 to 25. There's Isaac, chapters 21 to 27. There's Jacob, chapters 25 to 36. And lastly, there's Joseph, chapters 37 to 50. And that really shows us God's election of the Hebrew raised as his chosen people, and this was his way that he had initiated the beginning of his redemptive plan.

Now, believe it or not, there's nine different perspectives on what really happened in the creation of the world. Now, if you look in Genesis 1, you're going to see that there were six days that God created the earth and then one day he rested on the seventh. Now, we're going to encourage you to look at those individually. It might take a lot of time to talk about each of the things, the events that happened on those days, but we want to talk about the theories that man looks at in determining what really the beginnings of the world look like. The three that we're going to talk about is the gap theory which we'll start with, then we're going to be discussing what they refer to often as the day age theory, and then

end with the 24-hour theory which is what we prescribe to and we'll be showing you what we feel biblically that's what God's intention was for us to understand.

The gap theory is an interesting concept because there's this indeterminable period of time between Genesis 1:2a and Genesis 1:2b, the second half of that verse. Some even think billions of years. In verse 1, God created the world with the pre-Adamic race. Then when Satan rebelled, he was cast to the earth and God destroyed the world. Verse 2 should be understood as the earth was or became without form and void, and darkness was upon the face of the deep, referring to this cataclysm of divine judgment for the rebellion of Satan, which is referred to later on in the Bible in Revelation 12:3-4. And what it claimed is that God, being perfect, would not create a universe in a chaotic state.

Now, the seven days of creation in Genesis 1 and 2 actually record the recreation of the earth beginning in chapter 1 verse 2 in letter b there, the second half of that. So you see that they throw this time period in where there's a lot of assumptions that are made that there's these gaps there that you have to refer to as you look at other places, but that book of the Bible and that section of Scripture in Genesis 1 certainly don't give any clear indication that that's what takes place there. And there's some strong biblical arguments against the gap theory. In Jeremiah 4:23-26, it refers to the Babylonian invasion of Judah. There's a backward look there. In Isaiah 24:1, we see that there's a little apocalypse time that Isaiah talks about. It was when the invasion became an illustration of the desolation of the tribulation.

Now, in Isaiah 45:18, we see that God's purpose for the land of Israel was established and how he created the earth for his chosen people. Genesis acknowledges the same truth and gives the steps God performed to fit the earth for his people, his inhabitants. Now, we use that and that references that way because you see the looking back again to things that take place in Scripture. And it seems to prove to us in more than one situation where we'll see that God, in his word, will have us look back to different events that took place there. Genesis 1 to 2 implies only an incompleteness, not evil that took place there, that the earth was without form and void, not that something horrible had taken place there that they had to go in and recreate the earth into a different form.

Now, the day age theory, which is the second theory that we're going to talk about, talks again about the days of Genesis in chapters 1 and 2, and they're going to be understood as symbolic terms for a longer period of time. They'll say that the day of the Lord refers to later on in the Scriptures where one day equals a thousand years and a thousand years is a day, which you'll find in 2 Peter 3:8. And that same biblical argument is in Romans 5:12 that we could really look at and review that that wasn't really

the intent there of the whole aspect of the day age theory. Now, what we believe the Bible teaches is the proofs of the 24-hour day. Now, again, we're going to give you some resources to have you even look at these theories a little bit better to be able to understand and you yourself be able to unpack them. Again, as we take this bigger view, understanding what a big section of material we're looking over in the Book of Genesis.

So the 24-hour day, or the solar day as we call it, you're going to see all throughout the chapter of Genesis 1 that he frequently refers to, "And the evening and the morning were day one. And the evening and the morning were day two." We believe that God specifically stated things that way to indicate, just like our days, when you wake up and the sun rises there, it's the beginning of the day. And at the end of the day, when the sun sets, it's the close of the day. That equaling one solar situation that allows us to understand the 24 hours of a day that takes place. In the Jewish time period, their workday actually started at dawn and ended at sunset. So there was an understanding and a relevance, even to the audience that it was first written to, that this is what a day looked like, the beginning and the ending of a day.

And you'll see that again, over and over again in Genesis 1. The order of creative events that are narrated in Genesis is very different from the accepted order that's represented a lot of times in the geological ages. What you have to look at is that word again "day," which in the Hebrew is yom. And when you see that used in the Scriptures over and over again, that word "day" refers to one 24-hour day. So we're using the same terminology and that's why again we feel that each day that's represented in the creation narrative is one 24-hour day for mankind.

Mankind was established by God. We see that clearly in creation. God brought Adam and Eve into the world, and Adam and Eve lived in perfection. If you can think of it, walking in a field never worrying about stepping on a thorn. And if you can imagine picking a rose and not worrying about the thorns in the rose bushes, eating any kind of fruit that you could imagine, being able to walk around with any animal on the face of the earth. God gave Adam the specific instruction to name all the animals. And it just shows us the vastness of the intelligence that God gave to mankind from the very beginning. But then something horrific happened. The devil, anytime he's involved, is to destroy mankind, to destroy God's creation, to be able to try to rub into God's face the fact that he has somehow "failed." And God, in his sovereignty, again provides for us a way of redemption.

But we see, first of all, the fall. What happened there? The devil used the serpent. Now, at the time that the serpent was used, when you and I think of serpent, most people, when you pick house pets, you're not going to pick a house pet to be a snake. Now, there are people that like snakes, but most people, that's not their first preference for a house pet. We like cuddly, furry things like kitty cats and puppy dogs. But the snake was a much more beautiful creature back in those times than we realize. And it was a creature that you'll even see in Eve's interaction that didn't scare her or make her any way frightened. And the serpent came and he communicated with Eve, and Eve was tempted as the devil pointed out, "Hey, do you realize that God is holding out on you?" was his concept. He was trying to get Eve to doubt the goodness of God, that God always was looking for what would be best for mankind. And this devil just had to throw those seeds of doubt in there, which he still does today. He likes to get mankind to doubt the goodness and the direction that God has for us that's always best.

And so Eve, she listened to the serpent as he pointed out that one tree, and only one tree that God set apart, that tree of the knowledge of good and evil, and said, "God is holding out on you," rather than realizing God was protecting them from what sin could really do. And Eve made a choice and she took that fruit and she ate it. And then feeling herself guilty and convicted, and as again mankind likes to do, we don't like to sin alone. She went to her husband, who made a cognizant choice to take that fruit from his wife, knowing where it came from, and he too ate, and they both sinned. Then you'll see how they not only hid from God, but they saw their nakedness now, which in perfection is pure. Now they saw it as something to be embarrassed about. And they went and they covered themselves with leaves and God came looking for them. God found Adam and Eve, and knew exactly, of course, what they had done, but asked them to give them an opportunity to be able to share, and they lied. And then God chose to take man and to cover him with animal skins, but he had to remove him from the Garden of Eden which was perfection.

And sin entered into the world during that time period. And we are bearing the repercussions of sin even until today. And that was also the reason that God knew that he was going to have to send a redemptive plan to make a way for us to be able to experience that perfection again similar to the Garden of Eden. No sin, no problems, no difficulties. That place of perfection that doesn't exist on this earth any longer, in that place of the Garden of Eden. And to this day, man continues to sin. Adam and Eve had children, Cain and Abel, the ones we hear about most. And Cain and Abel were the ones that we find where the first murder takes place, and mankind unravels. And ask you look through Genesis, you're going to see that the fall of man, which we have just discussed in chapters 3 to 5, leads to a point

where God had to destroy all mankind, he felt. Not all, I should say. There was a remnant. And God always, in his love for us, leaves a remnant.

And that remnant, at this point, was a man named Noah, his wife, his three boys and their wives. And God came to Noah and said, “Noah, I have to destroy all mankind because of sin. But I want you to be able to take your family and to start over again.” And then Noah was asked to do something crazy, to build this mammoth boat and to be able to take two of every animal, seven of the pure animals on to this big, huge boat, and to take care of them, to watch over them, to feed them. And it took him hundreds of years to put together that plan, building the boat. Again, remember, it was Noah and his sons and their wives that were putting the boat together. God sent the animals to them. They had to collect the food. They put it all in there.

And then finally the day came when, again, remember, throughout all this, Noah was sharing with the people that they needed to repent, but everyone made fun of him. Everyone turned their back. They continued in their sinful patterns. And finally, God sent rain. Until this time, rain was probably unknown. The Bible indicates that the earth was fed by the dew of the earth, that each morning when you wake up and you feel the wetness on the grass, that that’s what was the primary source of moisture there. Now rains came. Not just a little of rain. Not a refreshing spring rain, but torrents of rain that led to flooding that was never known by mankind. A flood that destroyed the whole earth, where the whole earth was covered in water. And again, God was the one that shut the door on the ark, not Noah but God, and shut out the rejection mankind had done and saved Noah and his family, and they were on the ark.

I’m sure it was a difficult time. I can’t imagine taking care of all those animals and all that comes with that, making sure they were fed and taking care of them. But again, God is an amazing God. And God put something in the atmosphere for Noah and his family to see that would promise him that there would be no further destruction by flood on a universal aspect of things when he sent a rainbow. And to this day, when we see the rainbow after a rain, it reminds us of God’s promise that he’ll never destroy the earth in a flood again. When you realize that the ark was floating on this water, you have to ask yourself the question, “How did they know when the land was going to be dried up, when they could get off?” Well, they sent birds, and when they came back, they realized that there was no place for the boat to land. And finally as they sent a dove, it came back with a branch that reminded them now that God was about to end this chapter in their journey.

The ark finally settled. They got off and immediately made a sacrifice to the Lord to thank him for the safety that had been given to them. And they started over again. Mankind did. And we see in Genesis that mankind had this wonderful opportunity to replant themselves. The Bible says that God directed Noah to say to him and his family, “Go and replenish the earth.” And they did. And tribes were sprouted up and humanity thrived again, and villages and cities were established. But once again, man turns to his own sinful way and rejects God’s plan and did again what the Bible says was right in their own eyes, and even got to the point where they were going to unite themselves against God Almighty and they started to build a tower. A tower that we know of as the Tower of Babel.

Now, at this time, all the earth and all the inhabitants of the earth spoke the same language, and they gathered together and their intent was to build this tower to the point that they would be able to be where God was at. But, see, we’re never going to be where God is at. God is holy and just in a perfect sense. God has never had a beginning and will never have an end. His intention is for his plan to be fulfilled when mankind will see him, not mankind’s plan to do that. So how did God stop the building of a tower that goes or is leading up to heaven? God did something that maybe none of us would have chosen to do, but he scattered man through the confusion of changing their languages. As well comes the birth of all the different languages, whether it be Chinese or German or Spanish or English. All of those were birthed and people found the individuals that spoke with their same language and broke off and scattered again throughout the whole earth to establish their own nations, to establish their own civilizations.

But we see again that God had a plan, and God had a specific group of people that were his special people. And as this grouping broke away from the Tower of Babel and it was left, you’ll see that one group that branched off from that was what we call the Jews, the Israelites. They were God’s chosen people and they started to live again according to God’s laws and God’s commands and what God intended. And the primary characters that we see coming out of that is what we would call the patriarchs, the leaders of the Israeli nation, the Jewish nation. And there were some significant ones that were there that decided to help in powerful ways, but a lot of times, they didn’t choose it because they just saw God’s plan. They were living life and God decided to intervene. And that’s the beautiful thing again as we’re going to hear about the gospel is we see how we often live our lives but God intervenes and shows us the beauty of the redemptive aspect of what salvation really means.