

Old Testament Survey—Genesis

Discuss: Let's begin by discussing some questions about the Old Testament...

- What word first comes to mind when you think about the Old Testament?
- What are some reasons that many people shy away from the Old Testament?
- What are some questions that you would like to have answered about the Old Testament?

Our goal in our current Wednesday evening series is to get to know it better! Why is this important? For one, the New Testament writers assume that we have a grasp of the Old Testament message--like they did. Second, Jesus said the Old Testament speaks of Him (John 5:39; also Luke 24:44). Third, all of the Bible is God's Word (not just the New Testament), and is profitable (2 Tim 3:16-17).

Guidelines for our Survey of the Old Testament:

1. As a general rule, we will devote one week to one book.
2. Read (or scan) the book prior to our study, looking for the big picture.
2. Our aim is to discover and remember the following details about each book:

Who wrote the book?

When was the book written?

Why was the book written?

What is the outline of the book?

What is the message of the book in one sentence?

What contribution does the book make to biblical theology (that is, how does this book relate to the rest of the Bible)?

Some Cautions to Keep in Mind when Studying the Old Testament

1. Remember the human author's intent.

We get in trouble when we fail to pursue the original intent of a passage and engage in "eisogesis" (as opposed to "exegesis"). For instance, there's a lot of narrative in the OT. You can find people doing all sorts of things. If we wanted to, we could "justify" all sorts of actions by saying, "Well, so-and-so did it in the Bible! So can I!" There are also a lot of commands in the OT. Do all the commands apply to us? If not, why not?

2. Remember that the Bible is *Christo-centric*.

That means the Bible is Christ-centered. It all points to Him, as He Himself said in John 5:39-40, “You diligently study the Scriptures because you think that by them you possess eternal life. These are the Scriptures that testify about me, yet you refuse to come to me to have life.” If we study the OT merely to increase our Bible knowledge, we’ve missed the point.

Related to this...

3. Remember that we are studying the Old Testament *this side of the cross*.

There are hundreds of references to and quotations from the OT in the NT. We can benefit from observing how the New Testament authors used the Old Testament. How so?

E.g.—Find a quotation of a verse in Genesis in the New Testament. For instance, Genesis 2:24 is quoted in Matt. 19:5, Mark 10:7-8, 1 Cor. 6:16, and Eph. 5:31.

Ob servation: The following is taken from an article by Ronald Youngblood:[\[1\]](#)

“How many quotations are there? Unanimity on the question of statistics is notably lacking. New Testament verses or passages introduced by a formula designating that what follows is indeed an Old Testament quotation number 224 according to Nicole, 239 according to Shires. If we add to these the Old Testament citations that are not formally introduced but are nevertheless clearly intended as quotations, the number is 255, “at least 295” etc. (According to my own count, in the NIV there are 296 New Testament footnote references to Old Testament citations.)

“If we include allusions, the total rises dramatically, with tallies ranging from 442 to 4,105. But since “the gradation from quotation to allusion is so imperceptible that it is almost impossible to draw any certain line,” it is perhaps best to content ourselves with round numbers and rough estimates. S. Lewis Johnson summarizes: “There are over three hundred explicit quotations of the Old Testament in the New, and there are literally thousands of allusions.” Nicole is thus able to assert that “more than 10 per cent of the New Testament text is made up of citations or direct allusions to the Old Testament.”

Review: Last time we introduced the book of Genesis...

Genesis

Who wrote the book? Moses

Critics have attacked Mosaic authorship.

Q: What is the "JEDP" theory? This view says Moses did not write the Pentateuch. Critics suggest the book was written much later than Moses, and had several writers (unknown to us, and identified by the letters JEDP). Their objections to Moses authorship include: the duplication of stories means there was more than one author (e.g.--two creation accounts); the use of more than one name of God indicates multiple authorship ("J" wrote the material where "Jehovah" is used; "E" wrote the text where "Elohim" appears; "D" wrote sections in Deuteronomy; and "P" represents a priestly source).

Q: How do we know that Moses wrote Genesis? (and the Pentateuch)

- Ex 17:14 God orders Moses to write down on a scroll
- Num 33:2 Moses is seen logging the journeys of Israel
- Josh 1:7-8 Joshua ascribes the "law" to Moses
- Jn 1:17 John states that the Law came by Moses
- Jn 5:45-47 Jesus said Moses wrote of Christ.
- Rom 10:5 Paul quotes Deut 25:4 and says Moses wrote it.

When was the book written?

Remember, Genesis was not designed to be a separate, stand alone "book" as we think of a book, but was part of the Pentateuch (a word which comes from the Greek term meaning "five volumed book," LaSor, 54). The Jews called it the Torah, the "Law."

When did Moses write the Torah? After Israel left Egypt and prior to entering the Promised Land (15th century B.C.)

Why was the book written?

The Pentateuch was written to prepare God's people to enter the Promised Land (see map showing relationship of Egypt to Promised Land).

Q: Who lived in the Promised Land in the 15th century B.C.? The Canaanites

Q: What special problems would the Israelites encounter when they reached the Land?

Paganism, polytheism, moral decadence.

Q: What truths does Genesis teach that would be essential for the Israelites in the 15th century B.C.?

--There may be other "gods," but there is only one GOD (Gen 1).

--This one God is the Creator of all (see Gen 1)

--This God takes sin seriously (Flood--Gen 6; Babel --Gen 11)

--This God has entered into a covenant relationship with Abraham and his descendants (Gen 15).

--The true God is an exclusive God, and will not play second fiddle to other gods (see the story of Sodom and Gomorrah in Gen 19).

--God does not want His chosen people to lose their identity by mixing with the pagans of the world (see choice of bride for Isaac in Gen 24).

--How did Israel get to Egypt anyway? (see story of Joseph, Gen 37-50)

Key: Genesis prepares us for the story of redemption which will unfold in Exodus.

Discuss: What does the term “redemption” mean? When the New Testament later speaks of Christ being our “redeemer,” it’s drawing on this OT concept. How so?

What is the outline of the book?

Last week, we scanned the book and observed the main events which are recorded. We noticed that the book is divided by subject matter into two main parts.

Q: Where is the break? Between chapters 11 and 12

Q: What are chapters 1-11 about? The history of the human race

Q: What are chapters 12-50 about? The history of the Patriarchs

Outline: Genesis is a book of beginnings.

I. The Beginning of the Human Race (1:1-11:26)

A. Creation & Fall (1-3)

B. The Population of the Earth (4-11)

II. The Beginning of the Nation of Israel (11:27-50:26)

A. The life of Abraham (12:1-25:18)

B. The life of Isaac (25:19-26:35)

C. The life of Jacob (27:1-37:1)

D. The life of Joseph and the other sons of Jacob (37:2-50:26)

Discuss: Why is it important to keep in mind the big picture of a book when reading or studying chapters in that book?

What is the message of the book in one sentence?

Genesis is a book of beginnings in which we learn how God formed the world, and specifically how God entered into a covenant relationship with one family in order to bring hope to the world.

Discuss: Why is it important *not* to assume that people know the message of Genesis when we are doing evangelism in America in the year 2008?

What contribution does the book make to biblical theology (that is, how does this book relate to the rest of the Bible)?

Genesis is a foundational book to the rest of the Bible. It answers the following key questions (for each, see if you can answer the question based on what is written in Genesis):

1. What makes God unique?

He is the all sufficient Creator Who needs nothing. He is a revealing God who reveals Himself and His purposes to His people, as He did with men like Adam, Enoch, Abraham.

2. Why is there sin and death in the world?

Because of Adam and Eve's disobedience (Rom 5).

3. What is God's plan for rescuing a people for Himself out of this cursed world?

God is forming a people for Himself. Through Israel , God promised to bring redemption to the world (Isaiah 44-45).

4. Why does Israel have a special place in the plan of God?

God has entered into a covenant relationship with Abraham and his seed (Galatians 4:16-17).

5. What will the Messiah do?

He will defeat the foe of Satan (Gen 3:15).

[\[1\] http://www.ibs.org/niv/mct/10.php](http://www.ibs.org/niv/mct/10.php)