

GENESIS

Lesson 1

Introduction Part 1

This lesson begins what is perhaps the most challenging study of one book of the Bible in Daniel222.com, the book of Genesis. The book of beginnings, Genesis, is the foundation for all that is in the Bible. It is God telling us how everything came about and revealing for the first time his eternal plan for us through his only son Jesus. We are introduced to the Trinity, God the father, Jesus our Savior, and the Holy Spirit our teacher, as well as our adversary - Satan. The book is foundational in that if you don't believe or accept Genesis 1:1, then all of scripture must simply be fiction written by man.

The sources of information that I drew upon for this study are unlike anything that I have previously employed. Specifically, I have incorporated all that I have learned through years of study—and especially my dissertation research, which led to earning a PhD in Archaeology and Biblical History. My dissertation focused on establishing the reality of Abraham as an actual, physical, person who interacted with God during the Middle Bronze Age. This study is the direct result of spending long hours over nine years reading, researching, and re-reading the book of Genesis. Additionally, the study also incorporates my experience traveling throughout the Holy Land—including Jordan—multiple times, both as a tour member and as a guide. Furthermore, my experiences excavating Tall el-Hammam, the site of biblical Sodom, are reflected in the lesson materials.

My approach to this study integrates years of PhD research, physical travel, and excavation, as well as on-going research at Veritas University, Trinity Southwest, on the destruction of Sodom. I have endeavored to provide information regarding life in the Middle Bronze Age that will help set the context for much of the book of Genesis, as well as to provide insight into the world of biblical criticism, and why the current and ongoing excavations at Tall el-Hammam are so important as Bible critics are challenged with real, hard, evidence.

So let's begin this study by reading the verses below. Jot down what they tell us about God and the world around us.

1. Psalm 19:7-8
2. Ecclesiastes 3:11
3. Colossians 1:16
4. Romans 1:18-20
5. 2 Corinthians 10:5a
6. 1 Peter 3:15

From the above verses, it is clear that God, through his only son Jesus, created everything. And while mankind may not accept what the Bible says about God and his creation, they cannot ignore creation itself, and what it reveals to them about

God and his invisible qualities and the reality of his existence. We will discuss this aspect further when we study Genesis Chapters One and Two, and the Creation.

We live in a world today where biblical criticism is on the increase. We are surrounded by all types of well-educated and respected people, speaking what appears to be wisdom about scripture. Seeking to deny its accuracy, its historicity, its foundation to our faith as God's Holy word, they approach the biblical text with a form of godliness, that of an informed academic, possessing a religious view that denies the existence and of power of God. Paul warned us of this in 2 Timothy 3:5, "having a form of godliness but denying its power. Have nothing to do with such people." Furthermore, 1 Peter 3:15 makes it clear that we are to have a reason for our faith and our hope—one that we can share with others in gentleness and respect. My prayer is that through this study, you will be better equipped to know Jesus more deeply so that you can join in the defense of our faith, as we see the day of Jesus' return approaching

God's Holy Word is our only true source. It represents the only truths that God desires to reveal to us, and it tells us that there is a mystery He will reveal to the lost world in His own timing. See Revelation 10:7 and Romans 14:11. Without God's Word, it would be difficult, if not impossible, to know God and His plan to save us. This means that every word of scripture has immeasurable value; we should not overlook or take casually a single word in the Bible, as it all comes from God. "All scripture is God-breathed, and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting, and training in righteousness." (2 Timothy 3:16)

Genesis is a study of the book of "beginnings." It is also a book of answers to questions such as: What did God intend when He created man? What is man's purpose? What is the meaning behind creation? How did we get from there to here, and how do we know where we're going?

Man was not present when God created the heavens and the earth, so we don't have any eye-witness accounts except that which God provides us in Genesis. We can try to imagine, to invent, and to theorize what happened—and many have—but the reality is that only God knows how creation came about; so we must trust His Holy Word, the biblical text. We need to understand that what is contained in the Genesis text is what God wants us to know. We should also understand that Genesis is not an historical narrative, or a genealogical record; rather, it is the beginning of God's eternal plan for mankind and not simply the story of creation as we see and understand it. Genesis represents a book of beginnings including the beginning of mankind, the presence of evil and its effect on the earth and mankind, and the beginning of God's plan to redeem His lost creation for all eternity.

Read the following and note what each text reveals to us.

7. John 17:24

8. Ephesians 1:4

9. 1 Peter 1:20

As we see from the above verses, God knew, before He created anything, how it would turn out. He had, and has, an eternal purpose for all that He has created—not simply for this current earth, but for all of eternity. This was all known to God before He created anything. "See, I will create new heavens and a new earth. The former things will not be

remembered, nor will they come to mind." (Isaiah 65:17) "Then I saw 'a new heaven and a new earth,' for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and there was no longer any sea. I saw the Holy City, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride beautifully dressed for her husband." (Revelation 21:1-2) We have an eternal destination with God; we have a new creation coming that will be our permanent, eternal home. This current creation is temporary until God's complete plan of salvation is revealed to everyone.

In the next lesson, we will briefly examine the text of Genesis, that is the biblical text, its source (i.e., who wrote the book under God's inspired leadership), and how it has been handed down over the centuries to us today. We will also examine some of the biblical criticism of the text, in layman's terms.

I continue to pray that God will reveal His triune being to you more fully as you faithfully study the book of Genesis with us. I am praying as well that this study will give you an eternal perspective and that your faith will grow deeper as you come to understand more about God, His creation, and His eternal plan.

In Christ,

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