

## **"WALK THRU THE BIBLE: GENESIS."**

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**First Christian Reformed Church, Lynden, WA**

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**Text for Sermon: Genesis 1:1-4**

### **Introduction:**

Genesis is the inspired revelation of God to His people. As God's revelation it is authoritative. We are not dealing with just any document from antiquity. Perhaps more than any other book in the Bible this one has been maligned and discredited and mocked and completely dismissed by most academic elites.

Genesis was written by Moses around 1500BC to recount the story of God's people before they go into the Promised Land. The God who created the universe and all that is in it, is the God who created Israel. They see what kind of God has created them, called them into existence, how powerful His Word is.

If creation all around us displays the glory of God (Psalm 19), then how much more the account of the origin of that creation in Genesis.

Israel is reminded everything all the pagan nations around them worship, God made. Sun, moon, stars, animals, rivers, mountains. And God destroyed all the gods of Egypt and Canaan. How foolish to worship anyone or anything but God. God is the creator, sustainer, Lawgiver and redeemer.

Genesis begins with the most profound statement ever written and perhaps the most offensive statement in the Bible, "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth." This marks the absolute beginning of everything. This becomes the foundation for understanding everything else in the Bible. Since everything exists by God, everything exists for Him, for His glory.

Genesis doesn't begin with Adam and Eve, it begins with God. Genesis (which means beginnings) begins God's Story, His Story. God is the author of creation and of the Bible and He is the hero of every story.

Everything that is, is only because of the sovereign creative act of God. From beginning to end Genesis emphasizes God's sovereign majesty and authority over all creation and over all history and over all peoples. God is the author, the subject, the actor.

### **Genesis is the book of beginnings.**

As our text indicates, this is the book of beginnings. We have the beginning of the world, the beginning of man, the beginning of gender as male and female, the beginning of marriage, the beginning of parenting, the beginning of work, the beginning of cities and civilization, the beginning of nations, the beginning of the Hebrew race and the nation of

Israel. It is the beginning of music, love, sex, sin, death, murder, war, deception, greed, abuse, all immorality. Everything starts here. Genesis is foundational for understanding the rest of the Bible. If you get this book wrong, there will be a great deal wrong later on.

Genesis shows us why the headlines are what they are, why our natures are the way they are, why we struggle with conflicts in all our relationships. Genesis gives us the framework for understand ourselves and our world.

Genesis is the beginning of theology/doctrinal truth. Genesis is foundational for explaining foundational theological terms such as the federal headship of Adam, total depravity, justification by faith, and the providence of God.

***Genesis divides very neatly into two parts.*** The first eleven chapters give a very fast paced narrative of the beginning of the world, creation, fall, flood and tower of Babel. This part covers twenty generations of people. It almost seems like we are in rush to get to Abraham. As a result the first 11 chapters focus on just a few highlighted details.

Many so called scholars dismiss the first eleven chapters as poetry or myth. Many who claim to be Christian have joined with unbelievers in espousing these views.

Genesis 1-11 is not poetry, though it has some poetic elements. If you want to read a poetic account of creation in the Bible read Psalm 104 or some chapters in Job. Hebrew poetry has very definite characteristics and these elements are not found in the early chapters of Genesis.

As for myth, this is history, human history, His Story. The events in Genesis actually took place. God revealed them to us.

**Psalm 103:7** He made known his ways to Moses, his acts to the people of Israel.

I believe in six 24 hour days of creation and a young earth, created around 4,000 BC. You don't have to tell me all the objections to this view, I have heard them and used to be unsettled by some of them, but I have discovered that just because I don't know all the answers doesn't mean God's Word isn't true. I am comfortable casting my lot with the simple, straightforward understanding of Genesis 1-11. I hold this view in part because of ***the three "D"s. Days, dust and death.***

***Days.*** The days are described the way we normally think of days, evening and morning. The same word that is used for Sabbath day in Exodus 20:11, is used in Genesis. Day means day.

***Dust.*** Adam and Eve were the first humans, created by God. They were not the first spiritual humans who evolved.

***Death.*** Death entered the world through sin. There were not thousands or millions of years of death making fossils and oil. There was no death before the fall. Pagans have

no good answer for the problem of evil and sin and death, apart from the Biblical spiritual answer.

Many evangelical scholars are embarrassed by Genesis and therefore apologetic about it, trying to find ways to make it line up with post-modern anti-supernatural scientific theories about the origins to things.

When you take God out of the equation, things get really creative, and actually take more faith than just believing God did it. Most Christian schools, high school and college have long ago abandoned a Christian understanding of Genesis.

Those who have rejected God's revelation and chose spiritual blindness worship chance as the creator, beasts as their ancestors and fallen mankind as the flower and pinnacle of evolution.

Evolution says nothing is special as mankind is not made in the image of God and worth dying for. Evolution says nothing exists for a purpose or a reason, nothing glorifies God.

### **Genesis 12-50**

Then the rest of Genesis from 12 to 50 slows the pace down considerably as we move from the beginning of everything to the beginning of the people of God, the nation of Israel. Here we have the stories of just four generations of God's people, the patriarchal narratives of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob (who is renamed Israel), and Joseph, concluding with the family of Jacob/Israel migrating to Egypt.

This is the beginning of God's redemptive purpose for that world.

Throughout Scripture, God is a covenant making God, and He begins making them with His people in Genesis. He makes a covenant with Noah (9:8-17), and through him, with all mankind. He makes a covenant with Abraham (12:2-7; 15:1-21; 17:3-8), which He renews with Isaac (26:3-5), and again with Jacob (28:13-15).

The covenants are the rebar of the world, the foundations on which history is built and moves forward.

They remind us of the unchanging nature of our covenant-making and covenant-keeping God.

Genesis also establishes God's pattern of what we might call "election and a twist." God calls out Abraham from Ur of the Chaldees. This shows God's sovereign authority to recruit His children from the children of idolaters. But then Genesis also shows God's sovereign authority to recruit His heirs from unlikely places among His own children—Isaac, not Ishmael, Jacob, not Esau, Joseph, not Reuben, but then Judah, not Joseph. This pattern started at the very beginning—Abel, not Cain, and then Seth instead of Cain. Another riff on this same kind of pattern is His

way—which begins in Genesis—of choosing barren women in order to accomplish this. Remember Sarah.

### ***What about the raw parts of Scripture?***

What do we do with the record of Cain murdering his brother, the sexual sin of the men of Sodom and Gomorrah, Abraham's sin with Hagar, Judah's sin with his prostitute-pretending daughter-in-law, Simeon and Levi's cruel treatment of the men of Shechem, the betrayal of Joseph's brothers or the attempt of Potiphar's wife to lure Joseph into her bed, you don't have to move out of the first book of the Bible to come across the “raw parts of Scripture.”

The Bible is not a book for the faint of heart. But you know that already. The central message of the Bible is the most raw, the murder of the Son of God, who was torturously beaten, scourged and nailed to a tree by men in order to bleed to death for the raw sins of His people.

God commands that we diligently teach all of God's Word to our children, in age appropriate ways. Culture today necessitates we teach all of God's Word. All the sin is at our doorstep.

With our culture glorying in sexual immorality, it is incumbent on us to instruct our children about the dangers of it and what they are to avoid. Our own hearts need to face and own the truth of our own depravity, that this is my nature. There but for the grace of God go I.

Genesis ends with the exodus to Egypt.

This exodus is all part of God's plan and purpose. He creates the problem and then the solution. God always delivers His people, which means He always has to get them into a jam first. God always tells death and resurrection stories.

Again we see God's sovereignty and authority as He rules over evil and takes what men mean for evil and turn it to a far greater good. This is the pattern of God's redemptive activity.

God takes Israel out of the Promised Land to wait for the sins of the Canaanites to fill us, and to protect Israel from intermingling and intermarrying with the idolatrous nations. Furthermore, God wanted to raise up a great nation to take possession of the land in His time.

### **Jesus in Genesis:**

Every page of the Bible provides points to Jesus, including every page of Genesis.

***Jesus is in the beginning, as the Word.***

**John 1:1-4** 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. 4 In him was life, and the life was the light of men. 5 The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.

**Colossians 1:16-17** For by him all things were created, in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities—all things were created through him and for him. 17 And he is before all things, and in him all things hold together.

**Hebrews 1:1-3** Long ago, at many times and in many ways, God spoke to our fathers by the prophets, 2 but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed the heir of all things, through whom also he created the world. 3 He is the radiance of the glory of God and the exact imprint of his nature, and he upholds the universe by the word of his power.

*Jesus is promised as the deliverer and redeemer in Genesis 3.*

God makes the promise of all promises. All the promises of God lead back to the first promise. He immediately announces His plan for the redemption of mankind.

**Genesis 3:15** I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and her offspring; he shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise his heel.”

This verse sets in motion the longest running war in human history, the perpetual battle between the seed of the serpent and the seed of the woman.

**Ephesians 6:12** For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers over this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places.

*Jesus is the promised seed of Abraham who comes to fulfill the covenant and bless all the families of the earth.*

**Genesis 12:2-3** I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless you and make your name great, so that you will be a blessing. 3 I will bless those who bless you, and him who dishonors you I will curse, and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed.”

**Genesis 15:6** Abraham believed the Lord, and he counted it to him as righteousness.

We are counted righteous by a holy God not on the basis of our good works by faith in God.

**Romans 4:23-24** The words “it was counted to him” were not written for his sake alone, 24 but for ours also. It will be counted to us who believe in him who raised from the dead Jesus our Lord.

From the very beginning we learn salvation is by faith.

**Matthew 1:1** The book of the genealogy of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham.

Paul says it is the Gospel of Jesus that was preached to Abraham:

**Galatians 3:7-9** Know then that it is those of faith who are the sons of Abraham. 8 And the Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, preached the gospel beforehand to Abraham, saying, "In you shall all the nations be blessed." 9 So then, those who are of faith are blessed along with Abraham, the man of faith.

*Jesus is present in the various theophanies in Genesis.*

Walking in the garden in the cool of the evening.

Genesis 18 when the Lord appeared to Abraham at the oaks of Mamre; and when the Lord appeared to Abraham to sacrifice his son, and then stopped him just before the sacrifice and revealed a substitute ram in the thicket.

Jesus is the focus of all God's redemptive activity, activity that begins in Genesis.

*There are four reasons for reading Genesis with your family.*

*First*, it gives us a right understanding of our place as creatures before the Creator God and it shows how humans are unique in all of God's creation.

*Second*, it gives us a right understanding of our sinfulness and rebellion before a holy God and that we are unique in God's creation deserving death.

*Third*, it show us the grace of God started at the very beginning and everything that follows prepares us for the coming of Eve's son, Jesus. The God who creates everything is also the God who redeems everything.

*Fourth*, if God started it all perfectly, He will end it all perfectly. We worship and put our faith in a triumphant Savior. God will create a new people for His glory.

Genesis tells us that we are created by the same God who created Adam and Eve, we are created in the image of the same God as Adam and Eve. The same promises made to them are made to us. We are adopted into the same covenant family as Abraham, we receive the same blessings promised to Abraham.

**Genesis 12:2-3** I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless you and make your name great, so that you will be a blessing. 3 I will bless those who bless you, and him who dishonors you I will curse, and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed."