

The Book of Genesis

I. It's title-"Berashet"

II. The huge picture

Book begins-gloriously in paradise

Book ends-"dead in a coffin in Egypt"

III. General flow

Chapters 1-11 - Four great events

1.
2.
3.
4.

Chapters 12-50 - Four great people

1.
2.
3.
4.

IV. Structure and outline-"Toledot"

"What became of..."

1. The heaven's and earth... (2:4-4:26)
2. Adam... (5:1-6:9)
3. Noah (6:9-9:29)
4. Shem, Ham, and Japhath (10:1-11:9)
5. Shem (11:10-26)
6. Terah (11:27-25:11)
7. Ishmael (25:12-18)
8. Isaac (25:19-35:29)
9. Esau (36)
10. Jacob (37:2-50:26)

Content overview:

- Book 1: The account of the heavens and the earth (2:4-4:26)
- Book 2: The account of Adam's descendants (5:1-6:8)
- Book 3: The account of Noah and his family (6:9-9:29)
- Book 4: The account of Shem, Ham, Japheth and their descendants (10:1-11:9)
- Book 5: The account of Shem's descendants (11:10-26)
- Book 6: The account of Terah's descendants (11:27-25:11)
- Book 7: The account of Ishmael's descendants (25:12-18)
- Book 8: The account of Isaac's descendants (25:19-35:29)
- Book 9: The account of Esau's descendants (36:1-37:1)
- Book 10: The account of Jacob's descendants (37:2-50:26)

The Genesis Creation Narrative

A Plea for Sanity and Clarity

A. Common Ground

Although there are profound and honest differences between Evangelicals who hold to the “young earth” position and those who are “old earth” there is still much common ground. Perhaps before we look at the differences it would be helpful to remind ourselves of what we agree upon. Below is a list of beliefs that most evangelicals would affirm:

1. “In the beginning God”—the universe did not have an impersonal beginning. God is the source of all creation.
2. God is the source of all life and matter. It is self-evident that life cannot come from non-life nor matter from non-matter.
3. God created everything “ex nihilo” and by “fiat”. It was Francis Schaeffer who reminded us that regardless of how long it took for God to create the universe, he did so out of nothing and by His spoken Word.
4. God certainly could have created the universe in six, twenty-four hour days several thousand years ago. There is no question about His ability.
5. Only mankind has a soul. No other creature of any kind ever had a soul.
6. Adam and Eve were the first human beings and were especially created by God.
7. The Scriptures are inerrant in all they affirm. When both are correctly interpreted, the Scriptures and science will not contradict each other.

8. Biblical interpretation depends upon the proper use of the “gramatico-historical hermeneutic”, not a simplistic literal interpretation. In other words, no one believes the trees of the field clapped their hands, the mountains skipped for joy, or that God has wings and feathers he hides us with.
9. All truth is God’s truth no matter where it comes from. (In other words, two plus two still equals four, even when Carl Sagan says it!)

B. Alternative Explanations of Creation

There are a variety of positions about creation held by Evangelicals. Three of these positions are the most popular and seem to be closest to the Biblical record:

1. Pre-Adamite/Gap Theories

These theories state that after the initial creation of the heavens and the earth, and before the situation described in Genesis 1:2, a long period of time elapsed in which a great cataclysm desolated the earth. Some attribute this cataclysm to the fall of Satan. Some attribute the fossil record and the pre-human record to this period and argue these were all destroyed in the cataclysm. These theories tend to suggest that Genesis is primarily concerned with the “re-creation” of the earth and the creation of the human race through Adam and Eve.

2. Fiat Creationism

These theories include all of the literal views that insist on six twenty-four hour creation days and hold to a young earth of about ten thousand years of age. They would argue that all of the fossil record that has been so controversial is explainable through the universal flood. They would reject all scientific data pertaining to an ancient earth and argue it is based on faulty theories of age based on uniformitarian assumptions. They have generally adopted the same or similar chronologies as that which was worked out by Bishop Ussher.

3. Progressive Creationism

Those holding this view believe that the apparent disparity between Scripture and science is just that and can be reconciled by a careful interpretation of Scripture. In light of what they believe is overwhelming scientific evidence supporting the antiquity of the earth, they would generally accept the "day-age" theory of the creation account of Genesis. There are at least three versions of the day-age theory:

- a. day-geological in which each day represents a geological age
- b. modified intermittent day, which each era begins with a 24 hour solar day
- c. overlapping day-age in which each creative era overlaps with the next one.

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