

58 GENESIS ESTABLISHES ESSENTIAL SPIRITUAL TRUTHS

Introduction: There is something different about the first 11 chapters of Genesis. They have a heightened legendary tone. We believe their purpose was and is to shape the reader's philosophical/theological understanding of God and man through memorable condensed epic chronicles. Through close reading of the text and maintaining a commitment to the authority and inspiration of scripture, we are seeking to dispel common materialistic assumptions so we can clearly discern its transcendent spiritual purpose.

1. Genesis reports it is an account of the generations of creation, implying creation occurred in significantly more than seven twenty-four hour days.

"This is the history of the generations of the heavens and of the earth when they were created, in the day that Yahweh God made the earth and the heavens." Ge 2:4

2. It appears Adam was not necessarily the first man on earth.

Scriptures indicate large populations of people were on earth in the lifetime of Adam's son (#8 and #9 below).

3. Adam was not necessarily the first man on earth, but was rather the first covenant man*.

"Yahweh God commanded the man, saying, 'You may freely eat of every tree of the garden; but you shall not eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil; for in the day that you eat of it, you will surely die.'" Ge 2:16-17

4. The talking serpent in the garden of Eden story tells us this is a symbolic story being used to convey spiritual truth.

"The serpent said to the woman, 'You won't really die, for God knows that in the day you eat it, your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil.'" Ge 3:1-5

5. The serpent was a "beast of the field," which eliminates the occult belief that the serpent was a spiritual entity.

"Now the serpent was more subtle than any beast of the field which Yahweh God had made." Ge 3:1

6. The story portraying the omnipresent God walking with Adam and Eve in the garden signals a symbolic narrative, conveying the special relationship of God with Adam and Eve and not the material fact of walking together.

"They heard the voice of Yahweh God walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and the man and his wife hid themselves from the presence of Yahweh God among the trees of the garden." Ge 3:8

7. In Genesis 2, God made a covenant with Adam allowing him to live freely in the garden, walk in oneness with Him trusting His wise parameters. God required Adam to refrain from seeking forbidden knowledge.

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8. Potentially violent men already populated the earth, and Cain was fearful of them.

"Behold, thou hast driven me this day away from the ground [his farming life]; and from thy face I shall be hidden; and I shall be a fugitive and a wanderer on the earth, and whoever finds me will slay me." Ge 4:14

9. Cain built a city which implies high density populations.

"She [Cain's wife] conceived, and gave birth to Enoch. He built a city, and named the city after...his son, Enoch." Ge 4:17

10. Seth was the continuation of the covenant line in place of Abel and lived in deference to the Creator.

"Adam knew his wife again. She gave birth to a son, and named him Seth, saying, 'for God has given me another child instead of Abel, for Cain killed him.' A son was also born to Seth...at that time men began to call on Yahweh's name." Ge 4:25

11. Adam was known as "the son of God," making Seth also a "son of God" and in the Messianic line.

"...the son of Enos, the son of Seth, the son of Adam, the son of God. Luke 3:38

12. The flood judgment appears to pertain to the covenant line of Seth, involving what became a persistent problem throughout the Old Testament: the taking of pagan wives with consequent depravity.

A. "The sons of God [Seth lineage] saw that the daughters of men [non-covenant men] were fair and they took to wife such as they chose..."

"My Spirit will not strive with man forever... The Lord saw the wickedness of man was great... I will destroy..." Ge 6:3-7

B. Josephus reported: "Now this posterity of Seth continued to esteem God as the Lord of the universe... for seven generations; but in process of time were perverted..." (Josephus, Antiquities 1:3:1)

C. Alternative theory: If, as some believe, fallen angels were the "sons of God" and perverted creation by procreating with human women, one would logically expect God to have regretted creating the angels, not humankind. (We are familiar with M. Heiser's work)

13. The two genealogies in chapters 5 and 11 name ten generations each.

This implies the possibility that the names are representational of a longer list. "Begets" can have a number of generations between them and still be considered "begets".

14. The numbers in the descendants of Adam (ch. 5) appear to have numerological significance.

In Ge 5, all of the 30 numbers end with digits 0, 2, 5, 7, or 9. "The odds of getting all thirty of these numbers to end with just these five numbers are about 1 in a hundred million" according to one source.

<https://biologos.org/articles/long-life-spans-in-genesis-literal-or-symbolic/>

15. The flood appears to have been local and relatively shallow. (see #15, #16, #17, #18, #20, #23)

"The waters prevailed exceedingly on the earth, and all the high hills under the whole heaven were covered. The waters prevailed fifteen cubits upward, and the mountains were covered." Ge 7:19-20. (**Note:** 15 cubits is approx. 25 ft, the size of a 2 story house.)

16. The Nephilim were on the earth before and after the flood demonstrating they were not wiped out by the waters.

Before the flood: "The Nephilim were in the earth in those days, and also after that, those were the mighty men who were of old, men of renown." Ge 6:4

After the flood: "There we saw the Nephilim, the sons of Anak, who come of the Nephilim..." Num. 13:33

17. Josephus, a Tanakh believing Jew, reported other people besides Noah's family were alive after the flood.

A. "Shem, Ham and Japheth...persuaded others who were greatly afraid of the lower grounds on account of the floods and so were very loth to come down from the higher place..." (Josephus, Antiquities 1:4:1)

B. Josephus quoted Nicolaus of Damascus, who wrote: "There is a great mountain in Armenia, over Minyas, called Baris, upon which it is reported that many who fled at the time of the Deluge were saved..." (Josephus, Antiquities 1:3:6)

18. It is generally agreed Noah built the ark in Mesopotamia. If the flood was worldwide, it would be remarkable for the ark to land in the same territory it started. The mountains of Ararat are just north of Mesopotamia.

"...the ark came to rest upon the mountains of Ararat." Ge 8:4.

19. There appears to be two Noah stories: one with the animals going two by two and the other having 14 of each kind of clean animal (all different cattle, goats, sheep, elk, deer, etc plus 14 of each kind of bird—i.e. thousands of birds)

It can be determined from this, that these are symbolic stories and not meant to be "history" as we regard it in modern times.

20. Sweeping world-wide expressions in Genesis 7 are obvious local references elsewhere in the Bible.

A. **Genesis:** "All flesh died that moved upon the earth [erets #776]." Ge 7:21

Compare: "All the earth [erets #776] came into Egypt to buy grain." Ge 41:57

B. **Genesis 7:** "He blotted out every living thing that was upon the face of the ground [erets #776]. Ge 7:23

Compare: Cain, said, "Behold, you have driven me out this day from the face of the earth [erets #776]." Ge 4:14

C. **Genesis:** "All the high hills under the whole heaven were covered." Ge 7:19

Compare: "This day will I begin to put the dread of you [Israel]...on the peoples who are under the whole heaven." Dt 2:25

21. Ark: practical considerations

Noah is commonly thought to have been in the ark for over a year—see Genesis 7:4 to 8:14. A cow eats 8,000 pounds of food and drinks 8,000 pounds of water a year. A person eats 1,500 pounds of food and 1,500 pounds of water a year. One begins to see problems with the need for hundreds of thousands, if not millions of pounds of food and water for the year and ways to store and avoid spoilage. What about fecal matter, predators, mating and off-spring? These are just a few of many considerations.

22. The above evidence appears to support a local flood.

If Noah was living on the plains of Mesopotamia and the Tigris and Euphrates Rivers overflowed from the rains, it would explain the relatively low height of the waters that could devastate and cover the hills in the area.

23. Noah's great grandson, Nimrod, ruled four cities and built/rebuilt four other cities. This, as well as the building of the tower of Babel, implies huge numbers of workers and large populations far greater than Noah's descendants.

"The beginning of his [Nimrod's] kingdom was Babel, Erech, Accad, and Calneh, in the land of Shinar. Out of that land he went forth into Assyria, and built Nineveh, Rehoboth-Ir, Calah, and Resen..." Ge 10:10-12

Summary: The stories of Genesis 1-11 do not support literal interpretations and have an entirely different purpose than revealing bare facts. They are likely from an oral tradition far earlier than Moses, when formative teaching stories were central to culture. The Genesis stories teach moral theocentric lessons and stand in stark contrast to pagan creation myths: 1. There is one God, not many. 2. Creation has purpose and is good and orderly. 3. God is merciful as well as just. 4. Mankind was made in God's image and has inherent dignity and worth. 5. Mankind is persistently wayward and destructive when living heedless of his Creator.

Someone may say, well, if you say these stories are not literally true then you are saying they are false. Not so. Consider Jesus's story of the Prodigal Son, so pregnant with redemptive meaning. Who would ever try to maintain it isn't true?

NOTES:

***Adamic Covenant:** <https://www.simplybible.com/f46e-orig-gods-covenant-with-adam.htm>

Book: Beyond Creation Science by Timothy P. Martin & Jeffrey L. Vaughn (authors are full preterists).

Video: Preterist Paper #09 "The Death of Adam Was Spiritual Death, not Physical"

Tower of Babel: See Josephus, The Antiquities of the Jews, book 1, chapter 4.

"**Satan**": The interjection of "Satan" as the serpent in the creation story, along with the substitution of the word "Satan" for the correct word "adversary" through-out most translations, makes the Bible into something akin to Zoroastrianism.