

Genesis: Provenance – Purpose – Perspective

A Study of Genesis.

MPS: God reveals Himself as the Creator of all who gives identity, purpose and meaning to all life.

OBJ: Every person can know God as Creator and Source of life by three questions, provenance, purpose and perspective.

READ Genesis 1:1-2

*In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth. ²The earth was without form and void, and darkness was over the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters. **Genesis 1:1-2***

GENESIS Intro

Every person asks three BIG questions about life; Where did I come from?, Why am I here?, and Where am I headed? The answers we find in our search form our worldview, our understanding of self, of God, of others, and how we understand daily life in this world. Where we search, therefore, is of utmost importance for life.

The first is the question of provenance, we want to know our origin and design for life. The second is the question of purpose, we want to know why we are alive on the earth at this time. The third is the question of perspective, how we view the world to interpret and find meaning in all things. All of life is either a pursuit to answer these questions or a living to fulfill what we have learned by these questions.

God speaks to each of these questions in the Bible. His answer declares the glory of the beginning for all things. His story demonstrates purpose for every life. His power works to bring understanding and meaning to all of life. We search for answers in this world through materialism, experientialism, emotionalism, achievement, relationship and all sorts of things. But all these answers are found in one source, and it is not a "thing" or an "-ism", but the person of Jesus Christ. We were created by Him, for Him and through Him (Col 1:16), and only in Him is true life, the answer we long for.

The Third Century theologian Augustine of Hippo explains why the answers to these questions are so important for us when he writes, "Because you have made us for yourself, and our hearts are restless till they find their rest in Thee."¹ God wants you to know Him, and to know that He wants to know you personally. Genesis is His revelation of the beginning, His invitation into a personal relationship with Him. I invite you to join us as we study together God's revelation of beginnings.

Genesis was first heard by the children of Israel as God's history to introduce them to their provenance, their purpose and perspective on life as they entered the Promised Land. Genesis divides into two main sections of history. The first is primeval history, Genesis 1-11. These chapters represent a longer period of time than the entire rest of the Bible, (beginning to 2090BC). The second section is patriarchal history, Genesis 12-50. We will give this Fall to studying Genesis 1-11.

Genesis: The beginning of all...

Genesis 1:1-2

MPS God reveals Himself as Creator of all to show Himself as the Source of eternal life in Jesus Christ.

OBJ Every person should believe God is Creator because of five points of a complete doctrine of creation.

READ Genesis 1:1-2

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God reveals Himself as Creator of all to show Himself as the Source of eternal life in Jesus Christ.

TRANS I want to set forth where we are headed.

¹ Augustine, Confessions, 1.1.1.



Two Challenges confront us in Genesis.

Many challenges have arisen against the Bible. Our doctrine of the Scriptures as inerrant, authoritative and sufficient provide a foundation for our consideration. But two that deal specifically with Genesis that we need to deal with revolve around two basic questions, "Can we believe Genesis?" and "Should we trust Genesis?" We do not have time to consider the full scope of evidence, but I hope to offer a brief introduction to answer these challenges.

Challenge #1: Can we believe Genesis?

This first challenge is best addressed by two bodies of evidence, the literary and historical validity of Genesis.

As Literature, we basically consider if Genesis can be read and believed or simply enjoyed? An Author's purpose should provide a defining parameter for HOW reads a body of literature. Genesis is written as an introduction to God's covenant for His people at Mt. Sinai. Understanding Moses' purpose, we can understand Genesis' structure as a strong literary format.

Genesis divides into ten sections formed by *toledots*. *Toledot* literally means "These are the generations of...". These sections cover a period of time identified by the initial character, but focusing on what that character produced. The *toledots* are as follows; Heaven and Earth (2:4-4:26), Adam (5:1-6:8), Noah(6:9-9:29), Noah's sons(10:1-11:9), Shem(11:10-26), Terah(11:27-25:11), Ishmael(25:12-18), Isaac(25:19-35:29), Esau(36:1-37:1), and Jacob(37.2-50:26). Genesis reveals the generations to the time of God's people at Mt. Sinai. Commenting on these ten sections, W. Robert Godfrey states, "The origins or root of the people who met with God at Sinai are the central concern of the Book of Genesis. The structure of the Book of Genesis shows that concern. Moses gave a clear structure to Genesis."² [From creation to divine revelation in the Law, Genesis reveals God's sovereign, intentional work to establish His people as His own.](#)

ILLUS [Have you ever asked the questions, "How did I get here?" or "Where am I from?"](#)? We long from deep within to know our origin, where we came from. These are the questions Moses addresses for God's people in Genesis by strong, literary form.

TRANS The literary study of Genesis naturally leads to the next challenge.

History vs Myth / Legend

The second aspect of this first challenge goes beyond literary form to historical validity and asks, "[Is Genesis real history?](#)" To make brief and concise our consideration, I lean on the work of Allen P. Ross in [Creation and Blessing: A Guide to the Study and Exposition of Genesis](#).

Genesis has been scrutinized and often dismissed as myth or legend.³ Genesis is a unique form of history, especially the first eleven chapters. Allen P. Ross explains its uniqueness. "This historiography, however, was a history of a particular kind. Scripture was never intended to be a mere chronicle of events or the biography of a nation. It is not oblivious to the historical process; however, the Pentateuch deals with primeval history, the times of the patriarchs, and the gradual incubation of national consciousness among a people unused to independence. This special kind of history shows that the Old Testament's world view transcends the historian's plane; it is not history for history's sake but records of past events for the purpose of educating people spiritually. It presents a theological view of history, interpreting with a divine cause as well as a human one."⁴ [Genesis records the sovereign God creating and accomplish His will to form a people for Himself.](#)

² W. Robert Godfrey, *God's Pattern for Creation: A Covenantal Reading of Genesis 1*. (Phillipsburg: P&R Publishing, 2003), 18.

³ Ross, Allen P. [Creation and Blessing, A Guide to the Study and Exposition of Genesis](#). (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 1996), 56. Ross writes, "Most modern scholars have not been willing to call Genesis "history," unless it is distinguished from modern philosophies of history."

⁴ Ross, Allen P. [Creation and Blessing, A Guide to the Study and Exposition of Genesis](#). (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 1996), 57-



Genesis is neither myth nor legend, but divinely-purposed, historical record.⁵

“The narratives were selected and interpreted theologically to teach the covenant faith.”

“The biblical account is actually a unique distillation of history. It is less interested in recording events for the sake of history than in using these events as vehicles for communicating the verities of biblical faith. The Bible presents an interpretation of significant events from the perspective of Yahwistic faith.”

“At the center of Israel's interest in the interpretation of history is the covenant. God chose his people through Abraham and made a covenant with them through him. Genesis uses this theme as the central point of its interest in recording past events. The narratives were selected and interpreted theologically to teach the covenant faith. Israel's history looked back to what God had done (in the election) and looked forward to the promise fulfilled (in the liberation and ultimately in the eschaton); in between was the interpretation of events according to the faith.”

“The final product is not simply a collection but a theological shaping of the reports and traditions for the instruction of Israel under the Sinaitic covenant.”⁶

Maybe the most convincing of all evidence for Genesis as history is the way the New Testament authors handle it. All New Testament authors handle Genesis as history upon which they build and never allegory by which they allude or illustrate. [Genesis is an historical introduction to God's covenant with His people.](#)⁷

TRANS The evidence is clear. YES, you can trust Genesis. And this leads to our second challenge.

Challenge #2: Should we trust Genesis?

This second challenge has become, over the last century, the greatest challenge to Genesis. Some want to claim that science disproves the Bible, and specifically the teachings in Genesis. But in fact, true science proves just the opposite.

Evolution is the advancement of scientific theory originally developed by Charles Darwin. Since Darwin, many have embraced his theories and advanced their cause. [Evolution formula: Nobody x Nothing = everything.] This may sound absurd, but today to even question evolution has become an intellectual offense and professional suicide. [Scientific fact proves that evolution is not simply a bad theory, but a scientific impossibility.](#)

“But Pastor, isn't this just your opinion?” No, far more than opinion, it is my position. And I understand why you wouldn't take my word for it. I'm not a scientist, and not the most well studied or advanced in scientific theory. **BUT—why would anyone listen and accept those who ARE scientists, or at least intellectual elites, who are supposedly brilliant, and yet guard evolution as a proven, scientific truth?** Evolution is the apex of modern human intellect and cognition, but it fails to reach the minimum requirements of God's foolishness. (1 Cor 1:25) [Evolution is a deception of modern intellect that strips humanity of value and dignity by denying the Creator, and denying us to know our own origin.](#)

TRANS But I do not expect that you must take my word for it.

ILLUS Dailywire.com Article

A recent dailywire.com article overviews the story of an Ivy League computer scientist who has recently (Aug 2019) said Evolution is a scientific impossibility. The article records, "Renowned writer and Yale University professor David Gelernter has turned away from Charles Darwin's theory of evolution, arguing that it has too many holes and has aged out as a

⁵ Ross, Allen P. Creation and Blessing, A Guide to the Study and Exposition of Genesis. (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 1996), p53. Ross concludes, “We conclude that Genesis is not myth. The Hebrew faith departed radically from the mythological concepts of world reality and of harmony by correspondences between the human and divine.”

⁶ Ross, Allen P. Creation and Blessing, A Guide to the Study and Exposition of Genesis. (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 1996), p59, 63.

⁷ W. Robert Godfrey, God's Pattern for Creation: A Covenantal Reading of Genesis 1. (Phillipsburg: P&R Publishing, 2003), p18. Godfrey states, “Indeed one way to see the whole Book of Genesis is as an historical introduction to God's covenant made with his people at Sinai.”



probable scientific theory.”⁸ Gelertner is a computer scientist famous for predicting the emergence of the World Wide Web. (Not to be confused with the politician who claimed to create the world wide web.)

“Darwin’s theory predicts that new life forms evolve gradually from old ones in a constantly branching, spreading tree of life,” Gelernter writes. “Those brave new Cambrian creatures must therefore have had Precambrian predecessors, similar but not quite as fancy and sophisticated. They could not have all blown out suddenly, like a bunch of geysers. Each must have had a closely related predecessor, which must have had its own predecessors.” Gelernter says the incremental development of new species is largely not there. ‘Most species enter the evolutionary order fully formed and then depart unchanged.’ Darwinism can’t explain that.”

David Gelertner credits Stephen Meyer’s Darwin’s Doubt (2013) for convincing him. In his explanation he states, “Bringing to bear the work of many dozen scientists over many decades, Meyer, who after a stint as a geophysicist in Dallas earned a Ph.D. in History and Philosophy of Science from Cambridge and now directs the Discovery Institute’s Center for Science and Culture, disassembles the theory of evolution piece by piece. Darwin’s Doubt is one of the most important books in a generation. Few open-minded people will finish it with their faith in Darwin intact.”⁹

An hour-long video discussion between Gelertner, Stephen Meyer and David Berlinski is linked in the article. GElernter goes on to say, “Meyer doesn’t only demolish Darwin; he defends a replacement theory, intelligent design (I.D.). The religion is all on the other side. Meyer and other proponents of I.D. are the dispassionate intellectuals making orderly scientific arguments. Some I.D.-haters have shown themselves willing to use any argument—fair or not, true or not, ad hominem or not—to keep this dangerous idea locked in a box forever. They remind us of the extent to which Darwinism is no longer just a scientific theory but the basis of a worldview, and an emergency replacement religion for the many troubled souls who need one.”

Gelertner goes on to admit, “Darwinism is no longer just a scientific theory but the basis of a worldview, and an emergency religion for the many troubled souls who need one.”¹⁰ Scientific data demands that in order to believe evolution you must disregard real science, and believe in the impossible, because there is absolutely no scientific evidence to build evolution’s argument upon. [You don’t have to believe me. But I exhort you to accept no position that is not rooted in God’s Word.](#)

Evolution is important for us to discuss in our Genesis study because of its acceptance in today’s mindset. Famed author of the late 19th Century, Julia Huxley, wrote in her “Essays of a Humanist” (1964), “Evolution is the most powerful, most comprehensive idea that has ever arisen on earth.” **“What harm could it really cause?”** you may ask. Evolution was the driving ideology and rationale for Hitler’s regime and the Third Reich of Germany. That’s serious harm.

Evolution is also important for us to consider because of the damage it has caused on Biblical teaching. Well known scholar, theologian and pastor, Dr. John MacArthur states, “Evolution is the single greatest lie perpetrated against Christianity.”¹¹ The true danger of Evolution is that it denies the Creator, strips the glory of creation, and the dignity and value of human beings, choosing instead to worship creation. Theistic Evolution, the pseudo-Christian attempt at syncretism between evolution and the Biblical account of creation that says God used evolution to create, is wrong and completely false too, because the Bible didn’t say “God started creation”. The Bible says, God created. It was so. He saw it was good.” [Evolution is an ongoing process. The Biblical perspective of creation is complete.](#)

⁸ Amanda Prestigiaco, (Dailywire.com, Aug 22, 2019.) <https://www.dailywire.com/news/50912/watch-renowned-yale-prof-leaves-darwinism-says-amanda-prestigiaco?fbclid=IwAR3EICcZECyOYZGR-Y4vP9yAQkaUjip-kFoGKD6Ho-5nIHq-3LtgHIEeBxU> Last Accessed Sept 4, 2019.

⁹ David Gelertner, [Giving Up Darwin](https://www.claremont.org/crb/article/giving-up-darwin/), (Claremont.org, May 1, 2019). <https://www.claremont.org/crb/article/giving-up-darwin/> Last accessed Sept 4, 2019. [PDF copy in MLH Sermon study files.]

¹⁰ David Gelertner, Claremont Review of Books.

¹¹ Dr. John MacArthur, Sermons on Genesis. Cty.org.



Evolution, one of science's greatest celebrations of the twentieth century, but as it is any time we worship creation over the Creator, it is actually one a complete debacle and deception. But this should not surprise to us. Romans tells us that when we fail to honor God, when we exchange the truth about God for a lie and worship and serve the creature rather than the Creator, our thinking becomes futile and hearts darkened against the truth of God. (Rom 1:21-23)

TRANS With these challenges set before us, how can we proceed to trust in Jesus?

"Genesis is a covenant history focusing on what the people of God need to know about their God and about themselves."¹² Genesis reveals God for glory and faith. From the beginning Genesis is a book of divine revelation for faith. And this is why it is essential for us. [Genesis introduces us to God as Creator, and answers the deepest questions of life by faith in Him.](#)

A call to believe God's Word is not one that demands we reject science. Quite the opposite. The Bible has no need to reject science because it is neither made obsolete by nor in conflict with science. The only science that conflicts in any manner or degree with the Bible is bad science, bad scientists, or unbelievers masquerading as bad scientists to protect godless interests of their own self-religion.

The Word of God says,

*In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth. ²The earth was without form and void, and darkness was over the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters. **Genesis 1:1-2***

Believing the Bible and placing one's faith in God through Jesus Christ is NEVER an issue of denying factual information but embracing truth. The Christian faith is not one of ignorance but of divine revelation that illumines the mind, affectionates the heart, and attunes the spirit by awakening the soul with eternal life by the Spirit of God. THIS is the new life, the born again, the made new creation of the Christian life. Jesus Christ, the Living Word incarnate, is our life as revealed by the Word of God spoken to us recorded by the written Word of God in the Bible.

[God reveals Himself as Creator of all to show Himself as the Source of eternal life in Jesus Christ.](#)

OBJ Five points of truth form a Biblical understanding (doctrine) of Creation to believe in God as Creator.

Genesis begins by introducing God who alone was present in the beginning. Moses doesn't simply start at the beginning, as if there was a start to all things, and say that God was present. Moses begins with a distinct prepositional phrase, "*In beginning...*", that points to God AS the beginning. There is not a beginning to ALL things. God has no beginning. He is eternally existent and completely independent of His creation. THIS is how the Bible begins. And our beginning reveals our end! God is the 'beginning of' and the 'end for' which all things were created.¹³ God is the beginning of the Bible, and reveals to us the end of the Bible, from the beginning. According to the Bible, God is the beginning of all things. [Moses begins with God who IS the beginning, the Origin of all that is, and point us to Him as the end for which it all exists. God is the Alpha and Omega\(Rev 21:6\), the defining reality of all things because He is the beginning and end for which all things exist.](#)

Elohim is God's Name in Genesis' creation narrative. This is a title of majesty and glory. It extols His transcendence and the power of His word. He is the ruler of the whole universe, of all. [God who is the beginning of all is worthy of all worship because He rules all.](#)

¹² W. Robert Godfrey, *God's Pattern for Creation: A Covenantal Reading of Genesis 1.* (Phillipsburg: P&R Publishing, 2003), 20.

¹³ K. A. Mathews, [Genesis 1-11:26](#), vol. 1A, *The New American Commentary* (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1996), 126–127. Mathews states, "At the commencement of the creation story the passage declares that God as Sovereign knows and controls the "end from the beginning" (Isa 46:10)." Mathews states, "The occurrence of "beginning" (rē' šīt) in 1:1 suggests that it has been selected because of its association with "end" (' aḥārīt). If so, the author has at the outset shown that creation's "beginnings" were initiated with a future goal intended, an eschatological purpose."



God is the origin and source of all. The Hebrew word “*created*” is unique and distinct to God, ONLY with His activity. It is not create as we think; gather your materials and resources and assemble them together. God created “*creatio ex nihilo*”, “out of nothing”. He originates the resources and material, THEN forms them together. God as Creator means He is the origin of the raw material and the shaper of the finished product. The Bible does not say “there was matter and God made something he could take home and show his mama.” There was NO matter until there was first God’s utterance. [The Bible says that God spoke and the heavens and earth came into being.](#)

God was actively present, working in creation. God formed the heavens and the earth. The earth was *tohu wa bohu*, formless and void. The earth had no shape, no system or structure, no organization nor operation; it was without defined meaning or boundried purpose. But one potent truth must NOT be missed, the Spirit of God hovered over the face of the waters. The Master is brooding over His canvas, preparing to bring into being all this is, space, matter, and time, and all that is held within. God is never absent, unconcerned, distant, nor disconnected. [In creation, God is attentively present and working.](#)

Creation is completed by the end of Genesis One. The Bible says that God created, it was completed, and He pronounced it good because it was done, not ongoing. [The Biblical account of creation is one of completion, not an ongoing, outstanding or evolving process.](#)

From the beginning of all to the end, God is Creator. Creation makes sense, and is the narrative that joins our natural life with eternity. We were created FOR God, and by faith we are re-created IN Christ Jesus to live eternally with Him. YOU were made for God. He knew you from the beginning and is pursuing you for a relationship with Him.(Psalm 139:13-16) “The only way to understand yourself or your life is to start with God.”¹⁴ [Life loses all lasting value when God is denied as Creator. But when we believe God is Creator, there is a divine purpose that points us to a Sovereign Redeemer in all things.](#)

[God reveals Himself as Creator of all to show Himself as the Source of eternal life in Jesus Christ.](#)

CLOSE In the end, evidence is not the issue because it is in no way lacking to inform us. The issue remains simply this, “**will you believe what God said?**” To deny the God of creation is to reject the God of salvation. They are one and the same. Elohim, the God of majesty and glory, is Yahweh, the God of personal relationship who saves as the Living Word in Jesus Christ. [Hear the revelation of God as Creator of all, trust in Him as Source of eternal life in Jesus, and worship Him with the praise and glory with which He alone is worthy.](#)

¹⁴ Lloyd-Jones, Martin. The Gospel In Genesis: From Fig Leaves to Faith. (Wheaton: Crossway, 2009) 12.

