

Genesis — Introduction

September 13, 2015

Good morning CrossWinds. If you are new, my name is Kurt. I am one of the pastors. Welcome to fall! Everybody is getting back in the groove of life and school. We have already had the Iowa vs. Iowa State football game.

Unfortunately the underdogs lost. At least we still have high school football season. Since everything is new, it seemed an appropriate time to begin a new series.

Today we kick off our study in Genesis. Genesis is a long book. It has 50 chapters. Pastor Jordan and I laid out a plan to get through the book in 47 weeks but in our first sermon we both cut our messages in half. We are now up to 48 weeks. The series is already getting longer.

Today my goal is to simply introduce the book of Genesis, cover the first verse and prepare us up to cover the rest of the Genesis 1 next week. That is a modest goal so we won't have much trouble achieving it.

Introduction to Genesis.

Genesis means “origins.” It explains the origins of a lot of things. It is important to understand our origins because what we believe about that determines what we believe about where we are going and how to live on the way there. Some of the things Genesis gives us the origins of are:

- **Origin of the Universe** — The book of Genesis gives the only true and reliable account of the origins of the universe and our planet. All other ancient religions or modern scientific models begin with some kind of eternal matter or energy.

Only the book of Genesis tells us only God is eternal and God created everything. He created all space, matter, time and energy.

- **Origin of Order and Beauty** — Orderly things fall apart. The second law of thermodynamics means things go from order to chaos. Look at your bedroom. After a week you see chaos not order. Order and beauty never arise spontaneously. Genesis tells us the source of life, order and beauty in the universe is not chance. We have order and beauty because God loves order and beauty.
- **Origin of Life** — How does everything that is alive, that has feelings, a mind and a will come into existence from non-living chemicals? That question baffles scientists. How did life come from lifeless matter? How did life develop the ability to reproduce itself? Why can we have children? How does the almost infinitely complex system of our eyes or our brains come into existence? Only Genesis gives us an answer. It is not chance. God stands behind all of it.
- **Origin of Man** — We are the most highly developed physical beings in the universe. We have intricately detailed bodies and can reproduce like animals. As if that wasn't enough, we have certain capacities that animals do not have. We understand right and wrong, experience love and can worship. We can think about the meaning of life. Where did this come from? Genesis says this is part of what it means to be a special creation of God.
- **Origin of Marriage** — Genesis gives us the origin of marriage. In Genesis God defines marriage as one man and one woman for life. God didn't just

create the institution of marriage in Genesis but he he also officiated over the first wedding. Marriage is a God-given institution that has its origins in Genesis.

- **Origin of Evil** — The origin of physical evils, moral evils and mental evils are all explained in Genesis 3 with man's fall into sin. Nobody else has a good explanation for evil.

Genesis also gives us the origin of languages and the origin of cultures. The list could go on and on. Genesis is a book that has the origins of almost everything.

How important is Genesis to the rest of the Bible?

Genesis doesn't just give us the origin of everything. It is a book connected with everything else in the Bible.

- Abraham is mentioned by name in 15 Old Testament books besides Genesis and 11 New Testament books.
- Jacob is named in 20 Old Testament books besides Genesis and 17 New Testament books.
- There are 165 passages in the New Testament that are quotations from the book of Genesis.
- If you add New Testament references to the book of Genesis to the actual New Testament quotations of the book of Genesis you have a total of 200 New Testament references or quotations of this book. Genesis is an important and foundational book.

The rest of the Bible refers back to Genesis so many times that if we were to take the book of Genesis out of the Bible, the rest of the Bible wouldn't make sense because it would have so many missing pieces.

One of the things we often hear is Genesis 1-11— which has the story of God creating the universe in six days, the fall of man into sin, Noah’s ark, the flood, the tower of Babel and many other important stories — is just myth or legend. Most people don’t consider those first Bible stories as actual historical facts.

The problem with not taking Genesis literally is the 200 references to the book of Genesis in the New Testament all take Genesis literally. Of the hundreds of references back to Genesis in the rest of the Bible, every single one references the events of Genesis as historical fact. Jesus considered the stories of Genesis as factual history. Every prophet and apostle considered Genesis factual history.

If the rest of the Bible considers Genesis to be historical fact, you are on shaky ground if you don’t want to consider Genesis historically accurate. If Genesis is not true, then neither are the words of the apostles and prophets that believed Genesis is true.

Genesis is not just about our past, it is about our future.

As I studied, one things I found interesting was the incredible connection between the first chapters in the book of Genesis and the last chapters in the book of Revelation. If we think the creation story in the first few chapters of Genesis is myth, that means we also need to consider the last few chapters of Revelation, which talks about the new heavens and the new earth, as myth. Genesis and Revelation go together. Let me show you.

- Genesis 1:4 — God separated light from darkness. Revelation 21:25 — There is no more night in the new creation.

- Genesis 1:10 — God separated the land from the sea. Revelation 21:1 — There is no more sea in the new creation.
- Genesis 1:16 — God made the sun and moon to rule day and night. Revelation 21:3 — There is no more need for a sun or moon because Jesus is the light.
- Genesis 2:8-9 — Man was placed in a prepared garden. Revelation 21:2 — Man will be placed in a prepared city.
- Genesis 1:10 — There is a river flowing out of Eden. Revelation 2:1 — There is a river flowing from God's throne.
- Genesis 2:9 — The tree of life is in the center of the garden. Revelation 22:2 — The tree of life is throughout the city.
- Genesis 3:8 — God walked with Adam and Eve in the garden. Revelation 21:3 — God lives with his people in the city.

Genesis describes how our current creation is cursed because of sin.

Revelation describes how the new creation will be healed from the curse of sin.

- Genesis 3:17 — The ground was cursed. Revelation 22:3 — Life in the New Jerusalem is without a curse.
- Genesis 3:17 - Life will be daily sorrow. Revelation 21:4 — There is no more sorrow, crying or pain.
- Genesis 3:19 — We will experience death and return to dust. Revelation 21:4 — There is no more death.
- Genesis 3:24 — We are barred from the tree of life. Revelation 22:14 — We have full access to the tree of life.

The way our current creation was fashioned in Genesis is directly connected to the way the new creation will be fashioned in Revelation. They are similar. Everything that went wrong with the old creation is healed and improved in the new creation. If the creation story in Genesis is just a myth, then the story of the creation of the new heavens and the new earth in Revelation is also a myth.

The Bible says the new heavens and the new earth will come about as a special creative act of God. It will not take billions of years to evolve into existence. In the same way our current creation came into existence as a special creative act of God that took six literal days. It did not take billions of years to evolve into existence. One day our current creation will be destroyed by fire. That is a literal fact. We know that day of judgment will come because a literal day of judgment already came in Genesis with Noah where God wiped out the earth with water. In the future he will wipe out the earth with fire.

For they deliberately overlook this fact, that the heavens existed long ago, and the earth was formed out of water and through water by the word of God, and that by means of these the world that then existed was deluged with water and perished. But by the same word the heavens and earth that now exist are stored up for fire, being kept until the day of judgment and destruction of the ungodly....But according to his promise we are waiting for new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells. 2 Peter 3:5–7, 13 (ESV)

Who wrote Genesis?

For most of history it was believed Moses was the author of the first five books of the Bible. In recent years people began questioning Moses' authorship. One of the reasons they questioned Moses' authorship is because they didn't believe writing was possible in Moses' lifetime. Another reason they question Moses' authorship is the popular JEDP hypothesis. This hypothesis claims four

different authors stitched together pieces of other books to make Genesis and other Bible books. Is any of this true? First, we now know writing occurred at and before the time of Moses. There is no reason Moses couldn't have written the first five Bible books. In addition, Moses was highly educated. He grew up in Pharaoh's palace. I don't think basic writing skills were a problem. Second, the JEDP hypothesis is now proven false. Today, no serious scholar supports it. Third, if you think Moses didn't write Genesis, you are disagreeing with Jesus. Jesus claimed Moses wrote the first five books. When Jesus says it, I believe it.

[And beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, he interpreted to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning himself. Luke 24:27 \(ESV\)](#)

No matter what crazy ideas liberal guys come up with for their doctoral projects, I am sticking with the words of Jesus. If I can trust him to save my soul and my body at the point of death, I can trust what he said about the authorship of the first five books of the Bible.

Of course there are small parts Moses didn't write, like the last chapter of Deuteronomy, that describes Moses' death. That was probably not authored by him. The rest was.

How did Moses write Genesis?

Unlike Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy, Moses wasn't around when the events of Genesis happened. Where did Moses get his information about creation? Where did Moses learn about Noah and the tower of Babel? There are two likely explanations.

First, Moses, under control of the Holy Spirit, compiled existing historical information. That doesn't mean Moses didn't write it. It means God was behind controlling what Moses wrote.

One of the constant refrains in Genesis is the phrase, "These are the generations of". This phrase happens 10 times. That phrase acts like chapter divisions in a book. The phrase "generations of" could also be translated "books of." It seems Moses took history books that were probably written on tablets of stone and passed down from father to son. He compiled this historical information into the book of Genesis. Let me show you what I mean.

- Genesis 2:24 ends with, "These are the generations of the heaven and the earth." In this section Moses apparently took his information from a book written by Adam and authored by God about the creation of the universe.
- Genesis 5:1 closes with "These are the generations of Adam." The information in this section came from the history books written down by Adam.
- Genesis 6:9 ends with. "These are the generations of Noah." It contains history from the history book Noah wrote.

This continues through the entire book of Genesis where Moses seems to reveal the ancient history books he used for the information in Genesis.

There is a second theory. This is pretty straightforward. The Bible tells us Moses had a unique relationship with God. God may have given Moses all information on the early history of our planet by direct special revelation.

When Moses entered the tent, the pillar of cloud would descend and stand at the entrance of the tent, and the Lord would speak with Moses. And when all the people saw the pillar of cloud standing at the entrance of the tent, all the people

would rise up and worship, each at his tent door. Thus the Lord used to speak to Moses face to face, as a man speaks to his friend... Exodus 33:9–11 (ESV)

And there has not arisen a prophet since in Israel like Moses, whom the Lord knew face to face... Deuteronomy 34:10 (ESV)

Either God directed and inspired Moses to use source information or God spoke directly to him. Either of these are viable options for how Moses knew the information on the early history of our planet when wrote about it.

How is Genesis organized?

When Moses wrote Genesis, it wasn't haphazardly slapped together. Genesis divides neatly into two pieces.

- Genesis 1-11 — Early history of our planet.
- Genesis 12-50 — Early history of God's people.

The phrase "the generations of" which marks the possible seams of Moses' source material, occurs 10 times.

- Five of them are used in the section covering the early history of our planet in Genesis 1-11. Five are used in the section that covers the early history of Israel in Genesis 12-50.
- Five of them introduce Bible stories. Five of them introduce genealogies. As you can see, Genesis is a carefully and thoughtfully crafted book. Let's look at the first verse of chapter one first and set ourselves up to cover the rest of the chapter next week.

Genesis 1:1 — Who Created Everything?

In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth. Genesis 1:1 (ESV)

Genesis begins by answering the question, “Who created everything?”

This is an important verse. If you actually believe it, it changes the way you view everything.

- It refutes atheism, because the universe was created by God, not by chance.
- It refutes polytheism because only one God created all things.
- It refutes humanism because God, not man, is the ultimate reality.
- It refutes evolution because we did not evolve. God created everything and everyone.

Genesis 1:1 is reinforced throughout the Bible.

Worthy are you, our Lord and God, to receive glory and honor and power, for you created all things, and by your will they existed and were created. Revelation 4:11 (ESV)

Let them praise the name of the Lord! For he commanded and they were created. Psalm 148:5 (ESV)

By faith we understand that the universe was created by the word of God, so that what is seen was not made out of things that are visible. Hebrews 11:3 (ESV)

All things were made through him, and without him was not any thing made that was made. John 1:3 (ESV)

Some people are atheists. They don't believe God created anything. The Bible has a word for those who don't believe God created everything.

The fool says in his heart, “There is no God.” Psalm 14:1 (ESV)

When did God create the universe?

One of the questions we often hear is, “When did God create the universe?” In science class we are told the earth is billions of years old. We are told we evolved by chance. The Bible says creation is only thousands of years old and everything was created in six literal days. One of them has to be wrong.

In an attempt to compromise, we are told that Genesis 1 is Hebrew poetry. It is not meant to be taken literally. It is only meant to tell us that God created us, now how God created us. We are told we can't to take six literal creation days seriously.

The problem with that argument is the book of Exodus, which is not Hebrew poetry, refers back to Genesis. It takes the six days of creation as six literal days. If you don't believe in six literal creation days in Genesis, then you are saying Exodus is wrong.

For in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that is in them, and rested on the seventh day. Therefore the Lord blessed the Sabbath day and made it holy. Exodus 20:11 (ESV)

To claim Genesis is Hebrew poetry, so we don't have to take it literally, is to disagree with Exodus, which is not Hebrew poetry, and it takes Genesis literally.

This morning I won't be able to answer all of your questions on evolution versus creation. I want to get you thinking. Let's go back to the age of the earth. When was the universe created? When did Genesis 1:1 take place? Biblical and non-biblical scholars have tried to piece together the age of the earth and the moment of creation from genealogical and historical records from various ancient civilizations. Unfortunately, nobody comes up with an agreed upon date.

Why don't they agree? Sometimes they don't know if a calendar year today is identical to a calendar year in ancient history. Sometimes translating an ancient number to a modern number is hard to calculate. Sometimes the chronologies of other civilizations, such as the Babylonian and Egyptian

chronologies, are confusing. As a result, nobody has an agreed upon date for the creation of the world by studying history.

Best known biblical chronology to determine the date of creation was developed by archbishop James Ussher (1581-1656). Using the biblical genealogical records he figured the date of creation was 4004 B.C. While many people mock him today, he wasn't a dummy. Until Darwin, and the introduction of evolutionary theory which required ultra long periods of time, nobody considered the earth to be billions of years old. Even Isaac Newton criticized scholars that considered the beginning of the world to be 5000 or 6000 B.C. because that was too old. Egyptian chronology is some of our best. It goes back to 3000 B.C. Before that date we have no historical records of any civilization.

While I told you theologians and secular historians don't agree on a date for the beginning of the world, the differences between their dates are relatively small. The Jews believe the earth began 3760 B.C. Josephus calculated the beginning of the earth to be 5555 B.C. Johanus Kepler believed the earth began in 3993 B.C. Luther believed the earth began in 3961 B.C. Those dates are close.

Even if there are gaps in the genealogical record in Genesis 5 and 11, which some people claim, they could only amount to a few hundred, or being charitable, maybe a few thousand years. This means the earth began sometime between 4000 B.C. to 10000 B.C., with most of the evidence leaning toward a younger earth. Pre-Darwin nobody thought the earth was 5 billion years old or

20 billion years old. The ultra long age of the earth only came about to allow evolutionary theory enough time.

What do you do with radioactive dating? What do you do with the supposed evolutionary proof, like geological layers and the evolution of the horse? I don't have time to interact with those arguments this morning but I preached a message a few years ago where I examined the proofs of evolution. [It is called Scientific Reasons to Trust the Bible.](#) It is in the *Reasons to Believe Your Bible* series. I refer you to that message for more help.

Is theistic evolution true?

While most of us do not believe in pure evolution, we are not willing to believe in six literal days of creation. Many Christians believe a mixture of creation and evolution called theistic evolution. Theistic evolution is where we believe each day of creation represents vast ages of time where things evolved over millions of years. God inserts himself at various steps along the way to create the next leaps in the evolutionary cycle.

While theistic evolution sounds like a good idea, it has problems when you think about it.

If man was created at the end of an evolutionary process that lasted billions of years, with each creation day being millions or billions of years, there was lots of death before Adam and Eve came on the scene. Evolution means death. It involved suffering. It means survival of the fittest. It involves violence and bloodshed. It involves suffering and disease. Isn't that the definition of the evolutionary process?

The problem is, how do we reconcile billions of years of suffering, violence and death that ends with the creation of man in sinless perfect world that has no suffering or death? The Bible says death doesn't come into the world until sin enters the world. If theistic evolution was true, you have billions of years of death in the world before sin enters the world. That would make the entire Bible backwards.

Therefore, just as sin came into the world through one man, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men because all sinned... Romans 5:12 (ESV)

If death was in the picture for billions of years before sin entered the picture, as theistic evolution claims, the entire Bible is backward. If there was suffering and death in the world for billions of years as God slowly evolved creation, how could God look at the end of each creation day and claim it was good? That would make sin and death good.

As Christians we have no trouble believing God literally raised Jesus' body from the dead. We have no trouble believing God will literally raise our bodies from the dead. We have no trouble believing God will one day make a completely new creation in an instant. Why do we have trouble believing God made our current creation in six literal days?

Is the gap theory true?

While we are on the topic of the impossibility of theistic evolution, there is another theory out there called the gap theory. It was popularized by the Scottish theologian Thomas Chalmers and was printed in the Scofield Reference Bible. He taught there was a long period of time between Genesis 1:1 and Genesis 1:2. He believe there were millions or billions of years in the gap between Genesis

1:1 and Genesis 1:2. In that gap, he put the geological ages. This way he could believe the scientists, which talk about billions of years of evolution, and pacify the theologians, that talk about six literal creation days. Thomas Chalmers believed the six days of creation were primarily focused on Eden.

Does the gap theory work? The billions of years of the geological ages that the scientists want are based upon their belief that evolutionary fossils exist in sedimentary rock. The problem is fossils are dead animals. If there was a huge gap in creation between Genesis 1:1 and Genesis 1:2 where different animals died, that would mean there was suffering, disease and death in the world for billions of years before the sin entered the world. You have the same problem. The gap theory doesn't work.

Our options include pure evolution for billions of years and lots of chance. That doesn't work. There is also theistic evolution with millions or billions of years that supposedly correspond to the days of creation. The problem with that is you have death in the world before you have sin in the world. The third option is the gap theory which claims all the billions of years of geological ages go between Genesis 1:1 and Genesis 1:2. That also has the problem of introducing death into the world before sin comes in the world. The only thing you have left is six days of creation that are six literal days. The creation of the universe was a special act of God just as the creation of the new heavens and the new earth will be a special creative act of God.

Remember that historically the only people that thought the earth was billions of years old were the evolutionists. Until Darwin, everyone was a young earth believer, even though they didn't agree on the date.

If you take creation as a literal six days you stand on good ground. You stand on the same ground as the apostles and the prophets in their 200 plus quotations of Genesis in the New Testament where they believed Genesis was fact, not fiction. The only question is, "Do I believe my Bible?" The Genesis 1 is the chapter most of us do not believe because he bought into evolution and humanism. All attempts to harmonize Genesis 1 with ultra long periods of time and evolutionary theory fail.

Conclusion

This morning, some of us were gently rebuked by God. That is a good thing. It is good for the Bible to correct our thoughts and our ways. We realize how much we trust the theories of science instead of the truth of God's Word. The proper response is for us to repent.

Next week, when we look at Genesis 1, take it as God intended, six literal days of special creation. The only question is, "What will you believe? — Your Bible or National Geographic."



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