

Genesis as History

Biblically speaking there is every reason to accept the history record in the Book of Genesis
Don Ruhl • Savage Street, Grants Pass, Oregon • September 2, In the year of our Lord, 2012
Scripture Reader and Reading: Lake Thomason – Matthew 22.23–33

Prelude:

I. Did that stuff in Genesis really happen?

- A. Without hesitation, without equivocation, yes!
- B. Don, how can you be so sure?
 - 1. And someone questions, Does it really matter?
 - 2. Oh yes, it matters much more than we may realize.

II. Understanding the world, and understanding the Bible,

- A. both depend upon accepting Genesis as history.
- B. Reject Genesis as history, and
 - 1. your understanding of our present world will be flawed, and
 - 2. your understanding of the Bible will likewise be flawed.

III. Accept Genesis as history, and

- A. it will surprise you how it will open your understanding of all things, and
- B. you will be able to make sense of all things.
 - 1. Yes, reading Genesis as history,
 - 2. has that kind of power.

IV. You will understand the failure of

- A. people, nations, churches, and so on
- B. like you never have before.
 - 1. Reading the Book of Genesis and accepting it as history,
 - 2. will also lead you down the path of success, because
 - a) it will lead you to the rest of the Bible.

b) You know that Genesis begins with,

1 In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth (Gen 1.1),

(1) and it ends with this, leaving us hanging,

26 So Joseph died, being one hundred ten years old; and they embalmed him, and he was put in a coffin in Egypt (Gen 50.26).

(2) What happened between those two verses, and why does it matter?

(a) Reading Genesis as history reveals what happened, and

(b) continuing to read the Bible shows why it matters.

Persuasion:

I. Jesus Accepts Genesis as History

A. We just heard Matthew 22.23–33 read to us.

1. Jesus quoted Exodus 3.6, but

2. that passage draws from Genesis 17.7; 26.24; 28.21.

a) In Matthew 22, Jesus touched upon Genesis as history, and

b) from that spoke of the future.

B. In Matthew 8, He again brought together the past and the future,

1. basing the future upon Genesis as history,

11 And I say to you that many will come from east and west, and sit down with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven. (Matt 8:11).

2. Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob are people whose lives we find in Genesis.

3. Sitting down with them in the kingdom of heaven refers to the future.

C. The four Gospels show Jesus using the Book of Genesis 39 times,

1. proving that He was under the impression
2. that the Book of Genesis is important.

II. The Old Testament Accepts Genesis as History

A. In my introduction I showed you how Genesis ends.

1. The Book of Exodus picks up where Genesis left off and
2. the rest of the Old Testament continues the narrative.

B. If we reject Genesis or reject Genesis as history,

1. the rest of the Old Testament collapses.
2. For example, Exodus 20, The Ten Commandments, based the Jewish week
 - a) upon what the Book of Genesis records as the history,

8 “Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy. 9 Six days you shall labor and do all your work, 10 but the seventh day is the Sabbath of the LORD your God. In it you shall do no work: you, nor your son, nor your daughter, nor your male servant, nor your female servant, nor your cattle, nor your stranger who is within your gates. 11 For in six days the LORD made the heavens and the earth, the sea, and all that is in them, and rested the seventh day. Therefore the LORD blessed the Sabbath day and hallowed it” (Exo 20.8–11).

- b) Rejecting Genesis as history destroys this for ancient Israel.
3. Another example is Israel in the land of Canaan,
 - a) which fills the documentation of the Old Testament,
 - b) all based upon God’s promise to Abraham in Genesis 12,

7 Then the LORD appeared to Abram and said, “To your descendants I will give this land.” And there he built an altar to the LORD, who had appeared to him (Gen 12.7).

- (1) Do you realize how much of the rest of the Old Testament

(2) depends upon that promise?

III. The New Testament Accepts Genesis as History

A. What man lost in the first three chapters of Genesis,

1. he can regain in the last three chapters of Revelation.

a) For example, Adam and Eve lost paradise for us, as Genesis reveals, but

b) we regain it in heaven, as Revelation shows.

2. What we gained in Genesis,

a) pain, sorrow, and the curse,

b) we lose in Revelation.

3. If Genesis is not history, what does that do to the last chapters of Revelation.

B. The New Testament quotes from, refers to, or alludes to the Book of Genesis

1. about 100 times (Some scholars say 200 times), including

2. about 60 times from chapters 1–11.

C. Therefore, what you believe and interpret in the Book of Genesis

1. will determine how you interpret and believe the New Testament.

2. What the Book of Genesis says, we must value, because

a) it was important to the New Testament Books of

b) Matthew, Mark, Luke, John, Acts, Romans, First and Second Corinthians, Galatians, Ephesians, Colossians, First Timothy, Hebrews, James, First and Second Peter, First John, Jude, and Revelation.

3. The New Testament Books of Philippians, First and Second Thessalonians, Second Timothy, Titus, Philemon, Second and Third John,

a) did not include Genesis, because

b) they had no need to quote it.

(1) However, those writers did use Genesis in their other writings,

(2) so we can say that every New Testament writer used Genesis.

D. In Romans 15, Paul referenced the promises to the three patriarchs,

1. upon which every good thing we have in the New Testament is built,

8 Now I say that Jesus Christ has become a servant to the circumcision for the truth of God, to confirm the promises made to the fathers (Rom 15.8).

2. The promises made to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob in the Old Testament
 - a) have their confirmation in Jesus Christ in the New Testament.
 - b) Therefore, Genesis has its confirmation in the New Testament.

E. When Paul wrote First Corinthians 15,

1. four times he used the Book of Genesis
2. to teach something about the *future* resurrection.
 - a) vv. 21, 22 about Adam bringing death comes from Genesis 3.
 - b) vv. 37, 38 about seeds becoming plants comes from Genesis 1.
 - c) v. 45 about Adam becoming a living being comes from Genesis 2.
 - d) v. 47 about Adam being made from dust comes from Genesis 1 and 2.
 - e) If believing that there is a resurrection is important—and
 - (1) Paul wrote First Corinthians 15 to make the point that it is—
 - (2) then reading and knowing well the Book of Genesis is important.

IV. The Real World Accepts Genesis as History

A. I will not develop this point fully, but

1. I want to introduce it to you today, and
2. at a future date, I will give you a fuller presentation.
 - a) However, in the meantime,
 - b) I want to put some ideas in your head.

B. People argue that the Bible, namely, the Book of Genesis

1. is not a science textbook, or
2. that it is not about real things that we deal with everyday.
 - a) The Bible is not a science textbook, but

- b) it is a book of history,
 - (1) which makes Genesis a Book of history, and
 - (2) history is not fantasy, but
 - (a) a record of what happened in the past,
 - (b) which would include science or anything else it touches.
- C. The world now operates just as Genesis shows.
 - 1. It shows the beginning of nations.
 - 2. It shows the beginning of the races.
 - 3. It shows the beginning of the diversity of languages.
 - 4. It shows why geology is the way it is.
- D. Did you know
 - 1. that human records,
 - 2. that languages,
 - 3. that woodworking,
 - 4. that metalworking,
 - 5. that musical instruments, and
 - a) anything human,
 - b) only goes back about 4,000 years?
 - (1) If you read Genesis as a historical document,
 - (2) you will discover why human history only goes back that far.

Exhortation:

I. Rejecting the historicity of Genesis does not help our cause.

- A. Some people compromise or outright reject Genesis as history, because
- B. they believe it will help the secularist and others to accept the Bible.

1. However, it does not help, for
2. if you compromise in Genesis,
 - a) you will have to compromise elsewhere in Scripture, and
 - b) in time you will have to abandon Scripture.

II. If you are not yet sure about the Book of Genesis as history, do this.

- A. Read Genesis, not just critiques of it.
 1. For example, shall I listen to critics of yours?
- B. Read the rest of the Bible, and
 1. try rejecting it whenever it uses Genesis, and
 2. see what happens.
- C. Ask yourself why you do not accept Genesis as history.

III. The Book of Genesis reveals the past,

- A. truly, the entire Bible reveals the past accurately, but
- B. not only does the Bible reveal the past,
 1. it reveals the future accurately, because
 2. he who created the past creates the future,

5 Thus says God the LORD,
Who created the heavens and stretched them out,
Who spread forth the earth and that which comes from it,
Who gives breath to the people on it, and
Spirit to those who walk on it...

9 “Behold, the former things have come to pass,
And new things I declare;
Before they spring forth I tell you of them.”
(Isa 42.5, 9)

9 Remember the former things of old,
For I am God, and there is no other;

I am God, and there is none like Me,
10 Declaring the end from the beginning,
And from ancient times things that are not yet done,
Saying, “My counsel shall stand,
And I will do all My pleasure.”
(Isa 46.9, 10)

IV. If Genesis is not history,

- A. all the biblical sources that quote Genesis as history are likewise not historical,
- B. which means that whatever it says about the future, we cannot believe.
 - 1. Why then read the Bible?
 - 2. Throw it away.

V. However, if Genesis, and all biblical sources quoting it, do present the truth,

- A. it is to our eternal peril to ignore it.
- B. We should read it more diligently than anything else.

VI. It is in the Book of Genesis that God began to reveal His plan to save man.

- A. In Genesis 12, He said this to Abraham, and pay attention to the last part,

3 “I will bless those who bless you,
And I will curse him who curses you;
And in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed.”
(Gen 12.3)

- B. All the Bible, and
 - 1. all of world history
 - 2. works for the fulfillment of that promise.
- C. In Galatians 3, Paul said,

8 And the Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the Gentiles by faith,
preached the gospel to Abraham beforehand, saying, “In you all the nations

shall be blessed” (Gal 3.8).

1. Paul said that the promise made to Abraham found clear back in Genesis
2. meant that God was revealing a plan to save man,
 - a) not just Israel, but
 - b) the Gentiles also.

D. As Paul showed a little later in Galatians 3,

28 There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus. 29 And if you are Christ's, then you are Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise (Gal 3.28, 29).

1. The Past matters for the Present and
2. the Present matters for the Future.

VII. Genesis shows the sad history of man rebelling against God.

- A. Do not continue that history in your life.
- B. Do as Abraham did and turn to God in faith.
 1. Then obey the One who descended from Abraham, because
 2. Jesus wants to receive you today.

VIII. I have always loved the questions that God gave Job, and

- A. it is one that I would like to ask anyone who doubts Genesis as history.
- B. God suddenly appears at the scene of a debate between Job and his friends.
 1. Job acted as though he knew everything about nature, and
 2. about how God operates or should operate.
- C. One of the first things God asked Job was this,
 - 4 “Where were you when I laid the foundations of the earth?

Tell Me, if you have understanding.”
(Job 38.4)

1. After asking specific questions about the creation of the earth, and
2. how God has ordered things, God said,

21 “Do you know it, because you were born then,
Or because the number of your days is great?”
(Job 38.21)

IX. Listen to Him who observed the past and created it from the beginning.

- A. He revealed the past, because
- B. He wants to include you in the future with Him.
 1. Spend eternity with Him.
 2. Let us assist you.