

Introduction to Genesis

The book of Genesis provides a rich and necessary foundation upon which the rest of the Scripture is built. In Genesis, we see many of God's attributes on display including His love, faithfulness, mercy, patience, kindness, wrath, sovereignty, and power. The book is split up into two major sections: The origin and history of the world before Abraham (chapters 1-11) and the history of the patriarchs (chapters 12-50).

While there are two distinct sections in Genesis, there is one major theme, namely the Sovereign plan and power of God. Genesis 1 and 2 records the account of creation. In this narrative, the reader is confronted for the first time with the reality that God is not limited in His creative power nor is He hindered by obstacles. This is shown by detailing for us how God simply spoke and what was once nothing became something! The story of creation sets the stage for the rest of the book as we see over and over again God's sovereignty over all things which ultimately leads to man's salvation.

There are numerous examples of God's sovereign power recorded in Genesis including His preservation of Noah in Genesis 6-8, Isaac's birth to an elderly and previously barren Sarah, His selection of Jacob even as the youngest son, and His preservation of Joseph despite his brother's evil intentions. In all of these accounts the reality that God is in control comes shining through.

We also come to understand in the book of Genesis that God's plan is not dependent upon the laws of science, customs of men, or obstacles that inhibit mere mortals. Instead, we begin to learn of a God who is transcendent as well as personal. He is not bound by the limitations of this world and yet He cares for and saves individuals. This salvation is not dependent upon their work but it does rest on their faith. In fact, Hebrews 11 mentions a few of the main characters of Genesis telling us each time that their faith is what justified them in the sight of men. So, in Genesis justification by faith alone in God (Christ) alone is what moves God to save men.

The ultimate example of God's Sovereign plan of salvation of course is found in the life, death and resurrection of Christ. This impossible plan of redemption took place over 2000 years ago, but its roots extend all the way back to Genesis. Genesis 3:15 records for us the first prophecy about Christ called in theological circles the "protoevangelium", or the first Gospel prophecy.

While man's fall was profoundly destructive, it was not at all surprising to our great God. In fact immediately after it took place God was already predicting the fulfillment of His great plan! Beginning in chapter 3 and moving through Genesis and the rest of the Bible, we read a grand narrative about God's ultimate plan of salvation. This plan included Abraham as the father of the nation of people who would eventually yield Christ.

The fall recorded in Genesis 3 required man to be redeemed and God's plan graciously gave us a redeemer. This Savior would absorb God's wrath in the place of His chosen people. Ultimately, Jesus would be that redeemer as he would thwart the plan of Satan and in the process bring more glory to God! So, in Jesus we have the shining example of Joseph's wise words to his brothers in Genesis 50:20 "As for you, you meant evil against me, but God meant it for good, to bring it about that many people should be kept alive as they are today." Praise God that He can use even the worst of tragedies to bring about incredible, life-giving triumph!