

A Survey of the Bible

"Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path" Psalm 119:105

Lesson 2

The Patriarchs: Adam to Moses

The Book of Genesis

The Bible is a volume filled with historical events but is not a book of history. The theme of the Bible is God's redemption of man through Jesus. This theme is introduced in the first chapters of this inspired volume and is developed, in general form, from Adam to Moses.

Creation.

"In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth" is the grand introductory verse of the Bible. There is no defense of God's existence, just a declaration of his creative power. Beginning with this verse man is told that God is in control and that man is created in his image (Gen. 1:26,27).

Genesis affirms that God created the world out of nothing (Gen. 1, s.a. Heb. 1:1-3). In six days God created the world. Not only did God create the earth and all that is in it (Ex. 20:11), he also instituted what we call the laws of science. [It is no surprise that creation is the model of origins most consistent with the laws of science]. God created the world to multiply after their own kind (Gen. 1:11,12). This is the law of biogenesis and is one of the natural truths which supports creation and rejects the general theory of evolution.

The crowning of God's creation was mankind, male and female (Gen. 1:26,27). In Genesis 2 we learn that God created man and had him seek for a helper meet for him among the animals. When no suitable helper was found he formed woman out of man (Gen. 2:16-22; 1 Cor. 11:8,9). Mankind is unique among all creation. Humanity was created in the image of God (1:26,27). This is said of no other created being. It is also noteworthy that God's redemptive acts center upon humanity. God views us differently than the rest of creation.

Man's Fall.

When God created Adam and Eve he put them in the garden of Eden. They were given a task, were

provided the most blessed environment possible, and were given simple instructions. Adam and Eve could eat of any tree of the garden but one, the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.

In Genesis 3 the inspired record introduces our foe, Satan, in the guise of the serpent. Satan beguiled Eve and she ate the forbidden fruit. She gave it to

Adam and he also ate. In this account there are interesting parallels to our temptations, but the bottom line is that Adam and Eve disobeyed God. They sinned against their loving Creator and were the first to see his justice and hear of his mercy.

Because of their disobedience they were cast from the perfect environment

God provided for them. They were separated from the tree of life and had to endure hardships that they would not have endured had they remained obedient. Woman's desire would be to her husband and she would have pain in child birth. Man would reap by the sweat of his brow. Adam and Eve chose to disobey God and had to endure the consequences of their choice. The same is true of all mankind. We have a choice to obey or disobey, and either response has an associated consequence: reward or punishment.

Adam and Eve heard the gospel preached for the first time. The gospel message was simple but exhilarating: the seed of woman would crush the head of the serpent. This was a message of victory over the one who had deceived Eve, which led to the sin of Adam also.

Purging the World of Sin.

Sin entered the world through one man, Adam (Rom. 5:12). But, all have sinned (Rom. 3:11,23). The book of Genesis records events of the early

When Adam and Eve sinned God gave them hope. The first messianic prophecy was spoken by God in rebuking Satan for his deception of Eve: "And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your seed and her Seed; he shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise His heel."

(Genesis 3:15 NKJ)

history of the world. These accounts of early man are not always encouraging.

The first family of earth’s history was not free from problems. They experienced the joy of having children, but also endured shame and loss when Cain murdered Abel. Murder marred the first family.

Genesis, in chapters four through six, reveal the increasing wickedness of the early earth. Although righteous Enoch is listed as the seventh from Adam the unrighteous are also listed. *“Then the Lord saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every intent of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually”* (Gen. 6:5).

Because of man’s wickedness God intended to destroy every living thing. Noah, however, found grace (favor) in the sight of God. Noah was charged by God to build an ark. The building of the ark, the flood which purged the earth of evil, and the deliverance of the righteous is recorded in Genesis 6-9. Yet again we are reminded that disobedience (evil) brings Gods wrath but obedience brings great reward.

The events of Genesis 6-9 are verified by comments of other inspired writers and the Lord himself (Matt. 24:37-39; 1 Pet. 3:18-22). These events have also been supported by modern scientific investigation. (See Morris).

Adam	Abraham	Moses
[1656 years] Flood		Law Given
c. 4000 B.C.		1445 B.C.

Man’s failure to respond properly to God’s instruction did not end with the flood. Man continued to make decisions to follow their own will rather than God’s. This is seen in the attempt to build a tower into heaven rather than fill, populate, the earth (Gen. 11). God, however, prevailed again. God confused the languages of man and spread them throughout the earth. Genesis 10 reveals the distribution of humanity. Note the names familiar to you through your study of ancient history. This is yet another evidence of the Bible’s inspiration: the consistency of the Biblical record with known historical fact.

Following man’s spread throughout the world the Bible narrows its focus to Abraham and his family. This focus is reflective of the purpose of the inspired text: revealing God’s plan to redeem man and preparing man for this redemption.

Abraham to Moses.

Abraham lived in the ancient city of Ur when God called him. After leaving Ur and settling in Haran for a time, God called him again. With this call God gave the second promise to bless man. *“Get out of your country, from your family and from your father's house, to a land that I will show you. I will make you a great nation; I will bless you and make your name great; and you shall be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you, and I will curse him who curses you; and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed”* (Genesis 12:1-3 NKJ). This ‘seed’ promise was fulfilled through Jesus of Nazareth (Galatians 3:15,16).

Abraham obeyed God. He left his home for a land he had never seen but which God promised would be his. This land was the land of Palestine, a large part of which is occupied by modern day Israel.

Abraham became a sojourner in this land (compare Hebrews 11:8-10). He also went to Egypt for a time because of a famine in Palestine. Upon his return to Palestine he lived in the region west of the Dead Sea.

Not only had God promised Abraham a land area but he also promised that a nation would come from him. But Sarah, his wife and half-sister, was not able to conceive. Consistent with the custom of their day Sarah gave her handmaid to Abraham to have a child by her (Gen. 16:1-4). Her handmaid, Hagar, conceived and gave birth to Ishmael. Even though God blessed Ishmael, God said he was not the promised seed.

Finally, when Sarah was about 90 years of age, God told Abraham that she would conceive and bear a son. God fulfilled his promise and Sarah became a new mother at 90 years of age! **Isaac** was the promised seed.

Isaac, after the death of his mother Sarah, married Rebekah. They had two sons, twins, named Esau and Jacob. In time, **Jacob** bought Esau’s birthright and obtained Esau’s blessing as the firstborn. This was of God’s choosing. God had chosen to continue the promise given to Abraham through Jacob.

Because of Esau’s anger at Jacob, Jacob was sent to the home of his mother to obtain a wife. When he arrived in Mesopotamia, in the area of Haran, he met and fell in love with Rachel. Jacob worked seven years to have the right to marry Rachel. But, because

of custom, Jacob woke up the morning following the marriage ‘ceremony’ to find he was married to Rachel’s older sister Leah! [The use of veils hid Leah’s identity from Jacob]. His father-in-law, Laban, agreed that for seven more years’ work he could marry Rachel. They made the agreement but the marriage to Rachel was allowed one week later. Laban also gave his daughters their maids to assist them in their labors. After the second seven year period Jacob made an agreement to work for another seven years. He was to receive flocks and herds in exchange for his labor. Laban was agreeable because God had blessed him because of Jacob.

While he was working for Laban, Jacob was blessed with a large family. Remember, Jacob had two wives. Leah was able to conceive, but Rachel was not. Rachel gave her maid Bilhah to Jacob to have children for her. When Bilhah bore children Leah was not able to conceive so she gave her handmaid Zilpah to bear children on her behalf. Rachel was finally able to conceive and bore **Joseph**.

Jacob took his family, servants, flocks, and herds from Mesopotamia under circumstances that angered Laban. After settling things with Laban, who pursued Jacob, and appeasing Esau who came out to meet him [Esau was no longer angry at Jacob and had a large and prosperous family himself] Jacob lived from place to place in Palestine. After some struggles at Shechem Jacob eventually took his family to Hebron, west of the Dead Sea, where Abraham and Isaac had a home. On their way Rachel died giving birth to Benjamin.

Jacob’s family was not free from problems. One problem revolved around Joseph. Jacob preferred Joseph above his other sons. This, combined with Joseph’s dreams of his father and brothers bowing to him [in figurative dreams], angered his brothers. When they had opportunity they sold Joseph into slavery. Joseph eventually found himself in Egypt serving in the house of Potiphar.

Joseph was blessed by the Lord but was plagued by Potiphar’s wife. She continually sought an opportunity for immoral relations. She was refused by Joseph and then accused him of improper behavior. Joseph was imprisoned. While in prison God again blessed him. He interpreted the dreams of Pharaoh’s [the king of Egypt] baker and butler. His interpretations were true. Later, when Pharaoh had

troubling dreams the butler remembered Joseph. Joseph informed Pharaoh that God was revealing to him that there would be seven years of plenty followed with seven years of famine. Pharaoh placed Joseph second to himself in order to prepare for the seven years of famine.

When the famine came all of Egypt and the surrounding countries, including Palestine, suffered. Joseph’s preparations brought prosperity to Pharaoh but also fed the nation and those who went to Egypt to trade. Eventually, Joseph’s brothers traveled to Egypt for food. They bowed before Joseph just as Joseph had dreamed. On a later visit Joseph revealed his identity and with Pharaoh’s blessings obtained for his family a place to live in Egypt and the necessary provisions.

Israel’s (Jacob) move to Egypt began the 430 year period of the Israelite sojourn in Egypt. Joseph was eventually forgotten and a later Pharaoh made slaves of the Israelites. Three hundred and fifty years after Israel came to Egypt a boy was born to Amram and Jochabed of the tribe (family) of Levi. This boy was raised in the house of Pharaoh, trained in the wisdom of Egypt, but became God’s deliverer for the nation of Israel. Israel began its Egyptian sojourn with 75 souls and left 430 years later as a nation of millions. They entered with Pharaoh’s blessing and gratitude but departed a despised nation of slaves.

In all these events God was continuing his work to fulfill his promise to Abraham. He was building a great nation, preparing to give them the land of promise, and continued to prepare them for the coming of their Savior - Jesus of Nazareth.

The Promised Messiah

Gen 3:15

From the seed of woman, to crush Satan.

Gen 12:1-3

From Abraham’s seed, to bless all nations.

Gen. 49:10

Of the tribe of Judah, to rule.

Deut. 18:18

Like Moses, to him all must hear and hearken.

Jesus fulfilled all these prophecies. If he missed one he could not be the Christ, the Son of God.

Redeemed!

Adam and Eve learned a valuable lesson: sin has consequences. God gave them the perfect life in the perfect environment. His instructions to them were simple. But, Adam and Eve both rejected God's instruction and rebelled against him. It was not an open, flagrant, blasphemous rebellion. Their rebellion took the form of simple disobedience. They did not follow God's instruction. The consequence? They forfeited the perfect life in the perfect environment for themselves and for all to follow. The woman had unique consequences as did the man (Gen. 3:16-19), but all humanity suffered, and suffers, as a result of their sin. No man has lived in that perfect state on earth since Adam and Eve.

We also learn that God did not desire this separation and had already made preparations to offer forgiveness (Titus 1:2; Eph. 3:10,11). Forgiveness would come, has come, through Jesus. The Old Testament tells of the consequences of sin and our need for salvation.

Cain and Abel made offerings to the Lord. Why? Because of sin. In the book of Leviticus the need for sacrifice is described more fully. In order to be forgiven God told Israel to make a sacrifice. Can you imagine the graphic reminder of sin's consequences when a lamb died because of that person's sin? Sacrifice taught the people that forgiveness comes only through blood (See Heb. 9:22). Of course, we must understand that the blood of bulls and goats could [can] not forgive sin (Heb. 10:1-4). These sacrifices were types of the ultimate sacrifice, the sacrifice of Jesus. It is only by the blood of our perfect Lord that our sins can be forgiven. He is our sacrifice - see Heb. 9:22-28; 1 Pet. 1:16-19; Matt. 26:28.

God's promise of salvation always depended upon the sacrifice of Jesus. To be true to God the ancient people had to listen to God and obey. The Jews received a law from God through Moses. They were required to obey this law. Now, all men are subject to the new law given through Jesus (Heb. 9:14). Salvation, forgiveness of sins, depends upon our obedience to the law of Christ.

Do you want to be redeemed, forgiven of your sins? Read Acts 2:22-42. God has made forgiveness possible for you. Will you listen to him and obey?

For Further Study

Bert Thompson & Wayne Jackson, A Study Course in Christian Evidences, (Montgomery, AL: Apologetics Press, 1992).

Homer Hailey, From Creation to the Day of Eternity, (Las Vegas, NV: Nevada Publications, 1982).

A Survey of the Bible is written by Greg Weston
Go to www.tftw.org for Chinese and Spanish studies.

Getting Geographically Acquainted. Locate the following on a map and describe their location.

Ur.

Haran.

Hebron.

Tigris River.

Euphrates River.

Dead Sea.

Nile River.

Mount Sinai.

Matching. Match the person to the event.

1. Adam ____ He built an ark.
2. Eve ____ He went to jail for his purity.
3. Cain ____ He worked seven years for his wife.
4. Noah ____ She became a mother at 90!
5. Abraham ____ He was born of Israelites raised by Egyptians.
6. Sarah ____ He was the first murderer.
7. Isaac ____ The mother of Esau and Jacob.
8. Rebecca ____ His brother left single, returned with a large family and great wealth.
9. Esau ____ Satan beguiled her and sin came.
10. Jacob ____ He left his home for a land of promise.
11. Joseph ____ He was Abraham's son of promise.
12. Moses ____ He was created in God's image.

God is faithful! He made a promise to Abraham that Palestine would belong to Abraham's descendants. Our next lesson will note the fulfillment of that promise.