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Studies in
GENESIS



LOUIS T. TALBOT



CHAPTER I—INTRODUCTION

CHRIST—THE THEME OF GENESIS

In our radio Bible class this morning we are taking the first in a series of studies in Genesis. As we approach this "book of beginnings," let us clearly understand that it has to do with the person and work of our Lord Jesus Christ. He is the central theme of this first book of the Bible, as, indeed, He is the One of whom the whole Word of God speaks.

In the opening chapters of the Holy Scriptures we find God's perfect creation marred by sin; man, a fallen being; Satan, a fearful enemy of God and man. And in these same opening chapters we see portrayed the Christ of prophecy, the only Saviour from sin and the power of Satan.

Therefore, to us who love the Lord Jesus, the study of Genesis will be a source of inspiration and joy. But to you, my friends, who do not know the Lord Jesus Christ as the only Saviour from sin, Genesis will be a closed book. Look to His cross for cleansing, and then the Holy Spirit will teach you, from Genesis, blessed truths concerning the things of Christ. He is the key that unlocks manifold treasures from all the Old Testament, as well as from all the New.

Have you, dear friends, ever read the book of Genesis and learned from it the things concerning the Lord Jesus? Or have you done as many of His people do today? They begin to read through the Bible, but hurry over the greater part of Genesis because they think it contains only historical data. They think it was written just to show us how things in the universe were started.

There are yet others who ask, "Are you sure that Christ is foreshadowed in Genesis, or is it only the imagination of man that makes it appear so?" In answering this inquiry, let us turn to the New Testament, where we read from the words of the Lord Jesus Himself that the Old Testament foreshadowed His wonderful person and His mighty work.

In the fifth chapter of John, Christ was stating plainly to the unbelieving Pharisees that He was ever, always, eternal God. Because He had healed the impotent man on the Sab-

bath, they "sought to slay him" (verse 16); and because He "said also that God was his Father, making himself equal with God," they "sought the more to kill him" (verse 18). Then He gave them proof upon proof of His deity.

Not least of these proofs is found in verses 39-47, in which He concluded this, one of His most profound discourses, by saying:

"Search the scriptures (meaning the Old Testament, for the New Testament was not yet written); for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of me. . . . Had ye believed Moses, ye would have believed me: for he wrote of me."

And Moses wrote Genesis, as he was "moved by the Holy Ghost"!

Again, let us read Luke 24:25-27. Here we have the risen Lord speaking to the two disciples as they walked to Emmaus. They were sad because the One in whom they had trusted had been crucified outside Jerusalem's walls; and they were perplexed because "certain women" had heralded the angels' message of His resurrection from the dead. Then it was that the risen Christ, still unknown to them, said plainly:

"O fools, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken: ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and to enter into his glory? And beginning at Moses and all the prophets, he expounded unto them in all the scriptures the things concerning himself."

The expression "Moses and all the prophets" really comprehends the whole of the Old Testament. "Beginning at Moses"; that is, the first five books of the Bible—Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy—and then in "all the prophets, he expounded unto them in all the scriptures the things concerning himself." By "all the scriptures" Luke meant all the Old Testament, as these two disciples well knew; for the New Testament was not written until after the Lord Jesus ascended into heaven. But the point is that, taking all the Old Testament as His text, the risen Lord Jesus taught these two of Himself. How dare one say that the Old Testament contains only historical data?

How dare any Christian doubt that the hundreds of Old Testament prophecies concerning the crucified and risen Lord were fulfilled in His coming into the world as a suffering Saviour, or will be fulfilled in His second coming as a reigning King?

As if to emphasize this truth, the risen Christ said to His disciples similar words, as recorded by Luke in verses 44-46 of this same chapter:

“And he said unto them, These are the words which I spake unto you, while I was yet with you, that all things must be fulfilled, which were written in the law of Moses, and in the prophets, and in the psalms, concerning me. Then opened he their understanding, that they might understand the scriptures, and said unto them, Thus it is written, and thus it behoved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day.”

Oh, what a wonderful exposition that must have been! It was from the Old Testament Scriptures—the Law of Moses, the prophets, and the Psalms—that He expounded unto them the things concerning Himself. And “the law of Moses,” to every devout Jew, meant, not just the ten commandments and the explanation of these. “The law of Moses” meant more; it meant the five books which Moses wrote as he was inspired by the Holy Spirit. Indeed, the Jewish rabbis in the day of Christ divided the Old Testament into these three parts: “The law of Moses”; “the psalms,” and “the prophets.” “The law of Moses” included Genesis. And Christ said it speaks of Him.

How wonderful, then, does this book of Genesis become in our eyes, when we find that, instead of its being just history, it contains precious truths concerning the Lord Jesus Christ! May He open our eyes, that we may, indeed, behold wonderful things out of this portion of His Book! May He teach us to sing the wisdom of the poet who wrote, saying:

“In the cross of Christ I glory,
Tow’ring o’er the wrecks of time;
All the light of sacred story
Gathers ’round its head sublime.”

THE PENTATEUCH UNFOLDED IN THE NEW TESTAMENT

The books of Moses, sometimes called "The Pentateuch," meaning "The Five-fold Book," find a remarkable parallel in the New Testament. In other words, all of the New Testament teaching is bound up in the first five books of the Bible—Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy.

Someone has likened the book of Genesis to the four Gospels, because in it we have the beginning and the foundation, upon which the Christian faith rests; Exodus, to the book of Acts, because therein are recorded the stories of deliverance from bondage and the journey to a heavenly land, illustrated in Canaan; Leviticus, to the Pauline Epistles, because therein are found the great doctrines pertaining to holiness, separation, standing, and worship; the epistles of Peter, James, John and Jude, to the book of Numbers, for there we find the portrayal and explanation of the wilderness experiences of the redeemed; Deuteronomy, to the book of Revelation, for therein are rehearsed all of God's ways, and a prophetic outlook is given in detail concerning God's people—Jew, Gentile, and the church of God.

The Reverend Graham W. Scroggie, D.D., of Edinburgh, Scotland, while preaching in The Moody Church on one occasion, made a similar, sweeping statement when he said these striking words: "In the Old Testament we see portrayed the Christ of prophecy; in the Gospels, the Christ of history; in the Acts and the Epistles, the Christ of experience; in the Revelation, the Christ of glory."

We can not emphasize too much the truth contained in such words as these; for the New Testament is the unfolding of the Old, even as the Old is the foretelling of the New. And Genesis is the seed-plot of all the Word of God.

GENESIS—THE BOOK OF BEGINNINGS

The very word "Genesis" implies "the beginning" of all things. In spite of the infidels, the higher critics, and all who think themselves more wise than the God of the Bible; in spite of all that is said by scientific and literary men; sooner or later historians, astronomers, geologists, and all

others have to come back to this book, in order to trace the first authentic records about any subject that they are studying. Whether they like it or not—and many do not like it—they have to do it. They have to learn, as the ages march on, that the marvelous discoveries of one century or another have only proved the truth of some point in this book of Genesis, at which clever men of the ages before were throwing stones, or about which many were laughing, calling such things impossible or ridiculous.

The book of Genesis presents the beginning of all things that are in the world today. Here are some of these things, about which we shall study in more detail in later lessons; they have to do with all we need to know in regard to God's relation to the earth and the earth's relation to God:

1. *The Beginning of the Creation*—of all nature, including life, seasons, days, and years.

2. *The Beginning of Man*, created in the image and likeness of God, perfect in all his ways, until he became a sinful, fallen creature, standing in need of saving grace.

3. *The Beginning of All Social Life*—of the marriage tie, of music, of science, of agriculture, of architecture, and of literature. Genesis tells us that the first cities were built in that part of the world which secular history calls "the cradle of civilization," the Tigris-Euphrates valley. And the second chapter of Genesis states that this was the site of the Garden of Eden, as evidenced by the geographical names listed there!

4. *The Beginning of Sin and Death*. Alas! here we have the beginning of sin, and the beginning of death working among us because of sin. The entrance of sin accounts for the startling contrast between the way the book opens and the way it closes. The first words of Genesis are, "In the beginning God"; whereas the last words are, "In a coffin in Egypt."

This Book is the only book in the universe that explains why men die. It is the only Book that tells why men are born in sin, why they reach a certain point in their physical and mental development, and then weaken and die. Why is it that men do not live forever? The opening chapters of

Genesis give the answer, the only answer, to that question. In Genesis we find the germ of every bit of wreckage that later fell upon the human race, as well as the beginning of every hope for humanity.

5. *The Beginning of the Curse.* In the third chapter of Genesis we find the curse upon Satan, which seals his final doom; the curse upon the woman; the curse upon the man, and upon the ground for man's sake.

There were no thorns, briars, and thistles in Eden; but since Adam fell, these have infested the ground for thousands of years, even as God said. Nothing but hard toil will wrest from the ground a living for man. There is no other way to get it. A man may cultivate a piece of ground for fifty years; he may grow flowers and vegetables and grain, over and over again. But he has only to leave it for a year or two after all the cultivating, and thorns will be back again. Genesis gives "the why and the wherefore" of this.

6. *The Beginning of Bible Teaching about Satan.* In Genesis we have presented that fearful personality, Satan, opposed to God and to man. And in Genesis the wiles of Satan are exposed. Paul says:

"We are not ignorant of his devices";

and here in Genesis those devices are made known. His attack has been, from the beginning, on the Word of God, even as it has been all through the centuries.

7. *The Beginning of the Revelation to Fallen Man of the God of Love.* In Genesis God is revealed as a great, living personality—the Creator-God, the Mighty God, the covenant-keeping God.

In Genesis we find the first reference to the blessed Trinity—a plurality of persons in the Godhead. The Hebrew word "Elohim" in Gen. 1:1 is in the plural number. Then in Gen. 1:26 we read:

"Let us make man in our image."

(Compare the plural pronoun referring to God in Gen. 3:22; 11:7.)

In Genesis we have God presented for the first time as a seeking Saviour when He called to fallen man, asking, "Adam, where art thou?"

In Genesis we have the beginning of the Messianic prophecy that continues as a widening line until it reaches its culmination in the Child born in Bethlehem. Gen. 3:15 is one of the most significant verses in the book; for there we are told that "the seed of woman," our virgin-born Saviour, will one day bruise Satan's head. Thus, in Genesis we find first declared the great doctrine of the incarnation. The coming One was to be supernaturally born. He was to have a human mother, but no human father. The coming Saviour and Deliverer was to be "the seed of woman."

In Genesis the death and resurrection of Christ are foreshadowed. By the shedding of innocent blood God provided "coats of skins" to replace the fig leaf aprons which Adam and Eve had made. Abel's blood-sacrifice pointed on to the "Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world." Isaac, the beloved son of Abraham, was laid upon the altar; and from it Abraham received him back as "in a figure" from the dead. Thus God was teaching Abraham that He would one day send His only begotten Son to die and rise again—for simple man.

In Genesis the priesthood of Christ is proclaimed. The Lord Jesus is a priest "after the order of Melchizedek." He is the "King of Righteousness" and the "Prince of Peace," even as was Melchizedek.

In Genesis we have the Saviour's second coming, exaltation, and glorious reign prefigured. This is strikingly typified in the history of Joseph.

Joseph had two dreams. The first pictured an *earthly* scene, in which he and his brethren were binding sheaves in the field, when lo, his sheaf arose and stood upright, while the sheaves of his brethren stood around and made obeisance to Joseph's sheaf. The second dream portrayed a *heavenly* scene in which the sun, the moon, and the stars did obeisance to him. All this was a shadow of Christ's supremacy when, "in the dispensation of the fulness of times," He will "gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth; even in him" (Eph. 1:10).

In Genesis we have the person and work of the Holy Spirit associated with the Word of God—the two great agencies in the salvation of man.

“And the Spirit *moved* upon the face of the waters and God *said*.”

Here are the two powers used in re-creation, as well as in creation, the Holy Spirit and the Word of God.

What treasures are in store for us as, in Genesis, we consider the matchless person and mighty work of the triune God!

8. *The Beginning of Nations and Languages.* Skeptics laughed at the Genesis record of what took place at the tower of Babel, until archaeology proved the literal truth of this most valuable document of “how” and “why” the nations were “divided in the earth after the flood.” (See Gen. 10:32; 11:1-9.)

9. *The Beginning of the Hebrew Nation.* In Genesis the purpose of the creation of Israel and the glorious future of that nation are made known.

“And I will make thy seed as the dust of the earth: so that if a man can number the dust of the earth, then shall thy seed also be numbered” (Gen. 13:16).

“And in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed” (Gen. 22:18).

That this promise is a definite prophecy of the coming of the Saviour through the Hebrew nation, is stated plainly in Gal. 3:8, where Paul said, “God . . . preached . . . the *gospel* unto Abraham, saying, In thee shall all nations be blessed.” Now we know that “the *gospel*” is the “good news” concerning our crucified and risen Lord Jesus. Christ and the Bible were given to the world through Israel. What blessing! And Genesis tells us through which of the twelve tribes of Israel the Messiah should come—Judah. (Gen. 49:10).

Moreover, in Genesis we have the first warning of judgment upon the individual or the nation which persecutes Israel. “I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee” (Gen. 12:3) is a warning that has been ful-

filled to the very letter from the day it was given to this day in which we live. No nation has ever persecuted Israel without paying the penalty in sorrow and in suffering and in national shame. And no individual who despises the Lord's chosen people can escape the righteous judgment of our covenant-keeping God.

10. *The Beginning of Other Doctrines Concerning the Redeemed.* Every doctrine taught in the Bible is found in embryonic form in Genesis. These teachings are later developed in the rest of the Bible; but in Genesis we find the seed-plot of all great doctrines pertaining to salvation and the eternal destiny of man, as well as to prophecy about the Jew, the Gentile, and the church of God.

Of course, we must remember that the church is a New Testament body; and that the disciples were not called "Christians" until the days of the Antioch church. But in shadow and in type we see clear teaching concerning Christian doctrine, even in this first book of the Old Testament.

In Genesis the truth of salvation is typically displayed. Adam and Eve were clothed by God Himself, clothed with coats of skins (Gen. 3:21). Here it is proclaimed that man would be clothed only on the basis of a death. In all probability the skins were of a little lamb or a sheep, typical of the offering of Christ, by which we are made ready for the presence of God.

In Genesis the truth of justification by faith is first proclaimed.

"And he (Abraham) believed the Lord; and he (God) counted it to him for righteousness" (Gen. 15:6).

This passage says that Abraham believed God, not Abraham obeyed God or loved God or served God, but Abraham believed God and it was counted unto him for righteousness. Compare this with the fourth chapter of Romans.

In Genesis we find proclaimed for the first time salvation through identification with another. And the Lord said to Noah,

"Come thou and all thy house into the ark; for *thee* have I seen righteous before *me* in this generation" (Gen. 7:1).

Thus, seven persons were saved in the righteousness of the one man. And not only that, but of every kind of beast and bird and creeping thing, clean and unclean, either seven's or two's were sharers in the deliverance. Such is the manner of the salvation which God has provided in Christ Jesus.

“By the righteousness of one . . . many be made righteous” (Rom. 5:18-19).

In Genesis the believer's security is marvelously illustrated. A godless world perished in the flood, but Noah and his family were secure in the ark. God had shut them in.

In Genesis the doctrines of separation and sanctification are also proclaimed and illustrated. Enoch walked with God; Noah was separated from the evil of his day; Abraham was called to separate himself, first from the Chaldeans, and later from Sodom.

In Genesis the rapture of the church is vividly illustrated, as are also the great tribulation and the return of the Lord to establish His millennial kingdom. Enoch, representing the church, was translated before the flood; Noah and his family, representing the faithful Jewish remnant, which will go through the great tribulation, went through the flood, miraculously preserved; following the flood Noah became the governor of the whole earth. We have here illustrated:

The church translated.

The Jew passing through the tribulation.

The millennium established with the Lord as its Governor.

11. *The Beginning of Bible Teaching Concerning the Judgment of Satan and His Followers.* In Genesis the coming Antichrist is foreseen. The two “seeds” of Genesis 3:15 were to culminate in two men, Christ and Antichrist. Christ was “the seed of woman”; the Antichrist will be the “seed” of the serpent.

In Genesis the judgment of God upon the wicked is solemnly exhibited. The flood upon the world of ungodly men in the days of Noah, the overthrow of Sodom and Gomorrah, all proclaim the sterner attributes of God and make known

His eternal hatred of sin, as well as His matchless love and forgiving grace.

12. *The Beginning of God's Revelation to Man of His Great Plan of the Ages.* Four of the seven ages, in God's dealing with the human race, are set forth in Genesis: (1) Man innocent in Eden failed, and was expelled from the garden; (2) man under conscience became utterly corrupt, and God sent the flood to purify the earth; (3) man under human government rebelled against God, and at Babel He had to send confusion of tongues; (4) man under promise failed God yet again; and Genesis closes with Joseph "in a coffin in Egypt," with Israel on the threshold of four-hundred years of bitter bondage.

In Exodus we see man under the law; since Calvary's Cross, man under grace; and one day we shall see Jesus as the reigning King.

When we remember that Genesis covers a period of 2,315 years, we must realize how much God must want to teach us in these fifty chapters!

13. *The Beginning of Four Great Covenants.* God made a covenant with Adam in the Garden of Eden before sin entered; He made another with fallen Adam, when He promised the Redeemer (Gen. 3:15); He covenanted with Noah, never again to destroy the earth with a flood; and He made a covenant with Abraham, that through his line the Messiah should come.

In all the remainder of the Bible there are only four other great God-given covenants: The Mosaic, the Palestinian, the Davidic, and the New Covenant.

Therefore, if we want a start in knowledge at the real fountain-head of true information, we must look in this book of Genesis. What a marvelous portion of God's Word Genesis is, and how rich we shall find this study to be! As a result of this exposition, we should find ourselves more deeply rooted and grounded than we have ever been in every doctrine proclaimed in the Word of God. We should find ourselves in a better position to understand the remainder of the Bible, as a result of our study in Genesis.

THE LINE OF SIN AND THE LAMP OF PROMISE

In Genesis we see clearly the rise of two lines of development, lines which run right through the Bible, beginning at Genesis and closing in the Revelation.

One is like a dark line, thickening, widening, and becoming more black as we go on down the history of man. It is the development of sin. This line of development runs on until Christ is rejected and until the Antichrist is received.

Then the next line of development, running side by side with this, is what we may call the lamp of promise. This is lighted up in Eden by the promise of "the seed of the woman"; and it goes on growing brighter and brighter, right on to the perfect day, when the glory of the Lord shall fill the whole earth as the waters cover the sea. Then there shall not be a corner in the wide world where the glory of Jesus of Nazareth shall not shine; then the very canopy of heaven shall be turned into a vast sounding board to swell the great refrain of praise and ascription of glory and honor to the Messiah of Israel, King of Kings and Lord of Lords. Yes, the time is near when His glory shall fill the whole earth, when His appearance in the clouds shall brighten up the two hemispheres of this world, and the chief men of the earth will flee from His presence. The study of Genesis will help us all to pray more intelligently,

"Even so, come, Lord Jesus."

These two lines of development, which have their beginning in Genesis find their culmination in the book of Revelation.

Genesis opens with a beautiful Paradise; Revelation closes with "Paradise Regained"—with a plus.

Genesis finds sinful man driven from the tree of life; Revelation pictures redeemed man beside the tree of life.

"In the beginning God . . ." Throughout all eternity God "will dwell" with His people.

The first heaven and the first earth were marred by sin; into the new heaven and the new earth nothing may enter that would defile.

In Genesis Satan first enters God's perfect creation; in Revelation he meets his awful and final doom.

Death came because of sin; in God's celestial city "there shall be no more death."

Sin brought tears and sorrow and suffering; in heaven "God shall wipe away all tears."

In Genesis the first Adam was given dominion over God's creation; in Revelation the last Adam is seen claiming His sovereign rights.

In Genesis the first bride became man's "helpmeet"; in Revelation the church, which is the bride of Christ, is seen reigning with Him in glory.

In Genesis man rebelled against God at Babel; in Revelation Babylon's doom is foretold.

In Genesis Satan presumed to doubt and deny the Word of God; in Revelation certain, awful judgment is pronounced upon all who add to or take away from the Holy Scriptures.

The line of sin and the lamp of promise find their beginning in Genesis; and in Revelation these two lines of development find their culmination.

HOW TO READ GENESIS

Dear friends, will you not read this first book of the Bible repeatedly, prayerfully? Read it and read it and read it again. Fix in your mind the great outline facts contained in these fifty chapters.

The late Reverend James M. Gray, D.D., formerly president of The Moody Bible Institute, stated the broad outline of Genesis in eight comprehensive words, with chapter divisions. Perhaps these will help us to see a bird's-eye-view of this seed-plot of the Bible:

1. Creation, 1 and 2.
2. Fall, 3 and 4.
3. Flood, 5-9.
4. Nations, 10 and 11.
5. Abraham, 12-25.
6. Isaac, 21-28; 35:27-29.
7. Jacob, 25-49.
8. Joseph, 37-50.

Then, having gotten a clear grasp of these outline facts, we shall be better able to fit all the details into the picture.

May the Lord add His blessing to our study of this portion of His wonderful Word. His own Holy Spirit wrote it, as He inspired Moses, the man of God, to put it on record. This same Holy Spirit lives in our hearts, if we love the Lord. He is our Teacher; and He will take the things of Christ, and show them unto us. Our Lord gave us this promise; and He always keeps His word!

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