

OT Narratives Bible Study Series

Genesis 1-3 - Beginnings

Read Genesis 1-3

-What does Genesis 1-3 tell us about God? (support your answers from the Scriptures!) How does this differ from other concepts of 'God' that you've come across? (some other Scriptures you might consider: Psalm 19:1-4; Romans 1:18-20; John 1:1-3)

-this is obviously a much larger question, and there's much more than we would have time for in one study. In the context of this series, some key thoughts include:

- He is eternal - "In the beginning, God..." - He was in existence before anything
 - He is Creator of all things - the heavens and the earth, and everything in them
 - He is separate / distinct from His Creation - transcendence
 - He has wisdom/insight/understanding far beyond what we can fathom
 - He rules over all things because He created it all and owns it all things
 - He is extremely powerful - created all things just by speaking - i.e. through His Word
 - He is 'creative' - amazing complexity, beauty, order in what He has created
 - He is good
 - created all things good
 - He created things for His enjoyment - and ours
 - provides abundantly for His creatures
 - He is holy
 - 'set apart' from His Creation
 - sets the standard of right & wrong
 - He confronts, judges & punishes sin/wrongdoing
 - He is immanent - i.e. not far off from His creation, but intimately involved within it
 - His authority - His commands are to be obeyed
 - He is relational - and created Man to have relationship with Him
 - He is merciful
 - did not immediately put Adam & Eve to death for their sin, but clothed them and promised redemption (3:15)
 - the notion of God in three Persons may be seen in the account of the Creation (Genesis 1:1-2,26; with John 1:1-3 --> the Word spoken & the Word made flesh)
- some concepts of God that are contrary to what we see in Genesis include
- the 'Star Wars' conception of an impersonal force that exists in all things
 - pantheistic concept that everything in the universe is God
 - 'watchmaker' concept of God as someone who created everything but then just stands back and leaves it to run on its own
 - Greek gods, who were imperfect and had significant flaws
 - concepts of God as someone who is there just to bless us, but would never judge or punish us for sin

-What does Genesis 1-2 tell us about the origins of the universe and of Man? How does this differ from secular worldviews? (you might also consider Hebrews 11:1-3)

- God created everything - we understand this by faith (Hebrews 11:3)
 - 'the heavens and the earth' - i.e. the universe and all that is in it - created by God
 - the universe had a beginning - created out of nothing
 - everything didn't just come in to being by chance, but by the will/intent & action of God
 - he created different species of living things, "according to their kinds" - created with a good/perfect design
 - contrary to theories of macroevolution (i.e. evolution of 1 species from another) as well as theistic evolution (i.e. God using evolution to 'create' new species)
- mankind had a defined beginning
 - created intentionally by God; not gradually evolved by chance from other primates
 - there was a first man & a first woman - again, contrary to evolutionary theories regarding the origins of mankind

-What does Genesis 1-3 tell us about the nature of Man (i.e. mankind)? (you might also consider Psalm 8:3-9; Genesis 9:5-6; Proverbs 14:31; Exodus 20:8-11; Romans 5:12-14) What implications does this have for issues facing our society today?

- specially created by God, in the image of God, for relationship with God
 - implications include the dignity & worth of mankind (Genesis 9:5-6)
 - applications to discussions on abortion, euthanasia, murder, human trafficking, racism, poverty, war, etc.
 - created as male and female - reflecting the image of God --? implications for sexuality, gender identity, marriage relationships (see next study)
- created to have dominion / rule over the earth, not as tyrants, but as stewards (cf. Psalm 8:3-9)
- created to work (cf. Exodus 20:8-11)
 - the importance of doing productive work 6 days per week --> part of the mandate to subdue the earth and rule over it
 - but also importance of rest, 1 day/week - rooted in the Creation pattern
- created "very good", but fell into sin by disobeying God's command
- contrary to popular opinion, no longer good by nature, but tainted by sin and bound for death
 - cf. Romans 5:12-21

For further reflection

Genesis 1-3 lays the foundations for the Christian understanding of just about everything - that is, for the Christian's worldview. It tells us about who God is and who we are. It tells us about how we and the world came into being, and about why the world and mankind are the way they are today - fallen, and subject to bondage to death and decay. As we've started to see in this study, the truths of Genesis 1-3 are very much at odds with much of what the world thinks and teaches. In our next study, we'll think about why this is the case.

Reflect on your own worldview in light of Genesis 1-3. Is the way you understand the world informed and guided by God's Word, or is it informed more by your own understanding, or even by the understanding of others who would reject God and His ways? What can you do to bring your way of thinking in line with the truth of God, as revealed in His Word?

Additional Resources

CGYG/LIFE website: www.cgygfellowship.com (Resources section)

- Genesis Bible study series: http://www.cgygfellowship.com/BBS_Genesis.shtml
- OT Daily Devotional series

CGC website

- OT Survey and Genesis adult Christian education materials: <http://www.cgctorenglish.chinesegospelchurch.ca> (Resources section)