

MAIN THEME: GOD'S SOVEREIGNTY DESPITE, AND IN, HUMAN SIN.

1. AUTHOR

Q. What do you know about Genesis? Jesus quotes dozens of times from the Pentateuch. Mark 12:26 *And as for the dead being raised, have you not read in the book of Moses [Gen-Deu], in the passage about the bush [Exo 3], how God spoke to him, saying, ...*

A. Author: Moses. Genesis is the first part of the 'Book of Moses' ca. 1400 BC.

We might know a lot about Genesis, but do we read it, as Jesus said we should?

2. TEN(ISH) TEXTUAL DIVISIONS

Genesis 1:1-2:3 Creation of everything, including human rule, marriage, work, rest (sabbath), ...

Genesis 2:4 *These are **the generations of** the heavens and the earth when they were created, ...*

Genesis 5:1 *This is the book of **the generations of** Adam.*

Genesis 6:9 *These are **the generations of** Noah. Noah was a righteous man, ...*

Genesis 10:1 *These are **the generations of** the sons of Noah, Shem, Ham, and Japheth. ...*

Genesis 11:10 *These are **the generations of** Shem.*

Genesis 11:27 *Now these are **the generations of** Terah. Terah fathered Abram, ...*

Genesis 25:12 *These are **the generations of** Ishmael, Abraham's son, ...*

Genesis 25:19 *These are **the generations of** Isaac, Abraham's son ...*

Genesis 36:9 *These are **the generations of** Esau the father of the Edomites ...*

Genesis 37:2 *These are **the generations of** Jacob. Joseph, being seventeen ...*

Pretty prosaic!

3. EVESON'S ORIGINS STRUCTURE:

1. The **origin of** the universe and of life (1:1-25)
2. The **origin of** human beings (1:26-31)
3. The **origin of** the holy day (2:1-3)
4. The original garden (2:4-17)
5. The original couple (2:7,18-25)
6. The **origin of** human sin (3:1-24)
7. The **origin of** distress and death (3:9-24)
8. The **origin of** human worship and culture (4:1-26)

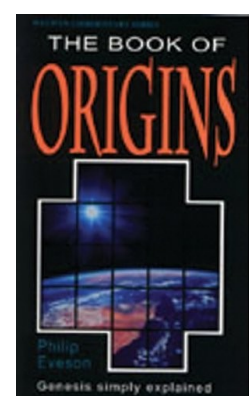


Illustration 1: A Useful Commentary

9. The original register of births and deaths (5:1-32)

10. The **origin** of the Flood (6:1-8) [etc. etc.]

Better, but still not very interesting!

4. FOUR GREAT MEN (AND FAMILIES)?

Adam, Noah, Abram, Joseph. OK, but only Adam, Noah and Abram are really emphasised in the NT.

5. FIVE GREAT EVENTS?

(1)Creation, (2)Fall, (3)Curse, (4)Flood, (5)Babel. But actually, these only take us to chapter 11 [out of 50].

6. TWO FOUNDATIONAL COVENANTS

Genesis is disproportionately important in covenant theology, having two out of the big five!

And, covenants are all about Jesus ...

7. JESUS IN GENESIS?

Q. Why might we expect to find Jesus in Genesis?

A. Luke 24:27 *And beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, he explained to them what was said in all the Scriptures concerning himself.*

Which key events were Jesus?

a) **John 1:1** In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. 2 He was in the beginning with God. 3 All things were made through him, and without him was not any thing made that was made. i.e. **Genesis 1:1**

b) **Genesis 6-9:** Noah and the ark.

c) When **Abraham** nearly sacrifices Isaac:

Genesis 22:15 *And the angel of the LORD called to Abraham a second time from heaven ¹⁶ and said, "By myself I have sworn, declares the Lord, because you have done this and have not withheld your son, your only son, ¹⁷ I will surely bless you, ... ¹⁸ and in your offspring shall all the nations of the earth be blessed, because you have obeyed my voice."*

d) **Joseph: Genesis 37-50.** [and many other verses!]

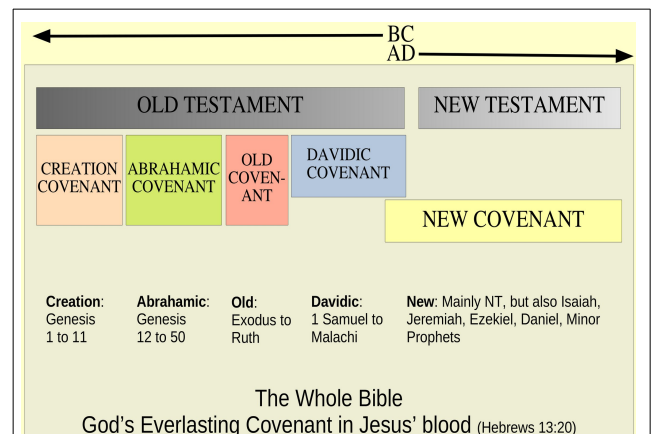


Illustration 2: The Major Covenants in the Bible: Where do we mainly read about each one? Note that Old Testament is not the same as Old Covenant, nor is even the New Testament quite the same as the New Covenant. This view shows how important an understanding of Genesis is as a basis for understanding the whole Bible.

From A.W. Pink, Gleanings in Genesis

'As we read thoughtfully the books of the Old Testament our study of them is but superficial if they fail to show us that ... God was preparing the way for the coming of his Son. The central purpose in the divine incarnation, the great outstanding object in the life and death of the Lord Jesus, were

*prefigured beforehand, and ought to have been rendered familiar to the minds of men. Among the means thus used by God was the history of different persons through whom the life and character of Christ were to a remarkable degree made manifest beforehand. Thus Adam represented his headship, Abel his death, Noah his work in providing a refuge for his people, Melchizedek pointed to him as priest, Moses as prophet, David as king. But the fullest and most striking of all these typical personages was Joseph, for between his history and that of Christ we may trace fully a **hundred points of analogy!**' [10]*

8. ONE SHAPE; ONE KEY THEME



Illustration 3: The Genesis Roller-Coaster (Shape)

God's sovereignty despite, and in, human sin.

In Genesis, we see the progress of God's kingdom on earth. Initially, there is the opposite of progress, with the Fall of man from his state of goodness. However, when things appear to have reached rock bottom at the Tower of Babel, God starts to reverse the trend, and upward, sustained, progress can be seen again. But even on the way down there are short periods of progress. And on the way up there are periods of decline. This is the overall shape of the book of Genesis, a roller-coaster ride.

9. KEY VERSE? 50:20

1:1; 3:15; 6:5; 15:6; 17:7; 22:15-17; 50:20 [Read out] Joseph to his penitent brothers:-

Genesis 50:20 *As for you, you meant evil against me, but God meant it for good, to bring it about that many people should be kept alive, as they are today.* ESV

Genesis 50:20 *You intended to harm me, but God intended it for good to accomplish what is now being done, the saving of many lives.* NIV

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APPENDIX - MAJOR THEMES IN GENESIS

(From the Genesis Roller-Coaster Bible Study Notes)



	Theme	Where in Genesis?		Application
1	The sovereignty of God	Everywhere, from Creation, through Providence, to personal dealings with his people. God is always shown to be unique and in every way superior to the pagan gods. God is the one who plans, initiates, rescues, and eventually does what he said he would. Sometimes he moves quickly (chapter 41), sometimes it takes thousands of years (chapters 5 and 40).		<p>We should never mistake the true God for a mere pagan god who is only sovereign over one aspect of life. The true God reigns over everything, therefore he can always be trusted, must be feared, and will prove faithful.</p> <p>Be more concerned for God's name than with making a name for ourselves (chapter 11).</p>
2	Types of Christ	Adam, Noah, Isaac, Joseph, Judah and others		When we see Christ typified by others, his roles are illustrated colourfully; our understanding and worship should be enhanced.
3	Man 'imaging' God well	Adam 5:3, Everyone 9:6, Enoch, Noah, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph		It is possible for us to 'image' God well or badly in different areas of life (fatherhood, husbands, children, leaders, friends, brothers, workers, creators, etc.) When we image God well, we bring him pleasure and glory. Attach greater importance to our relationships, especially marriage, fatherhood, and sonship/daughtership.
4	Man 'imaging' God badly	Adam, Cain, Ham, Canaan, Abram, Isaac, Jacob, Reuben		Let us learn from the sins and mistakes of our predecessors, and thereby image God better.
5	God choosing and rejecting	Chosen	Rejected	<p>If we are God's people, we should be humbly grateful, realising that he did not have to choose us, but thankful that he did.</p> <p>We should make sure that we, and those around us, are not rejected by God because of unbelief.</p>
Abel		Cain		
Seth's line		Everyone else		
Noah		Everyone else		
Shem		Nearly everyone else		
Abraham		Nearly everyone else		
Isaac		Ishmael		
Jacob		Esau		
Israel		Everyone else		
Judah	Reuben			
6	God bringing good even out of the heathen (godless)?	Cain's culture in chapter 4, multiplication in chapters 5 and 10, justice in 9:6, Abimelech, Nimrod 10:9.		<p>We should not despise culture or even be too suspicious of it. For example, some Christians only listen to Christian music. Let us recognise the good things that the heathen do. This is part of God's so-called common grace.</p>
7	God giving fresh starts	After the Fall, after the flood, Abraham, Israel in Egypt		Recognise God's mercy and his willingness to forgive and grant a fresh start. Be quick to repent, keeping "short accounts" with God.

	Theme	Where in Genesis?	Application
8	God's providence and faithfulness to his creation, people and his promises	Everywhere, but especially provision in Creation in chapter 2, remembering Noah, preserving Abram and Lot, pursuing and preserving Jacob, making Joseph's dreams come true, the patriarch's confidence in the promised land and ultimately the Resurrection. God's covenants summarised in Genesis 9 and 17, the Creation Covenant and the Abrahamic Covenant are constantly under threat, but God remains faithful. Eventually, the Lord Jesus Christ will prove himself faithful to his creation and his people by recreating it and resurrecting them Rev. 21:1,2.	Depend on God to care for us his people. Allow this knowledge to affect our feelings and decisions, worry far less, trust him in a more detailed way. As things go wrong in our lives, bodies, families, property etc, learn to hope increasingly in the Resurrection and life on the new earth.
9	The cycle of God's blessing, man's rebellion, God's judgement	See table at start of Study 6.	Despite God's many blessings, man does sin and God will judge. This gives a certain edge and urgency to all our dealings with those who are not yet Christians.
10	The way down	From the Fall to the Tower of Babel: Things got worse and worse in God's creation, his kingdom, before they eventually started to get better. But that did not mean that God had lost control. He brought great good out of the evil and, even during the evil times, there were many tastes of his blessing and protection of his people.	The rise of secular humanism should not surprise or worry us. God dealt with it in Genesis 11; he will deal with it in 21 st Century too. We too should take opportunities to oppose it. Since man left to himself, only becomes more evil, we should give up any idea that human evolution will solve the world's problems.
11	The way up	From Abraham onwards, with Joseph ultimately prefiguring Christ.	We should value God's people, his church and see continuity from Abraham to nowadays. We should work to build God's kingdom; it is at the centre-stage of world history.
12	The contrast between trusting (faith in) and not trusting God (unbelief)	Adam and Eve, Abel vs. Cain, Noah, Abram and Sarai vs. Abraham and Sarah, Jacob vs. Israel (note how God changed their names as a commentary on their spiritual experience.)	We should repent of our unbelief and learn to trust God much more. Start work on finding and believing all God's promises to us his people. Impress God's commands on our children, especially the command to trust him: Gen.15:6 <i>Abram believed the LORD, and he credited it to him as righteousness.</i>
13	Conversion and progress in godliness	Jacob, Abram, Joseph, Judah	We must be clear that people need to be converted and that, having been converted, all Christians are to grow and make progress in the Christian life.

	Theme	Where in Genesis?	Application
14	The trials of God's people	Abel, Noah, Abraham, Jacob, Joseph	The godly also face many trials, but God will work everything out for our good and his own glory.
15	Opposition to God's commands, people and promises	The Fall, Cain and his line, the Tower of Babel (secular humanism), Sarai's and Eve's unbelief, Adam's and Abram's weakness, Joseph's brothers	There will always be opposition to God's work, people and plans. Sometimes, things will look gloomy. We must be realistic about Satan and how bad things can appear.
16	The origin of everything	Everywhere. The universe, man, the Sabbath, marriage, work, sin, death, culture, worship, the nations, languages, God's covenants, God's people, the Serpent's (Satan's) people, and salvation typified in Isaac (chapter 22) and Joseph, promised in 3:15.	Remember that Genesis explains the origin of everything important. Rely on it, study it, believe it far more. Make sure those for whom we are responsible have a day off each week (including yourself). That we are all descended from Noah is an antidote to all kinds of racism.
17	How (not) to mess up relationships	Adam and Eve, Cain and Abel, Abraham's and Jacob's polygamy, Lot's daughters (incest), Sodom and homosexuality, Dinah and rape, Judah, levirate marriage and prostitution, Reuben and more incest, the danger of marrying Canaanites.	There are many practical lessons for godly living in Genesis. These lessons, if learned, will also save much grief and many regrets. In particular we need to think carefully about making godly marriages and bringing up godly children. There are many books to help. Let us also maintain a high view of marriage.
18	Parenting (badly)	Jacob's favouritism, Lot's poor marriage and parenting, Jacob's failure to discipline	Our decisions in the areas of marriage, family and parenting can have either good or bad consequences for many generations to come. Be warned by Genesis.
19	God's involvement in everything	Creation, good and evil 50:20, history, people's lives, fertility (from Eve onwards)	We should be aware of how God interacts with us in every part of life. This should make us more circumspect, more trusting, more prayerful, quick to repent, eager to serve ...
20	Who is the seed of the woman who will slay the serpent 3:15?	Not Cain, nor Abel. Not Seth, not even Noah or Abraham. However Joseph typifies Christ. It looked as if the covenant family was going to die of starvation in the famine, but God sent his saviour on ahead in the the form of Joseph who accomplished " <i>the saving of many lives</i> " 50:20.	Always remember that the single focus of all history is when Jesus comes, dies, rises and saves his people. All of history either looked forwards to Jesus, or looks back to it. Nothing is more important than seeing God's provision of his Saviour. The whole Bible from Genesis to Revelation relates to Christ.
21	All peoples on earth will be blessed 12:3	The hint of eventual victory in 3:15 remains obscure until 12:2,3 where God promises to bless all peoples through Abram, a promise that is fulfilled in Christ and eventually through the Gospel	As Abraham's children (Gal. 3:7), make sure that what we do and say is a blessing to all the people around us. Matt. 28:18-20, the Great Commission, is

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		reaching the whole world. In the meantime, many people find blessing by being associated with Abraham's descendants: Lot, Abimelech, Laban, the Egyptians.	the working out of Gen. 12:3.
22	The reign of death	The deaths of all the main characters are described, according to Gods' threat in 2:17. Death is particularly emphasised in chapter 5. Enoch was the only exception 5:24. The fact that Enoch did not die guaranteed that one day death would be conquered.	Sooner or later, death will demonstrate to us the truth of what we read in Genesis. We must be clear what the antidote to death is. We must see the Gospel clearly spelled out through the book of Genesis. Be clear that we will inherit the Earth after the (bodily) Resurrection.
23	Add yours here ...		