



The Essentials Series

Week 1 – Creation Gen 1:1-2:25; 3:1-3:24

St. George's Episcopal Church

Spring 2015

Genesis 1:1-2:3

- Seven Days of Creation
- Cosmological prologue to Genesis
 - Poetic in style: use of repetition of phrases, very organized and follow set pattern.
 - Symmetrical in structure: Days 1, 2 and 3 match parallel with Days 4, 5, and 6, respectively; where the former are the established realms and the latter the bodies that govern those realms.
- Material vs. Functional Creation (see Walton, “Lost World of Genesis 1”)
 - We moderns seek and assume creation account to be material in nature: where does ‘stuff’ come from. The nothing from something question, ex nihilo (Latin: out of nothing)
 - The ANE stories, including Genesis, although they assume a material creation (ex nihilo) but are more interested in the functional aspect of the creative act. A thing can be brought into being, but it is not truly its own until it is given the right function. This is what God is doing in Genesis 1.
- Creation Story: Who and Why, not How and When
 - God (YHWH) in Genesis vs. gods in other ANE creation accounts
 - Good, not evil or neutral
 - Creates volitionally, not accidentally
 - Creates in peace, not out of cosmic conflict
 - Creates solely by his word
 - Demonstrates authority over all realms and aspects of creation – i.e. he is not just the god of rivers, or mountains, or agriculture, but of everything
 - Seeks relationship with Creation, is not ambivalent
 - Humanity/Creation
 - Created in God’s image, both male and female reflect the divine image; in Gen 2 we see that they function differently, but still are equal image bearers
 - Blessed by God and declared ‘good’, rather than bad or accidental
 - Humanity is appointed by God to be his vice-regents, to rule over creation on God’s behalf. They are to ‘be fruitful and multiply’ to subdue the earth and rule it.

Genesis 2:4 – 2:25

- The ‘second’ creation account
 - If ch 1 is the cosmic side of creation, ch 2 is a retelling ‘on the ground’.
 - Often these are treated, incorrectly, as two creation stories that were mashed together. Not two creations, one creation with two aspects. This is a central feature of narrative storytelling, esp. in ANE.
 - The complementarity of Woman: the only thing not good in creation was Adam’s aloneness. The result is a marriage between equals, who share a common human nature, as over and against the nature of the other creatures.
- *Toledot*: Hebrew word for, “this is the *account* of...”
 - The 11 *toledot* verses give us the internal organizational structure of Genesis.
 - Gives us an awareness of the narrative’s internal organization and structure.
 - Shows the parts of history / story that Genesis is interested in telling us by serving as lenses through which the narrative is ‘focused’.
 - Indicates an overall internal unity and consistency to Genesis as a piece of literature

Genesis 3:1-24

- The Fall
 - The serpent appears without introduction, the enemy within the Garden-Temple, and talks to Eve, using partial truth to get her to question, doubt, then disobey God.

- Narrative style: where's Adam? 3:6, he was standing there the whole time, silent!
- "Listened to the voice of..." This phrase is used often in Genesis usually as an indication that someone listened to a person instead of God. In this case, Adam listens to the voice of Eve as over and against what he knew God had said.
- Curse and Seed – the just result and judgment of God is often referred to as 'the curse'. Life, goodness, and plenty do not exist apart from God. Adam and Eve have chosen life apart from God, thus bringing the curse, and both physical and spiritual death.
- Law & Gospel – God speaks his law: the commandment with its blessing and consequence in 2:16-17, and then the curse his verdict on the broken commandment. But then God also speaks a promise, a gospel, in 3:15, the promised seed which shall undo the work of the serpent. The rest of Genesis is essentially a mapping of the preservation and continuation of that Seed of Promise, who is ultimately Christ.
- The Scarlet Thread of Redemption
 - Coverings: The response of Adam and his wife is to cover themselves with leaves, i.e. their own works. This does not work. Only God can cover their shame, and he does so with the skins of animals – thus a sacrifice and the shedding of blood shall be the means by which human sin is first covered, and then ultimately expunged.
 - The renaming of Eve. Adam's immediate response to God's judgment (which includes the promise in 3:15), is faith – he trusts God's promises and the outworking of this trust is that he renames his wife Eve. Note, in 2:23 she is first named Woman. In 3:20 she is renamed Eve, which means mother of the living – Adam was listening this time!

Themes, concepts, and motifs's

- Nascent Trinity
 - Cf. John 1:1-5
 - God, Spirit, Word
- The Word: creative action as a result of God speaking
- Order and goodness emphasized
- Garden as Temple: God's people in God's place under God's rule. The enemy enters the Temple and is to be resisted and stamped out; but allowed to persist and in so doing evil enters and works its ill means. This pattern is repeated with Israel in the wilderness and Canaan with the Conquest.
- Representative Heads: Adam → Israel → Second Adam (Christ)
 - See Romans 5:12-21 and 1 Corinthians 15:12-28 for the NT connection between Christ as the Second Adam and his faithful work to undo the disobedience of the First Adam.

Next Week: Noah & the Flood – Genesis 6-9

Additional Resources

Waltke, Bruce K. *Genesis: A Commentary*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2001. This is the best single volume commentary on Genesis I've come across. A little technical, but valuable asset.

Walton, John H. *The Lost World of Genesis One*. Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2009. A fabulous and very accessible unpacking of the original context, meaning, and application of Genesis 1.