

Old Testament History

Lesson #1

Genesis 1:1-Genesis 8:14

Outline

- I. ***The Creation Of The Heavens And The Earth (Genesis 1:1-2:3)***
 - A. The beginning of creation (1:1-2).
 - B. The days of creation (1:3-2:3).
- II. ***The Account Of The Heavens And The Earth (Genesis 2:4-4:26)***
 - A. Adam and Eve in Eden (2:4-25).
 - B. The fall into sin (3:1-24).
 - C. The lineage of Cain: Sin's increase (4:1-24).
 - D. The birth of Seth: Men begin to call on the Lord (4:25-26).
- III. ***The Account Of Adam (Genesis 5:1-6:8)***
 - A. The line of Seth: A godly remnant (5:1-32).
 - B. The escalation of sin before the Flood (6:1-8).
- IV. ***The Account Of Noah (Genesis 6:9-9:29)***
 - A. Preparation for the Flood (6:9-7:10).
 - B. The Flood and deliverance of Noah's family (7:11-8:14).

Notes

Genesis 1:1-3:24

- Old Testament history was never meant to be a detailed explanation of world history; it is purely a history of the kingdom of God, and it only describes those persons and events as is necessary for that purpose.
- Genesis is divided into two grand sections of five generations each. The first section details the generations of the heavens and earth, Adam, Noah, and Shem. The second section details the generations of Ishmael, Isaac, Esau, and Jacob. The Old Testament is the "book of the generations of Adam" (Genesis 5:1), and it ends speaking of a curse (Malachi 4:6). The New Testament is the "book of the generation of Jesus Christ" (Matthew 1:1), and it ends with "no more curse" (Revelation 22:3).
- There is a tremendous contrast between the heathen accounts of the origin of the world and the scriptural narrative. The former are so full of gross absurdities that no one could regard them as truth; while the latter is simple and majestic.
- Genesis 1:1 answers a multitude of beliefs: the atheist who says there is no God, the agnostic who says you cannot know God, the polytheist who worships many gods, the pantheist who says that all of nature is

God, the materialist who says that matter is eternal and not created, and the fatalist who says that there is no divine plan behind creation and history.

- The Holy Spirit was involved in creation (Genesis 1:2; Job 26:13; 33:4; Psalm 104:30), as was the Son (John 1:1-3; Ephesians 3:9; Colossians 1:16).
- God, by setting apart the Sabbath day, indicated that worship was the proper relationship between man and his Creator. He also laid in Eden the foundation of civil society by the institution of marriage of family (cf. Mark 10:6, 9).
- The expression "created man in His own image" refers to the intelligence with which God endowed man (including mind, will, emotions, and freedom), the immortality which He endowed man, and the perfect moral and spiritual nature which man at the first possessed. Everything was "very good" (perfect for its purpose) except the loneliness of Adam.
- It now only remained to test man's obedience to God, and to prepare him for higher and greater privileges than those which he already enjoyed. Adam was given dominion -- a ruler can only rule others if he can rule himself. The tree of life in the garden was probably a symbol and pledge of a higher life, which we would have presumably inherited if our first parents had continued in obedience to God. If they had eaten of the tree, they would have lived forever in their sinful state.
- Christ partook of our human nature that we might be partakers of His divine nature. "Much more" in Romans 5 shows that we did not just get back to our original state, but we now have the possibility to go far beyond into eternity.
- God, in His infinite mercy, did not leave man to perish in his sin. He was indeed driven forth from Paradise, for which he was no longer fit. When our first parents left the garden of Eden, it was not without hope. They carried with them the promise of a Redeemer. Therefore, the foundations of the Christian life was laid in Paradise.

Genesis 4:1-26

- Chapter 3 was man against God, and chapter 4 is man against man. Cain gave way to feelings of anger and jealousy (cf. Matthew 5:22). Cain became a "walking sermon" on the grace of God and the tragic consequences of sin (1 John 3:12; Jude 11). In mercy, God spoke to him of his sin. He warned him of its danger, and pointed to the way of escape. He opened to man another path. He set before him the hope of faith.
- Moses takes us to the highest point in the lives of the two brothers. The religion of Abel leads to righteousness while the religion of Cain leads to

man pleasing himself (Hebrews 11:4). But the faith which prompted the sacrifice of Abel, and the way of faith which characterized Cain, must, of course, have existed and appeared long before.

- This episode teaches us that no punishment, however terrible, can ever have the effect of changing the heart of a man, or altering his state and the direction of his life. The punishment did not lead him to repentance, only to a fear of the consequences.
- There is a separation of all mankind into two classes -- the Sethites and the Cainites. All of the children of Adam grouped themselves according to their spiritual tendencies. Lamech was the seventh generation from Adam on Cain's side and he displeased God. With him, the record of the Cainites ceases. Enoch was the seventh generation from Adam on Seth's side and he pleased God.

Genesis 4:1-26

- The place of Abel could not remain unfilled if God's purpose of mercy was to be carried out. Accordingly He gave to Adam and Eve another son, whom his mother significantly called "Seth" or "appointed."
- By the time we reach Lamech, the character and tendencies of the whole race appear to be fully developed. It should come as no surprise that within so few generations, and in the lifetime of the first man, almost every commandment and institution of God should already be openly set aside, and violence, lust, and ungodliness prevail upon the earth.
- It is interesting to note that the names of Lamech's children point to the "lust of the eye" and the "lust of the flesh," just as the occupations of Lamech's sons point to the "pride of life." It is also very remarkable to note that the Cainite race manifests the characteristics of heathenism, as we find among the most advanced nations of antiquity, such as Greece and Rome.
- When Enos comes along, "men began to call upon the name of Lord." There is now a distinct and open profession of the vital difference between the two races. We have now reached the first great period in the history of the kingdom of God -- an outward and visible separation between the two parties.
- This separation and coming out from the world is what to this day each one of us must do for ourselves, if we would take up the cross, follow Christ, and enter into the kingdom of God.

Genesis 5:1-32

- Every generation lived its appointed time; they transmitted the promise to their sons; and then, having finished their course, they "died in faith"(Hebrews 11:13). This is all we know about the majority of them.

But the emphatic repetition in each case of the words, "And he died," with which every genealogy closes, tells us that "death reigned from Adam unto Moses" (Romans 5:14).

- The one exception to this rule is Enoch. His life and his translation are connected with his "walk with God." This expression is unique in scripture, and except in reference to Noah (Genesis 6:9), only occurs again in connection with the priest's dealings with God in the holy place (Malachi 2:6). It is indicative of a peculiarly intimate, close, and personal converse with God. His translation was like Elijah's (2 Kings 2:10), and like the saints who are alive at the second coming of the Lord (1 Corinthians 15:51-52). Enoch's shortened life was a relief from the work and toil which sin has brought upon this world.
- When Enoch was "translated" only Adam had died: Seth, Enos, Cainan, Mahalaleel, and Jared were still alive. On the other hand, not only Methuselah, the son of Enoch, but also his grandson Lamech, who at the time was 113 years old, must have witnessed his translation. Noah was not yet born.
- Evidently Lamech felt the burden of toil upon an earth which God had cursed, and looked forward to a gracious deliverance from the misery and corruption existing in consequence of it, by the fulfillment of the divine promise concerning the Deliverer. In longing hope of this he called his son Noah.
- In the case of Noah, scripture no longer mentions, as before, only one son; it gives us the names of the three sons of Noah, to show that from henceforth the one line was to divide into three, and they were to become the founders of human history.

Genesis 6:1-22

- The long continuance of life was absolutely necessary for the earth to be rapidly populated. Lamech died only five years before the Flood, and his father Methuselah, the longest lived man, in the year of the Flood.
- But, on the other hand, it was possible to pervert this long duration of life to equally evil purposes. The corruption of mankind reached its highest point when even the difference between the Sethites and the Cainites became obliterated by intermarriages between the two parties from sensual motives.
- The "nephilim" were not angel-man hybrids, but were "men of violence" or "tyrants." It was a period of violence, lust, and universal unbelief of the promise. With the virtual extinction of the Sethite faith and worship, no further hope remained, and that generation deserved to be completely swept away in judgment.
- When we read that God repented, it is merely a concession to our human way of speaking. It is the sorrow of divine love over the sins of

man. "Strive" means "dwell with man," "bear rule," or "preside." Mankind had become completely sensual, but they were given 120 years while the long suffering of God waited (1 Peter 3:20).

- Noah was spiritually upright and genuine. His heart had a single aim -- to walk with God. The statement that Noah found grace is like the sun bursting forth in a sky lowering for the storm.
- The building of the ark commenced when Noah was 480 years old; that is, before any of his three sons had been born. In fact, it was started 20 years before the birth of Shem. The great faith of Noah appeared in the building of the ark in the midst of a scoffing and unbelieving generation, and in the construction of it before he had born any children!
- God gave Noah a specific pattern of dimensions and of materials, and he was faithful in the execution of his duties. Noah preaching righteousness, warning of the judgment to come, and exhibiting his faith by his practice in providing an ark of refuge are all wonderful facts that stand out in that period (Hebrews 11:7).

Genesis 7:1-8:14

- There is a grandeur and majestic simplicity about the scriptural account of the Flood. Throughout the Old Testament the event is referred to only twice -- each time in the grave, brief language that befits its solemnity (Psalm 29:10; Isaiah 54:9-10).
- There was a solemn pause of seven days before the floodgates were opened. If we calculate the season according to the beginning of the Hebrew civil year, it would have occurred about the middle or end of November.
- The narrative of the Flood is vivid and forceful, but entirely wanting in the sort of description to which a modern historian would devote their writing. At the end of the 150 days, there is a touching mention of God remembering Noah.
- On the 17th day of the seventh month, exactly five months after Noah had entered it, the ark rested upon Mount Ararat, but not necessarily upon the highest peak.
- The remembrance of the Flood has been preserved in the traditions of so many nations, so widely separated, and so independent of each other, that it is impossible to doubt that they have all derived from the same original source. It is furthermore remarkable how all historical investigations, when completed and correctly applied, confirm the exactness of what is recorded in the Bible.