

Weekend

1. You may well have come across attack from others on the 'truth' of these early chapters. If so, then make time to re-read them (preferably all at once) to make sure that you see exactly what the Bible says, and if you want to take the matter further, you may find ***Evolution and the Authority of the Bible*** by Nigel Cameron useful (Paternoster Press), or ***When Christians Disagree: Creation and Evolution*** (IVP).
2. It is easy to get the impression that Genesis 1-11 is merely a collection of vivid stories which strangely move our imaginations. Or it is easy to see them simply as brief historical incidents, unparalleled in secular histories, viewed through breaks in the mists of time. They also, however, provide the framework for the unfolding history of God's plan to save mankind from the all-pervading effects of its rebellion. We saw a hint of this in Study 3. See if you can trace the emerging pattern of this plan in God's treatment of Adam and Eve, and the serpent, his attitude to Cain and Abel, and the saving of the human race through Noah's family.

Notes



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Meeting With God Bible Reading Notes

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Week 25: Genesis 1-11 (A detailed study)

This week's study concerns part of Scripture often used today as 'evidence' that the Bible cannot be true. It is handed down to us as primeval history and we must treat it as such. We should be willing to let it instruct us about God and his world; if we have preconceptions picked up from whatever source about its being a fairy tale, let's take another look...

Day 1. How it all began

Genesis 1:1 - 2:3

1. Note down which things were called into being on which day. What are some implications of man's order in creation?

Some interpreters feel that 'a day' here doesn't seem to refer to the 24-hour span as we understand it, but a period of time or epoch.

2. Depending on which translation of the Bible you are using, you'll find several repetitions of 'When God commanded...' or 'And God said...'. Read John's account of the creation (John 1:1 -2) and see how he links God's word with the Lord Jesus, who is God's Word. Paul does the same in Colossians 1:15-17.
3. God made the seventh day to be different; how can we follow his example in the way we spend our 'day of rest'?

We've been reminded today of God's overall authority, and that human beings are superior to anything else in creation. Thank him for the glory and existence of the world, and worship him as creator.

Day 2. The Garden of Eden

Genesis 2:4-25

These few verses give us a picture of life as God intended it to be. Man was the crown of God's creation, the 'apple of his eye'. Notice that he was placed in a garden, where there was much beauty.

1. List the things God provided for Adam to enjoy. What task was he set to do? What was prohibiting him?

2. Man had been given beauty to behold in the creation, a purpose to fulfil, and the company of the beasts. But this was not enough. God wanted him to have a partner, so woman was created, one of his own kind. Try to imagine his joy at this fulfilment of his being!
3. Someone might ask, 'How can there possibly be a God of love when this world is in such a mess?' Is there any way you could use this passage to help them? We shall gain a fuller picture in the next study.

Despite the wretchedness of the human heart now, we may still look upon a beautiful creation. Think of the craggy wonder of some mountain regions, or the sunsets over islands ... Let's thank God today for the splendour of our country's nature reserves. Thank him also that the beauty of love and companionship is a real part of the same world.

Day 3. Man's disobedience and what followed

Genesis 3

In order to understand our human condition now, we have to look back to Genesis 3, and the account of how sin (disobedience to God) entered human experience. Since then, it's as if sin got into the very bloodstream of humanity and has been passed down to every generation since. It's important for us to understand that we don't become sinners when we start to do wrong, but rather that we start to do wrong because we are sinners.

1. Summarize in your own words the origin of sin and separation from God, as though you were explaining it to an unbeliever. Notice how the consequences of sin quickly work themselves out.
2. Look back at the first five verses. Should Eve have parleyed with Satan? What lessons are there here for us to learn about how to deal with temptation?
3. Adam and Eve had broken their fellowship with God forever, but God broke the silence by taking the initiative. How is this typical of the Lord who is the Saviour?
4. Because of this sin, how did God punish Adam and Eve?

To be reminded that we sin because of a built-in weakness does not excuse us at all. Let's be sorry before God in our prayers for the falsehoods in our life. And let's thank him most of all for planning to forgive us, even from this very earliest rebellion.

Day 4. Noah's ark

Genesis 6:9 - 9:17

Sadly all that very many people 'know' of this part of human history is what they remember of a frieze on the wall in their primary school. Today's reading is long, but it's important that we get the whole picture of what is happening. People had

grown so wicked that God became sorry that he had created them. Noah, however, was a godly man and he was to be spared the punishment to befall the rest of the world.

1. What sort of man was Noah?
2. Imagine what people must have thought of the Noah family building a huge ark when there was no sign of any water. We read that Noah did everything God commanded him (verse 22). Would you be willing to follow God's lead, doing right despite the mockery of friends, colleagues, neighbours?
3. What do we learn of God and his attitude to the world from this passage - e.g. his judgment, covenant keeping, and provision for those that live in the right way?
4. Look again at 8:20-22. How did God view Noah's sacrifice? Can this be seen as a development of God's unfolding plan of salvation?

You might like to write out, then learn by heart, verse 22 as a reminder that God is faithful and always keeps his promises. Thank him that we do not live on a dying planet.

We've been reminded again today that sin is a serious matter. God takes it so, and we must too, remembering his complete goodness. Let's ask today that we may become the more willing to serve him whole-heartedly no matter what others think.

Day 5. The tower of Babel

Genesis 11:1-9

This is a well-known story of misplaced human initiative in seeking independence from God, and a disunity which happened as a result. Let's be careful that we don't interpret this as meaning that creativity is wrong - far from it. For God has made us in his image, and he is a creative God. It was the arrogance of the people which was being condemned (verse 4).

1. What does verse 6 suggest about why God took such action? Remembering that these were descendants of Noah, consider how God must have felt about their scheming.

Here we see God confusing people by dividing a single language into many. In another part of Scripture we see God enlightening people of many different tongues (cf. Acts 2:1-13). Both are the result of a supernatural intervention, and remind us that all our words, whether thought or spoken, are given us by him, the source of all communication.

2. How much is language a barrier today, not only between cultures, but also in close relationships? How may such barriers be healed ungloriously?

Let's pray that we will have our thoughts, longings and ambitions cleansed by God, that they will be unified in the purpose of loving and serving God, instead of being a 'babble' of conflicting and selfish interests.