

Genesis Introduction- John Karmelich

1. Genesis 1:1: "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth."
 - a) One of these days, I want to write a book called "Why did God bother?"
 - b) God had a specific purpose in mind when he created the world and mankind.
 - c) The argument is, He created us for the purposes of Him spending eternity with us.
 - d) God is perfect by definition. His love is perfect. He has no need of anything.
 - i) God did not create us as if He has a need to be loved.
 - ii) If you have love, you want to express that love to others.
 - iii) Thus, He created man to express that love.
 - e) If you want to understand the purpose of all history, a good place to look is in Ephesians:
 - i) And God raised us up with Christ and seated us with him in the heavenly realms in Christ Jesus, in order that in the coming ages he might show the incomparable riches of his grace, expressed in his kindness to us in Christ Jesus. (Eph. 2:6-7, NIV)
 - a) That is why God "bothered"!
 - ii) That is the purpose of all history in one sentence.
 - iii) God sent Jesus so that He could spend eternity showing his love for us.
 - iv) Unfortunately, before we can to the cross, we have to get through the entire Old Testament first. All of it is necessary prior to the cross.
 - f) Suppose Jesus died for our sins in the Garden of Eden.
 - i) We can then look to God the Father and say, "but you never gave us a chance to prove ourselves". You never gave man a chance to show if we can please you on our own efforts".
 - ii) God didn't say, "and after he created the heavens and the earth, he then sent his son to die for all of the sins that are going to be committed. First, God needed to have a long time span of history in order to supply evidence that Jesus is his son.
 - iii) Time is the evidence that a Savior is necessary for the payment of sin. If you study the history of the Jewish people prior to Jesus, they didn't do so good. ☺
 - iv) Not that the post-Jesus history is any better. The only difference is now there is a everlasting remedy to deal with the sin issue. for sin.
 - g) Which leads us back to Genesis. Last time I checked, this is an introduction to Genesis. ☺
2. Welcome to my study on the Book of Genesis.
 - a) This is the first book of the Christian Bible as well as the Hebrew Bible.
 - b) The word Genesis means "beginnings"
 - i) It covers the beginning of God's creation.
 - ii) It covers the idea of the family concept as God intended.
 - iii) It covers the beginning of new life after the flood of Noah.
 - iv) It covers the beginning of God forming a nation (Israel) of which God can use to be his witness to the world.
 - v) It covers the beginning of God using a people (Israel) through which the Messiah can come into the world.
 - vi) Every major concept that is used in the bible (e.g., sin, redemption, salvation by grace, God's love for us, etc.) is taught in Genesis.
 - vii) As the book progresses, the focus of the book gets more specific.
 - a) We start of with the universe/world perspective in the creation stories.
 - b) The focus eventually goes to one specific spot on the planet where Abraham is located.
 - c) The story then focus on the birth (beginning) of the Nation of Israel.

- viii) The time line from the beginning of the universe to the beginning of Israel is the scope of the book of Genesis.
 - ix) It begins with God creating the heavens and the earth.
 - x) It ends with God “creating” the family that is the beginning of the Nation of Israel.
 - xi) The purpose of that family, that nation is to be God’s witnesses to the world, to bring and preserve God’s word to the world and be the means by which God will provide a future Messiah (Jesus) for us.
 - xii) Genesis starts with a very broad focus of the creation of the world and ends with a narrow focus on one family going in Israel to start a new nation. The book that is all about creation “keeps on creating” emphasizing more a more narrow -focus with every section.
3. One of my favorite things to point out about Genesis is “God’s redemption plan will happen despite Satan’s best effort to foil that plan and despite man’s best effort to mess it up!
- a) The book mainly tells the story of a bunch of different individuals.
 - i) These guys are by no means perfect and every one of them has stories of their individual failures as well as successes.
 - ii) The big picture thing to see is that God uses imperfect-people to accomplish His perfect will for mankind.
 - iii) You don’t read much of Satan in Genesis other than the one encounter with Adam and Eve.. Yet as God’s redemptive plan is revealed more and more through the stories of Genesis, you can sense an evil presence in the background to “mess it up” God’s plans.
 - b) God’s “seed” is planted in Adam and Eve, and that seed will eventually work its way to the Messiah. If Satan can “stop” that seed from spreading through a particular family, Satan has “won”. Therefore, you can read much of the Genesis and the whole bible for that matter, as an eternal struggle of God’s will being accomplished through imperfect people despite demonic efforts to stop God’s redemptive plan from occurring.
4. For those who are new to these lessons, first of all welcome. Let me try to give you an overview of these lessons and see if they are right for you before you continue.
- a) They typically are about 10-12 pages in length. Sometimes I get carried away and write an extra page or two, but I try to keep the length within this scope.
 - b) A rule-of-thumb for most of my lessons is a chapter per week.
 - c) Since Genesis is 50 chapters, I’m going to pick up the pace a little and try to cover the entire book in about 30 lessons.
 - i) One can write volumes on any chapter in Genesis.
 - ii) One of the most difficult aspects about teaching Genesis is specifically what to teach about this book. The book is so rich in its teachings and applications that I could go on forever teaching from this book. Fortunately, I won’t. ☺
 - iii) Since I’m “only” doing about 30 lessons, I can’t cover every possible interpretation and every possible application to every verse.
 - iv) With every lesson I pray that God shows me what he wants me to learn and what he wants me to pass on. These lessons are usually summaries of what I have learned and prepared for these writings.
 - d) The other thing I want the reader to understand is that the most important part of these lessons revolves around the question of “how does this affect our lives?”
 - i) I don’t like to overemphasize history or science in any of these lessons. My primary focus is to teach how these people, these stories, these word-pictures affect our day to day life.
 - ii) Often I include some history and other background information. This is included to help explain a section of the story.

- iii) I'm also a big believer in humor. I take God very seriously. I myself have faults and therefore, I don't take myself nearly as seriously.
 - a) God created us to have a sense of humor and wants us to have joy in our life. If you think it is inappropriate to tell jokes in a bible study, well, you're in trouble. ☺
 - b) I take great comfort in reading the faults and shortcomings of the great people of the bible. It gives hope for me that God can and does use anybody. We need to be serious in our study of God's Word and our relationship with him. Everything else is fair-game for humor.
5. Let's talk about the early chapters of Genesis, that deal with the story of the world's creation.
- a) First of all, I am not a scientist, nor do I pretend to be one, nor do I play one on TV. ☺
 - b) There are wonderful God-gifted experts out there on explaining how the bible supports the scientific history of the creation. The bible is not a science book, but it does occasionally tie into the truths of science.
 - i) If that interests you there are great books out there on this topic.
 - c) My primary focus of these lessons is on how those lessons apply to our life, not on how to defend the bible to non-believers on the issue of creation science..
 - i) I always liked this quote, "Scripture is like a lion. Who ever heard of defending a lion? Just turn it loose; it will defend itself." (Charles Spurgeon)
 - d) It is my intention in the early lessons to cover the creation story, but not to give all sorts of cosmological and geological evidence to support those theories.
 - e) I happen to be a "young-earther". That means I believe in the literal 6,000 year view of creation. There are other science-based Christians who believe that God created the world over billions of years.
 - i) I don't believe you are going to hell if you hold a view different than mine. I simply disagree with the "old-earth" view. Some of the best on-fire-for Jesus who take-their-bible-seriously Christians hold this view.
 - a) They have every right to be wrong! ☺
 - ii) As I stated earlier, I take my bible seriously and as literally as possible.
 - iii) There are some sections of the bible that are designed to be poetic and not to be taken literally. I don't believe the opening chapter of Genesis has that intention.
 - iv) If I had a choice of being too literal or not literal enough in bible study, I would much rather "error" on the side of being too literal. When I go to heaven, I would rather be judged for taking the bible to literally as opposed to not literal enough.
 - f) I also believe that God created time and God exists outside of time. Time, is always from the perspective of where one is standing.
 - i) God is, well, God. He could have created the universe in a matter of seconds or mille-seconds or a matter of billions of years. If you can't handle that, your concept of God is too small.
 - ii) My view is that God choose from our perspective, to create the world over a six day period. If I'm wrong, I'll have a good chuckle over it in heaven. I don't lose sleep over this issue.
 - g) One also has to think about the creation story in comparison to the rest of the bible.
 - i) If you look at the bible as a whole, there are very few chapters dealing with creation. There are the first few in Genesis, a few references in the Psalms and the Book of Job, and Proverbs, but that is about it.
 - ii) Most of the bible focuses on God's redemptive plan for mankind.
 - iii) Most of Genesis focuses on the beginning of God's redemptive plan.

- iv) Another way to look at it is” What did the creation “cost” God?
 - a) I suspect not much of anything. He “snapped his fingers” and it was created. He could probably make another just as easily.
 - b) What did our redemption cost God? His only son. That is why so much of the bible focuses on our redemption as opposed to God’s creation.
 - v) I am not saying that one has to ignore the creation chapters, but to keep them in perspective in comparison to the scope of the entire bible.
6. Next, I would like to talk about the authorship of Genesis.
- a) I believe Genesis, along with Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy, the first five books of the bible were written by Moses.
 - b) Remember Moses lead the Israelites through the desert for 40 years. He had some time to kill. ☺ Jewish tradition is that God dictated these 5 books during the 40 day period when Moses was up on Mt. Sinai with God, before he came down with the 10 commandments. It is possible, but the text does not say for sure.
 - c) The events of Genesis all took place prior to the birth of Moses.
 - i) Some say that the stories were passed down from generation to generation on clay tablets. Moses then, under the inspiration of God, choose to include what was relevant to Genesis.
 - ii) A lot of the commentators break down Genesis into about 5-6 sections, most of them begin with a phrase like “These are the generations” (KJV) or “This is the history of... (NKJV)” or “this is the account of (NIV).
 - iii) The idea is that say, Adam wrote the first section himself, and say, Noah wrote the second section etc. That information was preserved until Moses collaborated it.
 - iv) We don’t know how Moses got the stories, we simply accept them as God’ word.
 - v) We’ll have to ask him one day. ☺
 - d) You may come across liberal scholars who will argue that “There were really 4 authors of Genesis (along with Moses’ four other books). This theory is called the “JEPD” theory, which stands for Jehovah, Elohim, Priest and Deuteronomy.” The theory goes that the first five books of the bible were written by four different authors each with a different emphasis and different sources.
 - i) I could give you the details of this theory, but it is so bad it is not worth wasting the paper. If you are a Christian, let me save you a lot of trouble:
 - a) Jesus quotes from all five books of Moses as listed above.
 - b) Jesus attributes all five to Moses in different places in the bible.
 - c) If you believe Jesus is Lord, then you must believe Jesus’ words.
 - d) Then you must believe Moses wrote these books, as Jesus said so.
 - e) If you don’t believe Jesus is Lord, you have much bigger problems than who is the author of Genesis and the other four books!
 - ii) Again, one can disprove the theory in many other ways, but quoting Jesus saves a lot of trouble. ☺
7. One also has to remember that chronologically, Genesis is not the oldest book of the bible.
- a) Most scholars believe Job is the oldest written book. It is “logical” to have Genesis put first in order as it discusses the “beginnings” of every major aspect of the bible.
 - b) The Christian order of Old Testament books is basically organized in this fashion:
 - i) First is all the narrative books in chronological order;
 - ii) Next is all the “poetry” books in chronological order, which includes Job, Proverbs, etc.;
 - iii) Then comes all the “major prophecy” books in chronological order (“major” refers to large volume of work),
 - iv) And finally comes all the “minor prophecy” books in chronological order.

- c) The New Testament is also not organized in true chronological order, but is mainly organized in order by author after the four gospel accounts.
8. For Christians, It is really interesting to compare Genesis with Revelation.
- a) Genesis is the book of “beginnings”.
 - b) Revelation is the book of “endings”.
 - c) For example, God created the heavens and earth in the start of Genesis.
 - i) Near the end of Revelation, it is described how God will destroy the heavens and the earth and create a new one (Revelation 21:1).
 - d) Sin enters the word in Genesis 3.
 - i) Sin makes it permanent exit in the new heavens and new earth of Revelation.
 - e) Almost every major concept that one can find that begins in Genesis makes its ending in Revelation. It is simply another proof that the bible, although composed of many books, all link together as if they are written at a single moment in time.
 - f) If you are “stuck” on a concept in Genesis, it may be helpful to find its counterpart in Revelation. I’m a big believer in “interpreting the bible with the bible”. This can be especially true in studying Genesis and Revelation.
9. Let me show you something Jesus said about the first five books of the Old Testament, and particularly, about Moses:
- a) Jesus said, “If you believed Moses, you would believe me, for he wrote about me.” (John 5: 46, NIV)
 - i) Jesus is claiming that Moses wrote about him.
 - b) One of the things to grasp about the Old Testament is that God works in word-pictures.
 - i) There is a good rule to remember here: The “pictures” in the Old Testament are the “principals” of the New Testament.
 - ii) If you look for direct references to the Messiah in Genesis , you won’t find many.
 - iii) But if you study the narrative stories and see the word-pictures, with some prayer help you can see how they tie to Jesus and how his words are true.
 - iv) As we go through Genesis, I can point out how Jesus is on every page. You can see “word-pictures” and “types” of Jesus in almost, if not every story in Genesis.
 - v) You may read one story and say, “well, that is a stretch to tie Jesus to that story”. The point is after reading story after story in Genesis and then reading the Gospels, you can see how every aspect of Jesus life, death and resurrection is predicted via word-pictures all through the Old Testament.
10. Let’s talk a little more about the time-line of Genesis as compared to the rest of the bible.
- a) If I had to list every verse in the Christian bible in chronological order, this would not come first. You would have to start with John 1:1
 - i) “In the beginning was the Word (Jesus), and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was with God in the beginning. (John 1:1-2)
 - a) If you doubt that “the Word” refers to Jesus himself, see John 1:14.
 - ii) My simple point is John 1:1 describes the situation prior to the creation of the world. Genesis 1:1 begins the creation event itself.
 - b) You can find other places in the bible that describe “life before creation”. Those places hint or bluntly state that Jesus was with God when the worlds were created.
 - i) Here is an example:
 - a) Who has gone up to heaven and come down?
 Who has gathered up the wind in the hollow of his hands?
 Who has wrapped up the waters in his cloak?
 Who has established all the ends of the earth?
What is his name, and the name of his son?
 Tell me if you know! (Proverbs 30:4, NIV)

- b) Here in the Old Testament book of Proverbs, is the author asking the prophetic question of “Who created the world and what is his son’s name?”
 - c) It is a strange question to ask. Many Jewish commentators believe it is referring to mankind, but I believe it is a prophetic reference to Jesus.
- 11. Let’s talk about the classical question of “Where did God come from?”
 - a) Children like to answer that question. This is where mom usually says, “Go ask your father” and vice versa. ☺
 - b) Let’s suppose someone created God. That means there is some “thing” greater than God that created him. Eventually you have to have to come to some sort of entity that always was, always is and always will be.
 - i) There has to be a perfect entity to start the whole process rolling.
 - ii) One of God’s titles is “Je-hov-ah” which means “I am”. That is the idea behind the fact that God always existed and always will be.
 - c) Suppose that the God we know has to be accountable to someone greater than him. (I’m not saying He does, I’m saying this for the sake of that argument.). In that case, whoever God has to answer to is “his problem”. My responsibility is being accountable to God the Father. The “rest” is God’s problem.
- 12. I do want to finish this introduction with a study of the first verse. There are some aspects to grasp about Genesis 1:1 that are key to understanding the whole book. With that here it is:
- 13. Genesis 1:1 “In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.”
 - a) It starts with the phrase “In the beginning”.
 - i) This implies there was a beginning.
 - ii) There is a starting point for mankind and existence just as there will be an ending.
 - b) If there was a “big bang”, there has to be a “big banger”. ☺ Some one lighted the fuse.
 - i) I don’t believe in the Big Bang theory as it currently exists. There are too many unexplained aspects. To those who believe in the “big bang” ask them “where does space come from?” There are lots of flaws in the big-bang theory, and that is one of many unexplained things. Scientist will also tell you there is the concept of “dark matter”. This means that they don’t understand where most of the matter that exists in the universe comes from based on this theory.
 - c) If you look at most civilizations throughout history, they all believed in some sort of superior being(s) that are greater than them.
 - i) God created us with a need to worship him. Those who choose to ignore God fulfill that need by worshipping other things. Look at someone’s free time and their spare income and you can find what people “worship” as their god.
 - ii) If one looks at the universe, it becomes obvious that there has to be a force greater than mankind who could create such a universe.
 - a) This reminds me of the classic story about the demons in hell holding a strategy meaning. Satan asked, “what can we do to prevent people from turning to Christ?” One demon answered, “I know, lets say there is no God”. Satan responded, “That won’t work. You look at the world and realize their must be a power greater than man”. Another demon answered, “let’s tell them they don’t have to repent”. Satan said, “That won’t work, God created man with a conscious”. Finally, one demon said, “I know, let’s tell people there is no hurry to repent.” That was the idea Satan accepted.

- iii) One of the interesting words in the bible to study is the word “invisible”.
 - a) There are things that the human eye cannot see, but must exist in order to explain the things that do exist. That includes God himself.
 - b) Paul said, “For since the creation of the world God’s invisible qualities—his eternal power and divine nature—have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so that men are without excuse. (Romans 1:20, NIV).
 - iv) This is also why humans are more special than any other created being.
 - a) Does your dog thank God for his dog food before he eats it? ☺
 - b) Do monkeys form a prayer chain to pray for their sick relative? ☺
 - c) My point is human beings are the only species that understand the existence of God and out of our free will, seek Him for guidance.
 - d) Let’s talk briefly about the false-idea of “evolution”. This is the theory that man evolved by accident.
 - i) It is idea of “In the beginning there was nothing, and then it exploded”.
 - ii) The classic evolution joke summary is “from goo to you via the zoo”.
 - iii) The theory of evolution in that man is here by accident is easy to disprove by modern science.
 - a) This is separate from the idea that God created man over millions of years. Although I disagree with that as well, that is not the focus of this topic.)
 - iv) My personal view is that atheists want to believe in evolution because if they did believe there was a god, then they would have to be accountable to that god. Since they don’t want to change their lifestyle, they desire a theory to explain creation without the existence of God.
 - v) The interesting thing today is with our knowledge of science, Darwin’s evolution theory can no longer be proven correct. If one understands how complex the DNA molecule is, you would understand it could not happen by accident. The mathematical odds of constructing this molecule, are estimated at 10 to the 200th power. If you believe the world is say 10 billion years old, that is only 10 to the 9th power. Therefore, if you made one attempt per second to create a DNA molecule, you don’t have enough time!
 - a) Even if you believe the world is billions of years old, the odds of a DNA molecule happening by accident are statistically impossible (not improbable, impossible) to achieve.
14. Getting back to Genesis 1:1. Notice God does not bother to tell you that he existed.
- a) Notice that Genesis doesn’t start with “Hello, I’m God, how do you do. Hey let me tell you a little about myself! ☺
 - b) It starts with the fact that in the “beginning” he created the heavens and the earth”.
 - i) That would be the beginning of time as we know it.
 - ii) That would be the beginning of material existence.
 - iii) Any “thing” that happened before that is not explained.
 - iv) Existence, as we know it, begins in Genesis 1:1.
 - v) God, who exists outside of time, outside of our material
 - c) This is a good spot to remind the reader that I do believe the 66 books that form the Christian Bible are God-inspired and are the Word of God.
 - i) These lessons are not here to prove that fact, but use it as a starting point.
 - ii) Just as God doesn’t spend a lot of space describing who he is, just that he exists and he created the world, so I don’t spend a lot of time arguing that God is God. If you don’t believe that, there are other books on this topic.
 - iii) These lessons are designed for those who do believe the bible is the Word of God and wish to grow and mature in their relationship with God.

15. The next word of Verse 1 is the word “God”. In the beginning, God created the heaven & earth.
- The word for God is “El-o-him”. It is a plural compound implying three or more.
 - In English, we only have singular and plural. We say one word or two or more words.
 - In Hebrew, there is a concept of “dual”. The only English equivalent is the word “both”. I could say, I had dinner with all my friends last night, both of them”. ☺
 - When I say “both”, you know I mean two people.
 - In Hebrew, there is a word for God-singular (“El”) plus an ending to the word if you mean “two of something” and another ending if you mean more than two of something.
 - In English we add the letter “s” to make it plural. The word becomes words.
 - A Hebrew Word for God “El” becomes “El-o-him” to make it a plural compound.
 - To a Christian this is an obvious reference to the Trinity in the beginning.
 - We get a clue of this latter in Genesis 1 when it says, “Then God said, “Let us make man in our image”. (Genesis 1:26a, NIV) It is the same “El-o-him” word.
 - Religious Jews “dance around” this issue by saying it is the “majestic one”. They argue that God is so great and vast, he uses a “pluralistic one” to describe himself.” (Yeah right. ☺)
16. The next word of Verse 1 is the word “created”, as in God created the heavens and earth.
- The Hebrew word is “ba-ra”. It is rarely used in the bible.
 - It means to “create out of nothing”.
 - If I took some wood and metal and made a hammer, I made “something out of something”. That is not “bara”. Bara means to make something from nothing.
 - The idea behind it is God took his “thought” and made his “thought” come alive.
 - This is the idea behind “And God said” which occurs 10 times in Genesis Chapter 1.
17. The last phrase is “heavens and earth”.
- This means that it did not exist prior to creation.
 - It means that the creation as we know it has a beginning.
 - This argues against the idea of “random chance”. The idea that we are here by accident.
 - Isn’t it interesting that are public schools teach in “science” class that we are here by random chance and then try to encourage the kids that “you are something special?”. How can you be “special” if you are here by random chance?
 - To be technical, the bible speaks of “three” heavens:
 - The first heaven refers to the sky and the atmosphere.
 - The second heaven refers to the stars.
 - The third heaven speaks of where God is located. (Reference: 2nd Corinthians 12:2)
18. In the next lesson, I’ll tie Verse 1 with Verse 2 and the rest of the chapter.
- What I wanted to show in the introduction is that Verse 1, “God sets things in motion”.
 - The focus of the first few chapters is in the creation of the heavens and the earth.
 - By the time we get to Noah in Chapter 5, God is going to destroy most human life on earth. We’ll talk about “why” that is when we get there.
 - The important thing to understand is that Verse 1 sets in motion the redemptive plan for mankind that God set out prior to the creation of Verse 1.
19. Let’s tie all the phrases together: “In the beginning, God created the heaven and the earth”.
- If God created us, he created us with a purpose in mind.
 - It wasn’t like God was bored and needed something to do. ☺
 - He created us for the purpose of having a relationship with him.
 - Genesis sets in motion God’s redemptive plan for mankind.
 - The beginning of the book focuses on the big-picture of the creation story. The last portion of the book focuses on the smaller-portion of the creation of the Nation of Israel through whom the Messiah (Jesus) will come.
 - Genesis is all about “getting the ball rolling”.
 - With that, I’ll stop rolling the ball for this week. ☺

20. Let's pray:. Father, we thank you in advance for the wonderful lessons you are going to teach us about Genesis. May these lessons be fruitful for us, as we grow and mature in our relationship with you. Show us the things you want us to learn and apply to our lives. For we ask this in Jesus name, Amen.