



Wednesday Bible Education

Biblical Theology

Lesson 2: Genesis

Review

Questions from last week's lesson:

1. What is biblical theology?
2. What is the Old Testament about?

Answers:

1. Biblical theology is a way of reading the Bible as one whole, unified book revealing the redemptive purpose of God through history. Biblical theology particularly focuses on Jesus Christ through two great epochs: 1) The promise of his coming to the incarnation--Old Testament, and 2) The incarnation to the promise of his return--New Testament. Biblical theology recognizes the flow of history in the Bible as a flow, or progress, of revelation concerning Christ. Biblical theology reads the smaller portions of the Bible in terms of where it is in the timeline of Christ's coming and what it contributes to the progress of revelation. We tend to naturally read and teach the Bible as if it is about us, and biblical theology helps us see the Bible is about Jesus Christ (Luke 24:25-27).
2. The Old Testament is about the promise of the coming Messiah who will be God's anointed Servant to take away the sins of his people and establish his everlasting kingdom of peace where he will dwell with his people. The Old Testament predicts the coming of Christ in three primary forms: 1) Through specific prophecies, 2) Through narration of historical events, and 3) Through symbols and themes.

Introduction

We open the Old Testament to Genesis first. What is the book of Genesis about? Genesis is a book about God from the very first verse. It gives the account of the creation of the universe and the earth in particular. Genesis gives us the origin of mankind and the fall into sin and the need for redemption. Genesis gives us the first promise of a Savior as the "seed of the woman" in Genesis 3:15. This book informs us of God's covenant promise to bless a nation and all families of the earth through them and the promised seed. Genesis also preserves the lineage of the Messiah from Eve to Seth to Noah to Shem to Abraham to Isaac to Jacob to Judah. That is not an exhaustive genealogy, but a highlight list. Genesis

tells about the eternal God creating all things, the origin and purpose of man, and the origin of sin and its consequences. Genesis also begins the revelation of God's plan for the redemption of man and his creation, and testifies to his power and purpose in ordering history to fulfill his promises.

In this lesson we will look at the whole book of Genesis. We will consider the contents of the book, the theological meaning of some of the major events, and the message of Genesis for modern readers. In biblical theology we are looking for what the book reveals about Christ and his kingdom, and what it contributes to major themes of the whole Bible to see how it fits into the big picture of the Bible's main story.

Observation

Genesis is the first book of the Bible, the first book of the Old Testament, and the first book of the Pentateuch (the five books of Moses, or the law). The name Genesis means beginning and this book serves as an introduction to Moses, the Old Testament, and the whole Bible, providing a foundation for understanding them.

In real time, Genesis covers over two thousand years of history. That is more than the rest of the books of the Bible combined. Chapters 1-11 cover nearly 2,000 years, while chapters 12-50 cover nearly 300 years.

A brief outline of Genesis:

1. Chapters 1-11
 1. Creation of the universe and earth and Eden (1)
 2. Creation of man and woman as the imagers of God and given dominion over the earth (2)
 3. The fall into sin and the curses and consequences (3)
 4. The promise of a redeemer in the seed of the woman (3:15)
 5. The populating of the earth and the multiplication of sin (4-5)
 6. God's judgment on the people of the earth through the worldwide flood
 7. The salvation of Noah and his family by the ark (7-8)
 8. God's covenant to not destroy the earth again in the same manner (9)
 9. The table of nations (10)
 10. The gathering at Babel and God's judgment to scatter from Babel by dividing the nations (11)
2. Chapters 12-50
 1. The choosing of Abraham and God's covenant (12:1-3)
 2. The birth of Isaac, the son of promise (21)
 3. The birth of Jacob and Esau (25)
 4. The house of Jacob going down to Egypt (46)
 5. The messianic prophecy over Judah (49:8-12)

6. Death of Jacob followed by the death of Joseph with Israel still in Egypt (49-50)

Interpretation

With the account of creation, God reveals himself to his creation. Throughout the book, God reveals himself in his eternality, power, fierce anger, wrath, mercy, and grace. Genesis teaches the most fundamental problem for man is his sin and the consequences of his sin, being separation from God.

God's faithfulness is revealed through his covenants in Genesis. His covenants come with conditions for certain blessings, but the keeping of the covenant and fulfilling of it is in terms of God alone. Genesis shows us the various failings of the chosen ones to receive God's covenant. They are shown as what they are, fallen sinners. God's covenants do not fail though, because he is faithful and his choice of people is based on his own counsel and purpose rather than any human merit or ability.

Genesis ends with fulfilling prophecy with Israel out of the Promised Land and in Egypt (Genesis 15:13-16). Being a fulfillment of prophecy reveals how God's covenant is not nullified. He promised a particular land to Abraham and his descendants (Genesis 17:7-8). Being the Creator, God has all authority over his own to do with it as he pleases, including the promise of a land for an everlasting possession (Jeremiah 27:5).

By the end of the book, Joseph understood how the events of history, though men are acting out of their sinful and selfish desires and motives, have been authored by God to fulfill his purpose (Genesis 50:20). Neither the actions of his chosen people, nor the actions of his enemies are able to thwart the accomplishment of his promises. Israel will not receive the blessings of God's covenant with Abraham because of their inability to keep anything, but rather through the coming of the seed of the woman and the seed of Abraham, the Lion of Judah (Genesis 49:8-12).

Genesis begins with the creation account and God's kingdom on earth to be ruled by man (Genesis 1:26-29; Psalm 8:6-8). Man (Adam) forfeited that rule by sinning against God (Genesis 3:23-24). After destroying mankind from the earth and saving Noah, God promises his kingdom to come (Genesis 8:20-9:17). God later reveals his kingdom to come through the covenant he made with Abraham (Genesis 12:1-3), including a geographic land and people to be the seat of his mediated kingdom on earth (Genesis 17:2-8; 18:18). The book ends with Abraham's descendants not in the covenant land, but in Egypt. Jacob blesses his sons before his death and blesses Judah with a messianic prophecy of the King (last Adam) and his kingdom (Genesis 49:8-12). This King and kingdom thread runs throughout the rest of the Bible. It is important to note that revelation does progress, but never changes the physical and tangible nature of God's kingdom.

Application

In our first lesson, we asked why the study of theology is important. People often mistakenly think theology is a mere human invention to categorize and divide people. While we must admit that men can and often do manufacture ideas to insert into the Bible, that is not what theology is. Theology most simply is studying what the Bible teaches. It is important because it enables us to read the Bible with understanding. Done rightly, it increases our knowledge of God through his word and guards from importing and inserting our own ideas into Scripture, or being led astray by those who have. Theology also equips us for living the Christian life in the real world.

In this lesson, we are considering the book of Genesis. How does Genesis help us today, or what does this book say to modern readers? The book of Genesis was written thousands of years ago and speaks of time even older. When we read Genesis with an understanding of theology, we find at least 8 important applications for us today.

1. Genesis helps us understand who God is and what he is like. Rather than turning to our own minds or emotions to know who God is and what he is like, we should turn to the record he has given of himself.
2. Genesis helps us understand how we got here and what is wrong with the world. Since man was created, he has pondered the question of his origin and has understood that understanding the history of his origin informs his present and future. Understanding that we are created in God's image teaches us about our identity and purpose.
3. Genesis helps us understand God's great purpose for the world and his faithfulness and power to bring his purpose to fruition. We need to understand that events are neither random nor meaningless. Life has meaning because today is ordained by God to lead to the tomorrow he has also ordained.
4. Genesis humbles us by showing us the failings of the patriarchs. It's easy to give a *tisk, tisk* to Abraham in saying Sarah was his sister, or the sinfulness of taking Hagar. Their failings highlight the mercy of God's grace and we should never think ourselves better than them.
5. Genesis helps us see salvation by the grace and mercy of God apart from human works. God's choice of Noah and Abraham are examples of his unconditional election and amazing grace.
6. Genesis gives us a promise that is thousands of years old: that a Man would be born who would crush Satan and destroy his work. We can trace the fulfilling of the promise through the Bible and time to today. We can look through eyes of faith to the seed of the woman, Jesus Christ, who came and lived a sinless life, died a vicarious death, and rose from the grave in order to reconcile us to God through faith in him.
7. Genesis gives us a much needed introduction to the physical, tangible nature of the kingdom of God. I am referring to the mediatorial kingdom on earth that will be established by Jesus Christ when he returns.

8. Genesis helps give us purpose in life as we understand history is not random, spontaneous events with no connection or purpose. This understanding helped Joseph forgive his brothers for an unthinkable act of evil against him.

Conclusion

We have taken a glimpse at Genesis--the contents, meaning, and message today.

For Next Week:

Biblical theology overview of Exodus

About This Study

This series is a study in biblical theology going book by book through the entire Bible. Each lesson typically covers one book of the Bible, though occasionally covers more than one book when the books are short. This PDF is provided for personal study, small group study, or use in a church class. Unless otherwise noted, all lessons have been prepared by Jeff Short, the pastor of Harmony Baptist Church.

Harmony Baptist Church
3012 W Delmar Ave
Godfrey, IL 62035

618-466-2631

Harmonybaptist3014@gmail.com

www.hbcgodfrey.com

www.facebook.com/HarmonyBaptistGodfrey