

TRUSTING GOD'S, PLAN, PURPOSE, AND DESIGN

"Why Genesis?"

January 14, 2024

INTRO.: It is always such a joy to witness people being baptized and to hear their journey of faith. Where do we find our need of God's forgiveness for our sin? We find it in the Bible, the Word of God. How many people here believe that there is great treasure to be found in the Bible? This includes both the Old Testament and New Testament. Many people and some churches shy away from the Old Testament, but I firmly believe we don't get the full view of God's plan without the Old Testament. From Genesis to Revelation, we have the unfolding of God's plan of redemption for men and women. When I think of the value of Scripture I'm reminded of this story:

Rewards in the Pages of the Bible

In her book *Amazing Grace*, the writer and poet Kathleen Norris shares what she calls "the scariest story" she's ever heard about the Bible. Norris and her husband were visiting a man named Arlo, a rugged, self-made man who was facing terminal cancer. During their visit, Arlo started talking about his grandfather, a sincere Christian. The grandfather gave Arlo and his bride a wedding present: an expensive leather Bible with their names printed in gold lettering. Arlo left it in the box and never opened it. But for months afterwards his grandfather kept asking if he liked the Bible. Arlo told Norris, "The wife had written a nice thank-you note, and we'd thanked him in person, but somehow he couldn't let it lie, he always had to ask about it."

Finally, Arlo grew curious enough to open the Bible. "The joke was on me," Arlo said. "I finally took that Bible out of the closet and I found that granddad had placed a twenty-dollar bill at the beginning of the Book of Genesis, and at the beginning of every book ... over thirteen hundred dollars in all. And he knew I'd never find it."

Source: Kathleen Norris, *Amazing Grace: A Vocabulary of Faith* (Riverhead Books, 1998), p. 95

Now I'm not going to tell you that you will find money in your Bible, but I do know there are eternal riches to be found in these pages. As stated in the first article of the church doctrinal statement: *We believe that the Bible, consisting of the 66 books of the Old and New Testaments, is the verbally inspired Word of God (II Tim. 3:16, II Peter 1:20,21) written by men divinely and uniquely inspired, and is therefore inerrant in the original writings (Matt. 5:18), and that it is the supreme and final authority for faith and daily conduct (II Tim. 3:17).*

This is why we preach verse by verse through books of the Bible. If you are not regularly reading and studying your Bible, I strongly encourage you to do so. This is what the Bible says about itself:

2 Timothy 3:14-17 But as for you, continue in what you have learned and have become convinced of, because you know those from whom you learned it, and how from infancy you have known the holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus. All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.

Hebrews 4:12 For the word of God is living and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow; it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart.

So, as we gather together this morning and begin our new series we look to the Word of God, the Bible. There is great treasure in the Bible, but we don't need some secret map to find it. We need to open the Bible and ask God to teach us. Would you be willing to do that right now, right where you are seated?

Beginning today, we are going to be going through the first 11 chapters of Genesis, the first book in your Bible. Our theme is **Trusting God's Plan, Purpose, and Design**. Whenever we begin preaching/teaching through a book of the Bible we share some background of the book. In particular, this morning we are going to use the word **TARP** to help us remember. The four things are:

TITLE

AUTHOR

REFERENCES

PURPOSE

TITLE

What is the origin of the word, *Genesis*?

Arnold Fruchtenbaum:

HEBREW

The Hebrew names for the books of the Bible are often based upon the first or second word of the of the book itself, and the book of Genesis follows this pattern. The Hebrew name for this book is *Bereishit*, which is derived from the first word in the Hebrew text of Genesis. *Bereishit* means “in the beginning,” and it is now the modern Hebrew name for the book. The original name for the book was *Sepher Maaseh Bereishit*, meaning “The Book of the Act In the Beginning”

GREEK

The Greek name as found in the *Septuagint* (an important Greek translation of the Hebrew Scriptures from second century B.C. that was particularly faithful in rendering the Law) is *Geneseos*, which means Genesis. While the Hebrew name is based simply on the first word of the book, the Greek name means “The Book of Origins” and emphasizes origin and source.

ENGLISH

The English title comes from the Greek *geneseos* and has the same meaning as the Greek translation: “The Book of Origins.”

This is a book of beginnings:

The beginning of time, light, water, animals, human life, marriage, sin, death, shame, judgment, redemption, Israel

How important is this book?

Henry Morris: “The Book of Genesis is probably the most important book ever written.... If the Bible were somehow expurgated of the Book of Genesis (as many people today would prefer), the rest of the Bible would be incomprehensible. It would be like a building without a ground floor, or a bridge with no support.

AUTHOR

Who wrote the book of Genesis? Most conservative scholars believe that Moses is the author of Genesis. He is never mentioned as the author of Genesis in this book or in any other book in the Old or New Testaments.

So, why do we believe that Moses is the author?

*Because he wrote the rest of the Pentateuch (The Book of the Law) which, along with Genesis, includes: Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy. There are several places where Moses is the author of all of the Law.

*Because there are several references to him in the Bible, both in the Old and New Testament, in reference to him and the Law.

The Lord speaking to Joshua:

Joshua 1:7–8 Be strong and very courageous. Be careful to obey all the law my servant Moses gave you; do not turn from it to the right or to the left, that you may be successful wherever you go. **8** Do not let this Book of the Law depart from your mouth; meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do everything written in it. Then you will be prosperous and successful.

King David’s charge to his son, Solomon:

1 Kings 2:1–4 When the time drew near for David to die, he gave a charge to Solomon his son. **2** “I am about to go the way of all the earth,” he said. “So be strong, show yourself a man, **3** and observe what the LORD your God requires: Walk in his ways, and keep his decrees and commands, his laws and requirements, as written in the Law of Moses, so that you may prosper in all you do and wherever you go, **4** and that the LORD may keep his promise to me: ‘If your descendants watch how they live, and if they walk faithfully before me with all their heart and soul, you will never fail to have a man on the throne of Israel.’”

Daniel’s prayer of repentance:

Daniel 9:11–13 All Israel has transgressed your law and turned away, refusing to obey you. “Therefore the curses and sworn judgments written in the Law of Moses, the servant of God, have been poured out on us, because we have sinned against you. **12** You have fulfilled the words spoken against us and against our rulers by bringing upon us great disaster. Under the whole heaven nothing has ever been done like what has been done to Jerusalem. **13** Just as it is written in the Law of Moses, all this disaster has come upon us, yet we have not sought the favor of the LORD our God by turning from our sins and giving attention to your truth.

Jesus speaking to the Sadducees after they questioned Him about marriage in the resurrection:

Mark 12:24–27 Jesus replied, “Are you not in error because you do not know the Scriptures or the power of God? **25** When the dead rise, they will neither marry nor be given in marriage; they will be like the angels in heaven. **26** Now about the dead rising—have you not read in the book of Moses, in the account of the bush, how God said to him, ‘I am the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob’? **27** He is not the God of the dead, but of the living. You are badly mistaken!”

The response of Jesus to those who were amazed at His teachings in the temple:

John 7:16–19 Jesus answered, “My teaching is not my own. It comes from him who sent me. **17** If anyone chooses to do God’s will, he will find out whether my teaching comes from God or whether I speak on my own. **18** He who speaks on his own does so to gain honor for himself, but he who works for the honor of the one who sent him is a man of truth; there is nothing false about him. **19** Has not Moses given you the law? Yet not one of you keeps the law. Why are you trying to kill me?”

Paul’s testimony to King Agrippa:

Acts 26:19–23 “So then, King Agrippa, I was not disobedient to the vision from heaven. **20** First to those in Damascus, then to those in Jerusalem and in all Judea, and to the Gentiles also, I preached that they should repent and turn to God and prove their repentance by their deeds. **21** That is why the Jews seized me in the temple courts and tried to kill me. **22** But I have had God’s help to this very day, and so I stand here and testify to small and great alike. I am saying nothing beyond what the prophets and Moses said would happen— **23** that the Christ would suffer and, as the first to rise from the dead, would proclaim light to his own people and to the Gentiles.”

Jesus referring to the Law of Moses on Road to Emmaus after His resurrection:

Luke 24:27 And beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, he explained to them what was said in all the Scriptures concerning himself.

Jesus appearing to His disciples after His resurrection:

Luke 24:44 He said to them, “This is what I told you while I was still with you: Everything must be fulfilled that is written about me in the Law of Moses, the Prophets and the Psalms.”

As Arnold Fruchtenbaum states: Moses would be mostly a compiler and editor since he wasn’t an eyewitness to the events in Genesis. He is an eyewitness to the remaining four books of the Pentateuch.

Ultimately, God works in and through every person who wrote Scripture so that it is without error.

2 Peter 1:20–21 Above all, you must understand that no prophecy of Scripture came about by the prophet’s own interpretation. **21** For prophecy never had its origin in the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit.

So, we see the title, the author, and the:

REFERENCES

The book of Genesis is mentioned in many places throughout the Bible.

Arnold Fruchtenbaum:

Quoted or cross-referenced more than any of the other books of the Bible. The New Testament quotes or refers to Genesis at least 200 times! There are 165 actual passages from Genesis quoted or referenced in the New Testament; about 100 of those from Genesis 1-11.

Henry Morris: Every one of these eleven chapters is alluded to somewhere in the New Testament, and every one of the New Testament authors refers somewhere in his writings to Genesis 1-11. On at least six different occasions, Jesus Christ Himself quoted from or referred to something or someone in one of these chapters, including specific reference to each of the first seven chapters. Furthermore, in not one of these many instances where the Old or New Testament refers to Genesis is there the slightest evidence that the writers regarded the events or personages as mere myths or allegories. To the contrary, they viewed Genesis as absolutely historical, true, and authoritative.

All these references to this book clearly communicate that this book is extremely important. If Genesis were not true than we couldn’t depend on the testimony of all these other writers of Scripture and even Jesus Christ would be a false witness. We clearly cannot get around the importance of the book of Genesis.

We have spoken of the title, author, references, and we conclude with the:

PURPOSE

Why was Genesis written? This also informs why we would be taking the time to study it.

- *We learn of the character of God: creator, almighty, holy, just, gracious, truth
- *We learn of creation, God's design, and the uniqueness of mankind in the plan, purpose, and design of God
- *We learn of the awful consequences of sin
- *We learn of the prophecy of the deliverer
- *We learn how God chose Israel and of His desire to bless others through Israel
- *We learn about some of God's covenants (binding promises) to His people

SO WHAT:

IKEA DIY Illuminates the Wonder of Creation

What is this? (DIY) It is impossible to do justice to the wonder of the creation of the world and everything in it. You and I have to work hard to make anything. Even when you buy a piece of furniture from IKEA, with all the pieces properly designed and a booklet of instructions, you are driven to the edge of your sanity trying to follow the instructions and assemble what you bought.

All of our DIY projects require mental focus, physical dexterity, and perseverance. We struggle to make things, even though we always start with raw materials, are following instructions, and have collected the appropriate tools. But you and I have never created anything; we do not make something out of nothing. C. S. Lewis said it this way: "Creation, as it is for God, must always remain totally inconceivable to man. We only build. We always have materials to build from."

The truth of creation should fill us with awe, humble us, and drop us to our knees. God, with nothing more than his will and his word literally spoke the universe into existence. Think of huge galaxies and little ants. Think of the body of an elephant and the translucent creatures that swim in the deepest trenches of the sea. Think of huge towering trees and microscopic organisms. Think of the technology of the human eye and the intricate design of your hand (I have thought more about that in the last few months: picture of thumbs up). Genesis 1 and 2 are meant to put you in your place and insert God in his proper place in your heart and life.

Source: Paul David Tripp, "Do You Believe?" (Crossway, 2021), pp. 195-196

- *With all that we have observed this morning how can I ignore the book of Genesis?
- *Will I commit to reading and studying this book?
- *Share one thing I have learned from this book this week with at least one other person
- *Thank God He has chosen to reveal Himself to me through His Word

Next week: Sanctity of Human Life Sunday