

Genesis - Bereishis (Beginnings)

Genesis 1:1 - 6:8

Introduction

We discussed in the introduction that there are at least 4 areas of observation for us as we read the Books of Moses:

1. Identify the elements in the narrative that teach us about God's wonderful plan for redeeming man.
2. How does God instruct His people to live in this world, separate and apart from the rest of the world?
3. Identify and recognized the pictures of the Messiah, Jesus the Christ, as presented through the stories and characters of the script.
4. What does the scripture I am reading today tell me about the nature of God?

While doing this, it is important to develop the habit of looking at what is not written as well as what is written. Hebrew in its original state is a very fluid and picture oriented language. Even in the translation or transliteration, it contains a great deal of fluidity and is picturesque.

Chapter 1 - Creation

V: 1 "In the beginning of God's creating";

1. All creation is brought forth by the hand of God.
2. The text is not a science book. Moses does not tell us how God created, only that He is responsible for the creation of the world and everything in it. There are marvelous principles of science in every stage of the creation, but the Bible is not a science book. God is the creator of science, as well as every other field of study in the world because in the beginning, He created the heavens and the earth; that is, all the earth and everything contained in the earth.
3. God created through aleph-tav, the first and the last letters of the Hebrew alphabet.
 - a. John the apostle in John 1 writes - everything that was made was made through the "WORD". (John 1)
 - b. Jesus uses this same description, only in Greek, "alpha and omega", in Revelation: 22:13; Revelation 1:8; (John 1:1). Isaiah records the concept of the "first and the last" in Isaiah 41:4.



4. Time was created with the creation of the world. There was no time before creation so any question about “Why did God choose this time to create the heavens and the earth” are moot points.

V. 2 “The earth was astonishingly empty, with darkness upon the surface of the deep”;

1. Chaos prevailed: nothingness; disorderliness; waters everywhere; no structure; no shalom.
2. “The Divine Presence (Spirit) hovered upon the surface of the waters”
 - a. God’s three dominate characteristics are present at creation: God Himself; Y’shua in v. 1; and the Holy Spirit in verse 2.
 - b. Unity (Oneness) of God Deuteronomy 6:4; Matthew 22:36-38; Mark 12:28-30; Luke 10:25-28. Hebrew word, “echad” translated as “one”, or “alone”, signifying He is the Only One and there can be no other.
 - c. God can and will manifest Himself in any form He chooses to meet His purposes: Moses and the burning bush; a man visiting Abraham; a banner; a healer; a fortress; a mother hen; a mighty wind. “I am who I will be” Exodus 3:14.

V. 3-25 Days of Creation - 7 (Perfection)

1. “Let there be light” - Light is the core essence of life. It is the foundational building block for all life. Creation begins in the beginning with - light.
2. Each day’s creation is based on the foundation or building blocks laid the day before. It is progression in such a way that it is driven by logic and wisdom.

Light - firmament (heaven) separated from the waters of the earth - dry land separated from the waters - vegetation - luminaries in the sky - water animal life - birds of the sky - dry land animals - man. And it was good!

- a. Luminaries - established to rule the night and the day. Designed to serve as signs for festival, days and years. Most modern versions state the luminaries serve as signs for the seasons, which we have always interpreted as spring, summer, autumn and winter. The word is actually “moadim”, which means God’s appointed times. God is establishing a clock or calendar to allow His people to know when the festivals (moadim) He has established are to take place. When we study these appointed times in later scripture we will see that these

are not “Jewish Festivals”, but rather, these are God’s appointed times of festivals.

V. 26-30 Day 6 - (Man, Human weakness, Short of Perfection - the day God creates man)

“Let Us make man in Our image after Our likeness. They shall rule over the fish of the sea, the birds of the sky, and over the animal, the whole earth, and every creeping thing that creeps upon the earth”.

a. The use of plural identification with God is difficult for the Jew. As we read earlier from the sh’ma, Deuteronomy 6:4, God is ONE! We Christians have no problem with the use of “Our” or “Us” because of our Trinitarian history. Some Jewish sages would suggest God is talking to the heavenly hosts, angels, in this statement, but that seems to be a faulty argument - the angels are created beings as well. The Trinity concept is one of the greatest stumbling blocks for the Jews to accept Jesus as the Messiah. Jesus made several statements of oneness with God which was deemed blasphemous. There is a fundamental truth that God is one and not a Trinitarian godhead. **God is one!** He manifests Himself as is needed by the world. The appellation, “Elohim”, one of the names used for God would suggest God’s form is not singular, though He is. Elohim would suggest both male and female articulation of the nature of God. In this sense, the plural adjectives are most appropriate. Y’shua is His physical man-type personification. His Spirit is just that, His essence, non-physical self capable of operating completely outside physical limitations. When God resided in the tabernacle and the temple, He did not physically inhabit those structures - His essence or His Spirit was present.

b. Man is created with free choice, to obey God or not. He is instructed to subdue the earth and operate it according to plans given by God, but it is his choice. This, along with man’s spirit is what separates man from the animals. This free choice nature is a significant element throughout the entire Torah.

c. Man is created with morality, reason and the capacity to live forever, just as God. He can know and love God and can hold spiritual communication with Him. Man alone can guide his own actions through reason and self control or self determination. In this sense, the Torah describes man as having been created in the image and likeness of God. (Rambam; Stone Edition Tanach)

d. “It was very good”! Man is the ultimate creation of God - the crowning glory. When He forms man out of earth He breathes His own Spirit into man and man becomes a living soul.

Chapter 2 - Creation of Man, woman, and Marriage

V. 1-3 Sabbath Rest -

- The importance of Sabbath rest.
 - God instituted on seventh day (7th - completion of the creation process)
 - God gave this model to His children so they too would find that special time for physical rest and spiritual renewal.
- Work from our rest rather than rest from our work.
 - Man created on 6th day. New day began at sun down so man was created to enjoy rest before work.
 - We rest at night so we can work from our rest; not rest from our work at night.

V. 5-7

- No rain; no sprouting plants; no sprouting trees
 - The whole earth did not look like the paradise we see in Eden.
 - The plants took sprout after God created Eden as a place for man to begin.
- God forms man from earth;
- Tri-part nature of man - God forms man from dirt, breathes His living spirit into man's nostrils, and man becomes a living body.
 - Spirit, soul and flesh.

V.8-17 Garden of Eden

- God places man in the Garden
- God waters the ground and causes every tree good for food to sprout
- God places the Tree of Life and the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil in the Garden
- Only the Tree of Knowledge is specifically forbidden the man for food. All other trees are provided for food for the man.
- The man is commanded to cultivate the plants and have dominion over the animals.
 - Man initiates dominion by first naming the animals
 - Man discovers every animal has a suitable counterpart, but he does not.

V.18-25 Creation of woman.

- It is not good for the man to be alone.
- Helper suitable for the man
 - "Helper" here is the Hebrew word "ezer", and can be translated: helper; aid; and/or strength. It carries the idea of doing for another what they cannot do for themselves. Most often in scripture it is used in connection with what God does for His people. God does for man what man cannot do for himself. This is not a word of "subordination", or

“lesser than”. God is the ultimate “ezer” and a good wife immolates the Heavenly Father when she functions as an “ezer”. It is a strong, praiseworthy, edifying connoting an indispensable nature within the relationship.

- Suitable - “kenegdo”; in proper context this three word fusion means, “One who stands in front of or opposite to”. It is a word picture for how one is to relate to another. In practical terms, a “kenegdo” is one who questions, confronts, challenges, and holds another accountable. Nothing too meek about this descriptor!
- Leave, Join, Cleave: God’s design for a successful marriage.
- V. 25 They were naked and were not ashamed
 - Shame, caused by sin, becomes the central issue in the lives of men from this day forward - even till today.
 - Therapists will tell us today that the basis of a lot of man’s emotional problems, and the basis for many couples issues, is shame. Satan is the great master at inducing shame in man. Initially, as perfect creations of the Mighty Creator, Adam and Eve experienced no shame, even in their nakedness.

Chapter 3 - Sin Enters the World

V. 1-7 The best lie is one that is closest to the truth.

- What is the serpent doing in the Garden? From the beginning, even in the sacred places of this world, sin and the opportunity to sin, is present. God did not put walls against sin in any part of the creation. This would void His plan for man to have full power and freedom for choice.
- This gives us a glimpse into the spiritual realm, much as the fact that God and Satan are having a discussion regarding Job (Job 1:6-19)
 - Definitely challenges our view on how things are, doesn’t it?
 - There is a strong correlation between the dialogue between Satan and Eve and V. 25 above. Shame follows sin. Satan does not mention the shame, but it will come with the knowledge of good and evil.

- And where is Adam when this conversation is going on? Isn't it Adam's job to manage the Garden, including risk management and danger control? How is demonstrating dominion over all the animals, and especially, protection for his wife? (Abdication!)

V. 8 The sound of God walking in the Garden.

- What might that have sounded like? In other places of scripture, God's presence among man evoked a wide range of sensory events. We are not told what this sounded like, only that it was not an unknown sensation for the people.
 - On Sinai it was the sound of thunder and lightning
 - At Pentecost it was the sound a mighty rushing wind

V. 14-16 Enmity, or strife and conflict will be set between the seed of woman and the seed of the serpent.

- There only two types of people in the world to this very day, seed of the woman or seed of the serpent.
- The serpent is cursed to crawl upon his belly all his life and eat the dust of the earth. Isaiah 65:25 paints a picture of a time when the wolf and the lamb will graze together, but the serpent will continue to eat the dust of the earth.
- V.15 - Messianic prophesy, "He will bruise you on the head and you shall bruise him on his heel. You will be conquered by the seed of the woman, you will only injure Him. Christ was crucified but was resurrected from the dead. Satan and his followers will be cast into the lake burning with fire (Revelation 19:20,21; 21:8)
- V. 16 - To the woman He says," Yet your desire will be for your husband, and he will rule over you". **This modifies the ideal of God's creation in marital relationship as stated in chapter 2:18.** Ezer and Kenegdo are still possible but only when a couple pushes against the earthly norm now established because of sin.
- The ground is cursed for all time. Paul speaks of this in Romans 8:19-25 as the earth groans for the coming restoration which will come with the return of the Messiah.

V. 21 Hashem made garments of animal skins for the man and woman.

- God's great compassion for man: replaced the flimsy fig leaf clothes for durable animal skins
- The first example of the requirement for the shedding blood to cover sin. Animals had to be sacrificed to cover the sin of man, as well as to cover man's naked flesh.

- God's compassion on man, His provision of grace and mercy. Man deserved death, he received covering instead.

V. 22 Man expelled from the Garden

- Man now understands the issues of good and evil
- There remains the Tree of Life in the Garden. If man eats of that tree he will live forever.
- Man is expelled and the cherubim (plural) are placed with flaming swords to protect the Garden.
 - Cherubim are angels but are not the baby-faced angels so often depicted in art.

Chapter 4 - Cain and Abel: The Fall of Man Continues

V. 1, 2 "I have acquired a man with Hashem". Either a statement of exultant joy brought by child birth, or some would argue this is a statement of pride/arrogance: "I am like God and produced a child". This negative statement may shed light on the difficulties Cain experiences later in the chapter.

Either way we have the first births recorded, Cain and Abel.

V. 3-12 Abel became a shepherd and Cain became a tiller of the ground - the first recorded rancher/farmer conflict.

- Conflict among brothers becomes a common motif throughout the Torah. Some are far more epic such as Cain/Abel and Jacob/Esau. Generally this motif sheds light on the difference between the curses presented in chapter 2; the seed of the woman verses the seed of the serpent; or, good versus evil. This conflict represents the struggle for the fact that man was created with full autonomy of free will choice. Choose life or choose death.
- Some versions cite Cain as being annoyed exceedingly or greatly angered by the fact that God did not accept his offering of produce in the same manner He accepted Abel's offering of firstlings or fat portions of his flocks.
- In verse 3 we get a glimpse of the issue, Cain brought some produce, any produce, not the best or not the first fruits of his produce. Here is an example of seeing what is written and what is not written. Cain brings produce from the ground whereas Abel brings of the firstlings of his lambs, the fat portions (the best of what he had). Cain's heart is not in synch with God.
- V.7 provides great advice for all time: *"Surely, if you improve yourself, you will be forgiven. But if you do not improve yourself, sin rests at your door. Its (sins) desire is toward you, yet you can conquer it"*.

- There are choices to be made and you have the power to make the choice.
- Sin is crouching at your door, desiring to consume you
- Yet, you have the power to conquer the sin and get right with God.
- Perhaps Paul had this in mind when he was writing the letter to the Christians at Corinth, I Cor. 10:13: *“No temptation has overtaken you but such as is common to man. And God is faithful, Who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation, will provide the way of escape also, so that you may be able to endure it”*.
- V. 8 Cain kills Abel in a field. Was it premeditated (murder) or was it manslaughter, a crime of passion? The punishment would suggest the killing was not premeditated murder as Cain is allowed to live, though cast out of the community. This may be a foreshadow of the concept of cities of refuge (Deuteronomy 19; Joshua 20)
- V. 9 *“Where is your brother”*? God asks with compassion, **allowing Cain the opportunity to confess and repent**. Our God is compassionate and full of grace/mercy. (Jewish sages comment on the grace of God)
- V. 12 The ground is cursed a second time (chapter 3:17)

V. 13-17 Embedded in the curse on Cain 3 interesting questions arise:

1. Who is Cain afraid of? Who are the people out there who might kill Cain?
2. Similarly, who did Cain marry? Where did she come from?
3. What is the mark placed on Cain?

God has not given us the answers to these questions.

V. 17-23 We are provided a short genealogy of Cain, to the 7th generation, Lamech is the 7th from Adam through Cain. On the other side of the coin, Enoch is the 7th from Adam in the lineage of Seth, the righteous lineage. There is a tremendous contrast between the lineage of Cain verses the lineage of Seth that continues the concept that there are only the seed of the woman vs. the seed of the serpent.

- There is significance in the 7th generation. 7 is the number of perfection. The contrast is obvious, the 7th generation through Seth is Enoch who did not die but was taken to heaven by God - He walked with God (5:24). The 7th generation from Adam through Cain is the picture of a perfect loss.
- Through extra-biblical sources we read that Lamech was out hunting with his grandson, Tubal-cain, and he accidentally killed Cain with an

arrow shot from his bow. Tubal-cain laughed about the incident and Lamech hit Tubal-cain so hard with his hand that the grandson died.

- V.23 is Lamech's lament regarding the two killings. Cain was promised a 7 times vengeance if someone kills him. Lamech is claiming a 7 times 7 vengeance (or 77 times vengeance) if he is killed for the deaths he has caused.
- Those listening to Jesus as recorded in Matthew 18:22 when He retorted to Peter that forgiveness should be seventy times seven would have understood that statement in light of Lamech's outcry.
- About 650 years after Lamech, or about 3 generations later, the entire lineage of Cain will be wiped out for all time by the great flood (1656 years from Adam's birth or roughly 2304BC-2348 BC).

Chapter 5 - Genealogy of Ten Generations, Adam to Noah

Torah provides us a description of the righteous lineage through Seth, the replacement to Abel. The ten generations represent a sense of completeness, the destruction of earth due to sin and corruption. The righteous generations will form the early foundation for the birth of Messiah.

Chapter 6:1-8 - God Decides to Destroy the Earth to Remove the Sin and Corruption

- Daughters of men and sons of God - The debate will go on for all time; are the sons of God, or as in some versions, sons of rulers, referencing angels or the sons of politically powerful men?
 - Can angels really transcend into the earthly realm and are they capable of sexual function? A good argument is the obvious genetic influence that creates Nephilim, the giants of old. When comparing the brief discussion in Genesis 6, the acts of the mighty ones, with the legends and mythologies of ancient Greece, one may find a connection between the two. Not only was mankind's genetic material influenced by the fallen angels, potentially the animals were objects of sexual outlet for these beings and the genetic order of the animal kingdom was disturbed as well, thus requiring the destruction of the animal kingdom as well as mankind (v. 7) through the flood.
 - V. 32 of chapter 5 reveals that evil was rampant on the earth and there was a mighty turning away from God. As evil was ever expanding on the earth, man found many ways to behave with total disregard of anything holy or sacred. "Might makes right" was the order of the day, and the

giants, Nephilim, developed as a result of angelic influenced genetic evolution.

- God “repents” from creating man and determines to destroy the world by flood.
- But Noah found favor and grace in the eyes of Hashem.
 - May it be said of you and me that we found favor or grace in the eyes of Hashem!