

OT 113c: A Survey of the Old Testament Lesson 1

Read: Genesis, **The Old Testament Speaks** by Schultz, pp.1-42 and the accompanying material.

Knowledge of the Bible is an integral part of a basic education. A student should never consider himself educated until he has a good knowledge of the Bible. Never should a survey course be undertaken without the reading of the primary and most important source--the Old Testament itself. You are encouraged to read the entire Old Testament during this study as well as the textbook--**The Old Testament Speaks** by Samuel J. Schultz.

In a survey to the Old Testament the student should be exposed to information concerning the literary, political, social and economic world during the writing of the Old Testament. The Old Testament was written by many authors over a period of least 2,000 years. Various archaeological discoveries have shed at least some light on the purely historical aspects of the Old Testament in the social, political and religious realms of Hebrew life. 1)

The historical records of the Old Testament are important to the Christian as well as the Hebrew, for it is in the Old Testament that the seeds of truth concerning the promised Messiah are found.

The nation Israel interacted with Egyptians, Assyrians, Babylonians and other peoples in the land of Canaan, so it is necessary to know some facts about these peoples and how they influenced the nation of Israel.

The Old Testament consists of thirty-nine books divided into four general divisions. The historical books consist of Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy, Joshua, Judges, Ruth, I & II Samuel, I & II Kings, I & II Chronicles, Ezra, Nehemiah and Esther. The poetic books consist of Job, Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes and the Song of Solomon. The major prophetic books consist of Isaiah, Jeremiah, Lamentations, Ezekiel and Daniel. The minor prophets are Hosea, Joel, Amos, Obadiah, Jonah, Micah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah, Haggai, Zechariah and Malachi.

The Old Testament was written to a large extent in the Hebrew language; however, some small sections were written in the Aramaic tongue. The entire Bible has undergone many translations, and it has been copied in thousands of languages and dialects. Today there is scarcely a tribe or group of people anywhere who does not have at least a part of the Bible in their own language or dialect. 2)

Introduction

The book of Genesis is a book of beginnings. Genesis means the coming into being of something. The book tells about the beginnings of all things except God. He had no beginning; He is the "I AM" of the past, present and future. Genesis, genetics, generations and genes are words that all have to do with beginning and shaping of life. The words "generation" or "generations" is used nineteen times in the book.

Genesis has been properly called the “seed-plot” of the Bible. Within the book almost all the great doctrines of the entire Bible are found, albeit some are in germ form. Those books and verses that follow develop these doctrines. The book of Genesis is even quoted about sixty times and in seventeen of the New Testament books.

The Beginning of the World

The Bible appropriately begins, “In the beginning God created...” It is revelation written by the only One qualified to write it-God. Apparently Moses was the human author, but God inspired him to write down what He wanted him to convey to all who read its sacred pages.

The word “create” means to bring into being. In other words, God made the world without any pre-existing material. “Through faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that things which are seen were not made of things which do appear” Hebrews 11:3.

The word translated God is “Elohim” which is plural thus indicating a plurality in the Godhead or the plenitude of God’s power. The verb “create” is singular which leads us to believe that there is more than one person in the Godhead. Verse 3 refers to the Spirit of God, so there were at least two persons in the Godhead. John 1:1-3 and Colossians 1:16,17 teach us that God the Son was present at the creation.

The Beginning of Man

Man was created in the image (resemblance) and likeness of God. Man’s body was developed from pre-existing material (the dust of the ground), Genesis 2:7; however, God breathed into him “the breath of life and man became a living soul.” Man is like God only in soul/spirit, not in body form. Man’s spiritual and moral nature including his intellectual, emotional, and volitional faculties are in the likeness of God. Furthermore, these faculties set him apart from the rest of God’s creation.

The Beginning of Sin

Sin had its beginning on the earth when Satan through the serpent tempted Eve in the Garden of Eden. He cast doubt in her mind when he said, “Yea, God hath said, Ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden?” Furthermore he captured the eye, ear, and inward desire of Eve through “the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life” (1 John 2:16).

When Eve and Adam yielded to the temptation of Satan the entire human race was made sinful because all mankind had its beginning in Adam and Eve. They were the parents of all mankind.

The Beginning of Salvation

Thank God, Genesis includes the beginning of salvation. God gives the reader the first glimpse of salvation, when he said that He would put enmity (hatred) between Satan and the woman, and between his seed and her seed. Then the promise is given. He (the seed of woman, more specifically Christ) will bruise the serpent’s head, and Satan’s seed will bruise his (Christ’s) heel. The contrast between the head and the heel are significant here because the

fatal wound will be in Satan's head, but the victory will be gained as Satan only wounds the heel of Christ. Both Adam and Eve are made responsible for their sins; however, salvation is forthcoming in the promised Redeemer, the seed of woman-the Lord Jesus Christ.

The Beginning of Israel

Starting here God begins to reveal His desire to focus His story on the family of Abraham and his descendants. A nation of people is chosen who will produce the Messiah, the Redeemer. So the Bible is not so much the history of man as it is history of the redemption of man.

God called out Abraham and gave him the following promises: (1) I will make thee a great nation, (2) I will bless thee, (3) I will make thy name great, (4) Thou shalt be a blessing, (5) I will bless them that bless thee, (6) I will curse them that curse thee, and (7) in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed.

The Beginning of the Twelve Tribes of Israel

From Abraham and Sarah came Isaac. Then Isaac and Rebekah were the parents of Jacob. From Jacob and his wives and concubines were born twelve sons from whom the whole nation of Israel would descend. A most beautiful verse is found in Genesis 49:10 where God promises Judah "the scepter shall not depart from Judah, nor a law giver from between his feet, until Shiloh come; and unto him shall the gathering of the people be." This promise is fully realized in the person of Jesus Christ, the Savior of the world.

1) Harrison, R. K., Old Testament Times, Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, p. 18.

2) Hester, H. I., The Heart of Hebrew History, Nashville: Broadman Press, p. 7.