

NOTES AND QUESTIONS ON THE BOOK OF GENESIS

CHAPTERS ONE AND TWO - THE CREATION

The book of Genesis is quoted in all but 5 New Testament books and all but 3 Old Testament books. The rest of the Bible is based upon it. If we do not know, understand and believe the whole of Genesis then what sense is the rest of the Bible going to make?

'Genesis' means 'beginning' from the opening words of the book. It describes the beginning of creation, man, sin, salvation, separate nations, and finally one family into whose lives God steps again and again for much the same reasons as He steps into ours.

It was written by Moses according to Jewish tradition confirmed by Jesus. (Jn.5:45-47; Lk.24:27,44) In that case it would date from about 1400BC. There are many indications in the way Genesis is structured that Moses had written records to work from as well as oral traditions. The written records may have been very ancient, even pre-flood. The important thing to understand is that the Holy Spirit guided Moses and ensured the accuracy of his editing. (II Tim.3:16) There are still many unanswered questions about Genesis but no contradictions or mistakes, even from a scientific point of view.

The central theme of Genesis is Jesus Christ. (Lk.24:27)

The book of Genesis has been more criticised than any other book in the whole Bible presumably because it is so foundational to the rest of scripture.

Before starting this study read the first two chapters of Genesis over several times, asking God to teach you what you have never seen previously. If you have time, read right through the whole book as if you were reading a novel to get a feel of the stories as a whole. The more you read, the more you will get out of this course.

It is usually a worthwhile exercise to divide a passage into its natural sections. Here they might be as follows:- 1:1,2; 1:3-23; 1:24-31; 2:1-3; 2:4-9; 2:10-17; 2:18-25.

Section 1 - 1:1,2

Q.1 The Hebrew word for God, Elohim, is in the plural, the word for created, bara, is in the singular. What does that tell us, right from the beginning of the Bible, about the nature of God? Try to put verse 2 into your own words to describe what picture it produces in your mind.

Section 2 - 1:3-23

Q.2 What happened on each day of creation? Does the order of events make good sense?

Q.3 Which words and phrases are used repeatedly in chapter one to describe God's role in creation? How does each idea tell us something important about the difference it should make in our lives to have the Creator living within us?

Q.4 What difficulties do people commonly have in accepting the account of creation as literal history? How does the New Testament teach us these problems can be handled not only to resolve the problems but to make positive and life changing discoveries? (Jn.16:13,14; Heb.11:3; James 1:5)

Q.5 What difference would it make to our understanding of the New Testament if Genesis 1-11 were not literally true?

Q.6 How did the New Testament Christians use the creation account to:-

- (a) preach the gospel to those who knew nothing of the Old Testament? (Acts 14:15; 17:24; Rom.1:20,25)
- (b) teach Christians how to live the Christian life? (Eph.4:24; Col.3:10; I Pet.4:19)
- (c) teach what the purpose of life is? (Eph.2:10; 3:9; Rev.4:11)
- (d) teach the meaning of marriage? (Mark 10:6; I Cor.11:9; I Tim.4:3,4)
- (e) explain who Jesus Christ is? (Jn.1:1-3; Col.1:16; I Cor.8:6; Rev.3:14)
- (f) warn about the end of the world? (Mk.13:19; II Pet.3:4; Rev.10:6)

Q.7 What comparisons can we draw between God's work in creation and His work in salvation?

Section 3 - 1:24-31

Q.8 What happened on the sixth day of creation? How was it different from the previous days? Is man just another animal? What do you suppose it meant to be in the image of God?

Q.9 What was God's plan for man? What special promises did He make to Adam and Eve? How was the original plan similar to the one Jesus gave to Christians in Matt.28:18-20

Section 4 - 2:1-3

Q.10 What did God do on the seventh day? Did He do nothing? What was He teaching us for the future by His example? (Exod.20:9-11) Are we to do nothing one day a week? (Gal:4:10; Heb.3:11,18,19; 4:1-11)

Section 5 - 2:4-9

Q.11 What different aspects of man's lifestyle, as God first intended it to be, are described in Genesis 2? How can this account of the creation of man be reconciled with that in chapter one?

Q.12 Where are the two trees of 2:9 referred to elsewhere in the Bible? What were they intended to teach Adam and Eve then and us now? (Ezek.47:12; Rev.22:2) What responsibility did God give man? How do we still have the same responsibility?

Section 6 - 2:10-17

Q.13 Would you expect to be able to identify the Garden of Eden on a map today? What did God warn man would be the consequence of eating the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil? Did it actually happen when they disobeyed? Why would it be a problem to know right and wrong as long as they chose right?

Section 7 - 2:18-24

Q.14 What does this passage show us about the intelligence of the first man? Was he an ignorant cave man?

Q.15 What need did God create even in a perfect man according to verse 18? In what different ways can this need be met?

Q.16 The word 'rib' literally means 'side'. What does this tell us about the nature of the relationship between husband and wife? What according to this section are the ingredients of a good marriage? What are the causes of marriage breakdown?