

Genesis

Introduction

Genesis is a book of beginnings, the foundation for the rest of Scripture. Not only does it explain the beginning of all creation (including the human race), but it also provides the foundation (directly or indirectly) for every major teaching found elsewhere in the Bible.

Two recurring themes found in Genesis are: 1) The contrast between: (a) the sovereign, holy and righteous God who keeps his promises, and (b) the weak and sinful humans who often fail to trust God; and 2) God's gracious blessings and promises, given to those who trust him (rather than because of human merit or birthright).

Interesting Features

Two main sections in Genesis are: 1) An account of creation, including details witnessed only by God; and 2) Ten historical accounts of events in early human history. These ten accounts would have been experienced, observed and communicated by humans, and then combined in the book of Genesis by Moses (with God's guidance).

Additional features: 1) There are striking parallels between the first three chapters of Genesis and the last three chapters of Revelation. Only God could have planned this. 2) There are instances in which God appeared to people, in human form. 3) Certain numbers seem to have significance: 10, 7 (or multiples of 7), 12 and 40.

Outline

1. God's description of how creation came into existence (1:1-2:3).
 - 1. First six days of creation: The heavens and earth are *formed* (days 1-3) and *filled* (days 3-6).
 - 2. (2:1-3) Seventh day of creation: a time of *rest*.
2. Ten historical accounts - the development of God's promise in earth's early history.
 - a. Account #1 - The first family (2:4-4:26).
 - 2. (2:4-25) - The creation of Adam and Eve; the garden where God personally walked with humans (as described in 3:8); the significance of marriage and the family structure.
 - 3. How sin entered the world, with consequences that affect all of creation, including our relationship with God; human nature becomes corrupt, destroying even the most sacred relationship people can have with each other (reflected by a changed attitude toward sexuality); the first mention of the promise about one who would conquer the serpent (3:15).
 - 4. The first offspring; the line of Cain; advanced technology, but moral decay; Abel replaced by Seth.
 - b. Account #2 - Adam's line through Seth (5:1-6:8).
 - 5. The offspring of Adam - Seth to Noah.
 - 6. (6:1-8) The morally corrupt conditions of the world at the time of Noah.
 - c. Account #3 - The life of Noah and the worldwide Flood (6:9-9:29).
 - 6. (6:9-22) Why Noah's family is spared; instructions for building the ark.
 - 7. God protects those in the ark; a description of the global catastrophe that caused the Flood.
 - 8. The waters recede; those in the ark exit on dry ground; sacrifices made to God; God's promise.
 - 9. God's blessing, instructions and promise (with the rainbow as a sign); sin and judgment in Noah's family.
 - d. Account #4 - The offspring of Noah's sons (10:1-11:9).
 - 10. The families from which all nations came; additional information about Nimrod and Canaan.
 - 11. (11:1-9) Their refusal to spread out across the earth; God forces them to do so; tower of Babel; multiple languages.
 - e. Account #5 - More details about Shem's offspring (11:10-26).
 - 11. (11:10-26) Some details specifically related to Abraham's ancestors.

- f. Account #6 - Terah's offspring, the main focus being on Abraham and Lot (11:27-25:11).
- 11. (11:27-32) Terah's family, including Abram (Abraham) and Lot; their journey to Haran.
 - 12. Abram and Lot travel to Canaan; God's promise to Abram; a temporary stay in Egypt.
 - 13. Return to Canaan; overcrowding; Lot moves to Sodom; God's promise to Abram reaffirmed.
 - 14. War; Lot is captured; Abram rescues Lot (and the others); Abram is blessed by Melchizedek, a priest of God.
 - 15. God makes an eternal covenant with Abram; Abram trusts God.
 - 16. A temporary lapse of faith; Hagar becomes pregnant; runs away, but returns with God's blessing; Ishmael is born.
 - 17. God's promise of offspring through Sarai (Sarah); circumcision to be a symbol of God's promise; Abram's and Sarai's names changed to reflect this promise.
 - 18. Three visitors (God and two angels, all in human form) announce when the son will be born, and warn about judgment against Sodom; Abraham pleads for Sodom.
 - 19. The angels visit Sodom; the people show their depravity; fire judgment; Lot and his family are spared (except for his wife); Lot's daughters conceive sons by their father.
 - 20. Abraham's temporary stay in Gerar; God protects Abraham during a temporary lapse of faith.
 - 21. Birth of Isaac; Hagar and Ishmael sent away (protected by God); treaty at Beersheba.
 - 22. God tests Abraham's loyalty and trust; the offspring of Nahor (another son of Terah).
 - 23. Death and burial of Sarah.
 - 24. Abraham sends a servant to Nahor's home town, to get a wife for Isaac; God provides.
 - 25. (25:1-11) Abraham's second wife and more children; death of Abraham.
- g. Account #7 - Abraham's son: Ishmael and his offspring (25:12-18).
- 25. (25:12-18) List of Ishmael's descendants.
- h. Account #8 - Abraham's son: Isaac and his family, the main focus being on Jacob (25:19-35:29).
- 25. (25:19-34) God provides offspring; birth of Jacob and Esau; Esau abandons his birthright.
 - 26. Famine; Isaac goes to Gerar, lies about who his wife is; conflict over water rights; blessed by God.
 - 27. Jacob gets the inheritance rights; though originally deceived, Isaac later affirms it (v. 33); Jacob fears for his life.
 - 28. Jacob flees to his uncle in Haran; God blesses him in a dream (at Bethel); Jacob makes a vow to God.
 - 29. Jacob arrives in Haran; tricked by his uncle Laban; marries Laban's daughters; has children.
 - 30. Two more wives, more children. Jacob prospers; works for Laban, and God blesses.
 - 31. Laban gets jealous; Jacob flees and Laban pursues; God warns Laban; peace treaty.
 - 32. Preparation to meet Esau; Jacob wrestles with God and God blesses him; name changed to Israel.
 - 33. Jacob, full of fear, meets Esau.
 - 34. Dinah (daughter of Jacob) is raped; in revenge, her brothers murder an entire town.
 - 35. Return to Bethel; the death of Jacob's second wife (Rachel); the death of Isaac; list of offspring.
- i. Account #9 - Isaac's son: Esau and his offspring (36:1-37:1)
- 36. Esau moved to Seir; a list of Esau's descendants; rulers of Edom (Esau's offspring).
 - 37. (37:1) Jacob, Esau's brother, remained in the land of Canaan.
- j. Account #10 - Isaac's son: Jacob and his family, the main focus being on Joseph (37:2-50:26).
- 37. (37:2-36) Favoritism toward Joseph; Joseph's dreams; his brother's jealousy. Joseph is sold into slavery by his brothers.
 - 38. Judah's offspring; Judah has children by his deceased son's wife.
 - 39. Joseph (in slavery) is blessed by God; refuses to be seduced by an officer's wife; is falsely accused and is punished. God blesses him further.
 - 40. Joseph interprets two officer's dreams; but is left forgotten in prison.
 - 41. Joseph interprets dreams for the king of Egypt; is put in charge of Egypt, to prepare for the famine.
 - 42. The famine arrives; Joseph's brothers go to Egypt to buy food; Joseph secretly recognizes them.
 - 43. The second journey to Egypt; Joseph sees his younger brother Benjamin for the first time.
 - 44. Joseph threatens to make Benjamin remain in Egypt; Judah intercedes.
 - 45. Joseph makes himself known; sends for his father Jacob.
 - 46. Jacob goes to Egypt; meets Joseph; a list of all his descendants.
 - 47. Jacob's family settles in Goshen (a district in Egypt); more about the famine.
 - 48. Jacob blesses Joseph's children.
 - 49. Jacob blesses his own sons; the death of Jacob.
 - 50. Jacob's burial; Joseph reassures his brothers that he has forgiven them; the death of Joseph.