

PREACHING THROUGH GENESIS

You are invited to join us in reading this book during the month, and to hear the discussion of it in sermon, morning and evening.

Hear how modern discoveries support the historic truth of the Bible record.

If your reading of Genesis arouses questions you would like to hear discussed, write your questions out and hand them to your preacher. They will be considered in the evening services.

The "Book of Beginnings" tells of:

Creation—the beginning of all things.

The beginning of the human race.

The beginning of sin.

The beginning of God's plan for man's redemption.

The beginning of God's promise finally fulfilled in Christ.

The beginning of the Hebrew nation.

The writer is *Moses*, who lived three centuries after the last event recorded in Genesis. He may have used ancient records, but was aided by the Spirit of God (Heb. 1:1).

The time covered—something like two thousand years, from Adam to Joseph.

A BRIEF OUTLINE OF GENESIS

<i>Chapters</i>	<i>Characters</i>	<i>Events</i>	<i>Places</i>
1- 5	Adam, etc.	Creation and Fall	Mesopotamia
6-10	Noah, etc.	The Flood	Mesopotamia
11-20	Abraham, etc.	The Beginning of the Nation and the Promise	Mesopotamia and Canaan
21-36	Isaac, Jacob, etc.	Founding of the Nation	Canaan
37-50	Joseph, etc.	Preservation of the Nation	Canaan and Egypt

Sermon Outlines Provided:

"The First Birth of Freedom" (Gen. 3:1-20)

"Cain and Abel - Hatred and Warfare" (Gen. 4:1-15)

"Mother Love in Trying Times" (Gen. 16; 21:1-21)

"Jacob and Esau - God's Sense of Values" (Gen. 28:10-22)

"Everybody's Business" (Gen. 41:25-43)

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Other Suggested Sermon Topics:

- "In the Beginning" (Gen. 1:1-13)
- "Noah - Obedience and Salvation" (Gen. 6)
- "Babel - Man's Way to Heaven" (Gen. 11:1-9)
- "The Greatness of Abraham" (Gen. 13:1-13)
- "Joseph - Used of God" (Gen. 45:1-11)

QUESTIONS OVER GENESIS

1. How many days did God use in creating the world? (1:3-31)
2. Who gave the animals their names? (2:19)
3. Adam called his wife Eve. What does the name Eve mean? (3:20)
4. Who said when asked about his brother, "Am I my brother's keeper?" (4:9)
5. How old did Methusaleh live to be? (5:27)
6. Who were the sons of Noah? (6:10)
7. Who closed the door of the ark? (7:16)
8. What was the sign of God's covenant with men after the flood? (9:13)
9. What does the word *babel* mean? (11:9)
10. Who was promised that he would be the father of a great nation? (12:2)
11. Who escaped from Sodom when it was destroyed? (19:16, 26)
12. Who is the only woman whose age at death is given in the Bible? (23:1)
13. The Arab nations are descendants of whom? (25:18)
14. Who were the children of Isaac and Rebekah? (25:25, 26)
15. Who helped Jacob steal the blessing from Esau? (27:6-17)
16. Who was Jacob's second wife? (29:28)
17. Who is famous for wrestling with an angel? (32:24)
18. Because of jealousy who was sold to the Egyptians by his brothers? (34:4, 19)
19. Name the two sons of Joseph. (41:51, 52)
20. What last request did Joseph make concerning his body? (49:29, 30)

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FIRST BIRTH OF FREEDOM

(Genesis 3:1-20)

INTRODUCTION —

Abraham Lincoln, at Gettysburg, November 19, 1863, urged that “This nation, under God, shall have a new birth of freedom”

Whence comes freedom? (from preamble to Declaration of Independence)

When in the course of human events it becomes necessary for one people to dissolve the political bands which have connected them with another, and to assume among the powers of the earth the separate and equal station to which the laws of nature and of nature’s God entitle them . . .

We hold these truths to be self-evident — that all men are created equal; that they are endowed by their Creator with certain inalienable rights; . . .

. . . We therefore . . . appealing to the Supreme Judge of the world for the rectitude of our intentions, do in the name and by the authority of the good people of these colonies, solemnly publish and declare that these united colonies are, and of right ought to be, free and independent states. . . .

I. “LET US MAKE MAN IN OUR IMAGE, AFTER OUR LIKENESS . . . AND GOD CREATED MAN IN HIS OWN IMAGE” (Gen. 1:26, 27).

A. God indicated the freedom of His own choice — “Let us”

B. The man, made in His image, is likewise free.

II. MAN IS COMMANDED, BUT NOT FORCED, TO ABSTAIN FROM THE FRUIT OF THE TREE.

(All elements of freedom are here:)

A. Man with the power of choice — no other creature has it.

B. There is more than one way to choose.

1. There must be an alternative or there is no freedom.

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2. The presence of evil in the world is necessary to preserve the humanity of man.

C. God's command, guiding in the right way. Without it, the human family is like a ship without a rudder.

III. MAN CHOOSES TO DISOBEY.

A. Well-ordered nature, without choice, moves in the pattern set by God. Man blunders through history like a drunkard, because he must be free.

B. Wherever there is choice, some will choose the wrong course.

C. Read Edwin Markham's poem—"Man Test."

IV. MAN IS PUNISHED, BUT NOT DESTROYED, FOR HIS DISOBEDIENCE.

A. Here is evidence of God's value placed upon human personality. On this all human liberty rests.

B. The serpent and the ground are cursed for man's sin; man is not cursed. — The things of nature have suffered much for man's sin (Romans 8:19-22).

C. The punishment is discipline, not destruction.

1. Toil, to teach the value of life and God's goodness.

2. Pain—"Tribulation worketh patience, and patience approvedness" (Rom. 5:3, 4).

3. Death—But only after a time of testing and preparation.

D. Freedom remains.

V. GOD SETS IN MOTION THE PLAN TO SAVE MAN FROM HIS SINS.

A. The promise of the redeemer.

B. The clothing of skin, preview of the covering for sins.

C. The plan of salvation itself must be accepted freely, or not at all.

CAIN AND ABEL - HATRED AND WARFARE

(Genesis 4:1-15)

INTRODUCTION —

A German school teacher says, "Hatred in the intellectual world is what the atomic bomb is to the physical."

Here is traced the beginning of hatred and warfare, and here are the words of God Himself on the subject—the story is too often told without them.

I. HATRED GREW OUT OF DIFFERENCES—CAIN A TILLER OF THE SOIL, ABEL A SHEPHERD.

- A. "I like everybody I know; it is just the ones I don't know that I don't like."
- B. Compare feuds between cattle men and sheep men in the old West.
- C. "We are different."—Reply, "We are brothers."

II. HATRED GREW OUT OF *CAIN'S OWN MORAL FAILURE*.

- A. "Jehovah said, Why art thou wroth, and why is thy countenance fallen? If thou doest well, shall it not be lifted up?"

Illus. — "I have noticed that the man who is doing his level best to live a Christian life knows how hard it is, and is usually generous of his fellow man. It is the one who has something in his own life to hide who wants to drag everybody else down to his level."

- B. Bitterness, frustration, quarrelsomeness, have the same source.—When one fails himself, he can trust no other.

III. HATRED IS EXPRESSED IN JEALOUSY AND RESENTMENT AGAINST THE BETTER OR MORE FORTUNATE.—Can one hate a baby, or a small kitten?

- A. Fear and lack of security make one dangerous—as a skittish animal.
- B. Jealousy of another in some way superior. (How popular is the star pupil?)

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1. Materially—driver of a jalopy smashes the big car.
2. Morally—the resentment kindled against Jesus. “If they have hated me they will hate you also.”
3. The Swiss said, “We see no reason to persecute the Jews; we do not feel inferior to them.”

IV. THE TIME TO CONQUER THE THING WAS BEFORE IT TOOK SHAPE IN ACTION.

- A. “If thou doest not well, sin coucheth at the door, and unto thee shall be its desire, but do thou rule over it.” (See Matt. 15:11, 18-20.)
- B. “Whosoever hateth his brother is a murderer.”

V. THE ACT FOUND A TIME (DELIBERATELY) FOR FRUITION.

The Septuagint says (“Cain told Abel his brother”) “Let us go out into the open field.”

- A. Sin grows up: Adam disobedient—his son a murderer.
- B. “When inclined to work up a triple plated hatred for somebody, just pause, count ten, and think. If hate still lingers, sit down and write a letter to that half-forgotten man or woman who gave you a lift when you needed it most.”—*Strickland Gillilan*.

VI. DISCOVERY AND PUNISHMENT ARE SURE. . . .

“The day when every secret thing shall be made known.”

VII. GOD FORBIDS REVENGE.

- A. “Beloved, avenge not yourselves, but rather give place unto wrath . . .”
- B. The spiral revenge, like the spiral of inflation . . . “If ye bite and devour one another, take care that ye be not consumed, one of another” (Gal. 5:15).

CONCLUSION:

God’s reply in Christ Jesus.

“God so loved the world”—“Blessed are ye”

Diff.—He broke down the middle wall.

“Do good unto all men—overcome evil with good.”

Failure—If any man be in Christ, he is new.

MOTHER LOVE IN TRYING TIMES

(Genesis 16; 21:1-21)

INTRODUCTION —

One difficulty about Mother's Day is an excess of idealization. Mother is pictured as a Madonna or as a silver-haired ideal; either of which applies to relatively few mothers.

Let us recognize Mother for what she is, and honor her before God. One of the most memorable mother stories in the Bible is not one of an ideal character.

I. CHAPTER ONE —

- A. Abraham, childless at 85, has been promised a nation. Sarah, according to the custom of her nation; urges him to take her Egyptian servant, Hagar, as a secondary wife, with the exception that Sarah will bring up Hagar's child as her own.
- B. When Hagar finds that she is to become a mother, she becomes proud and despises her mistress. Sarah becomes jealous and deals harshly with Hagar.
- C. God's laws are not set aside without tragic consequences.
 - 1. Abraham did that which was custom in his country, but his act controverted God's plan, and he and all his suffered for it.
 - 2. Broken homes and re-marriages are not according to God's plan, no matter what the laws of the state may say.
 - 3. Marriages of believers and unbelievers (mixed marriages) are not His plan.
 - 4. Hasty, thoughtless marriages are not according to His plan.

II. CHAPTER TWO —

- A. Hagar, unable to bear Sarai's mistreatment longer, flees into the desert, and is found at a fountain of water near Kadesh, on the way back to Egypt.
- B. The angel finds her, chides her, commands her to return; and promises a nation through Ishmael.

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- C. Here is born greatness.
 - 1. Hagar, the Egyptian servant, becomes a real heroine through mother love.
 - 2. She obeyed God's command and, for her son's sake, bore her trouble.
 - a. Can we have the promises if we reject the commands?
 - b. The mother who won't lose a little sleep to take her children to church may lose much sleep to get them out of trouble.
 - 3. (An obstetrician tells of seeing many frivolous girls respond remarkably to God's miracle of motherhood.)

III. CHAPTER THREE —

- A. Hagar returns, and sees her son brought up as Abram's heir; then Sarah bears a son Isaac, and there are two heirs; then at the feast of weaning, Ishmael makes fun of the baby Isaac, and Sarah demands his ejection.
- B. Abraham demurs, but God tells him that it shall be so, and, reluctantly hasty, he sends Hagar and Ishmael off with meager provisions to find friends among the wandering tribes of the desert.
- C. Water gone and thirst pressing down, Hagar resigns herself and the boy to death, making him as comfortable as possible; then an angel chides her again, and she is led to see a well of water.
- D. God relieves dark tragedy.
 - 1. Not only that we should do our best, but we must let Him do His best with us.
 - 2. The restoring fountain was always there—God pointed it out.

IV. CHAPTER FOUR —

- A. Ishmael lives, a rugged, independent life; genders a nation.
- B. How much more can God do with well-taught sons of godly mothers—sons of God in Christ.

CONCLUSION — "What aileth thee, Hagar?"

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JACOB AND ESAU — GOD'S SENSE OF VALUES

(Genesis 28:10-22)

INTRODUCTION —

Why should God choose Jacob, rather than Esau, to establish His chosen nation?

“Please, God, make bad people good and good people nice!”

These twins are an astrologer's nightmare:

Born with one holding the other's heel; no way to explain their horoscopes.

The one the carefree, frank, and generous outdoorsman delighting his father.

The other the suspicious, crafty, quiet dweller in tents.

In popularity contest, then or now, Jacob would not have had a chance. But God—

The incident at Bethel may shed light on the subject.

I. JACOB LEFT BEERSHEBA.

That's the first chapter; he was escaping Esau's wrath.

A. The purchase of birthright (double portion of inheritance) for a bowl of chili.

1. Esau demonstrated absorption with present satisfaction — *now* generation. (red lentils)

2. Jacob showed concern for roots in past and development in future. — His procedure was shady, but his sense of values was right.

B. The securing of the blessing from aged Isaac (the first place in the family).

1. Jacob's deception promoted by Rebekah. They both pay for it. Last time together.

2. Esau's bitter tears and Isaac's disappointment.

II. JACOB WAS ON HIS WAY TO HARAN.

Second chapter; he was going to establish a family.

A. God's directive was clear in later times: don't marry idolaters. So find a bride among the family and keep the way of godliness clear.

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- B. The family to become the nation, through which to send God's son. The family to teach of God, to worship God, to serve God. Father the priest.
- C. By contrast, Esau took Hittite girls, "which were a grief of mind unto Isaac and to Rebekah" (Gen. 26:34, 35).
- D. This tolerant integration is very popular now.
 - 1. Love is all; religion, race, culture mean nothing. But what of the children?
 - 2. And what of the love of God?
- E. In this case it was respect, or disregard, for God.

III. AT BETHEL.

Third chapter; the place and the experience.

- A. The place, a desolate area in the highlands of central Palestine. (Bears found among the scrub trees.)
- B. Evidence that Jacob had turned his thoughts to God. He brought his family here to build an altar twenty years later, speaking of that former time: "God . . . answered me in the day of my distress" (Gen. 35:3).
- C. The dream of access to Heaven could have answered to thoughts of the day.
- D. God renews to Jacob in this dream the promise He had made to Grandpa Abraham.
- E. "The Lord is in this place!" (Did he then recognize that God is everywhere? At least he was on the way.)

IV. FROM BETHEL.

Fourth chapter; Jacob's response.

- A. Set up and anointed the pillar; customary act.
- B. Made a vow, expressing the worship reflected in the name and the place.
 - 1. "The Lord will be my God" (with him everywhere.) This was the key factor.
 - 2. "I will give a tenth." This was not mere yielding an agent's fee. It was recognition of Him who supplied.

CONCLUSION – Hebrews 12:16, 17 "Esau could bring about no change. . . ." *You still can!*

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EVERYBODY'S BUSINESS (An election time sermon)
(Genesis 41:25-43)

INTRODUCTION —

- A. Politics is literally everybody's business, and as such demands intelligent participation.
- B. The story of Joseph as one who handled the affairs of Egypt during its trying time, to the salvation of many lives.
- C. Politics and vote-getting are not really the same.
— See the kind of man Pharaoh sought to handle the affairs of Egypt.

I. JOSEPH SAID THERE WAS NEED OF A MAN
"DISCREET AND WISE."

- A. He must be chosen for ability, not for popularity.
- B. He must rely on service to be rendered, not only on service already rendered in another capacity. (One may be a good soldier and a poor congressman.)
- C. One remarkably honest western Senator tells those who apply for appointments, "I can recommend you for character only as far as I know you, and you will have to prove your ability."

II. PHARAOH SAID, "A MAN IN WHOM THE SPIRIT
OF GOD IS."

(Illus. — The Virginia voters drafted Alexander Campbell to their legislature for the purpose of drawing up the state constitution.)

- A. A worshiping man — humble, knowing there is a Ruler above. (Compare the regal humility of George Washington.)
- B. A clean and upright man
Prov. 31:4, 5 — "It is not for kings, O Lemuel, it is not for kings to drink wine; nor for princes strong drink; lest they drink and forget the law, and pervert the judgment of any of the afflicted." Eccles. 10:17 — "Blessed art thou, O land, when thy king is the son of nobles,

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and thy princes eat in due season, for strength and not for drunkenness.”

C. A courageous and uncorruptible man.

The office-seeker who is willing to take a stand on an unpopular moral issue automatically recommends himself for courage and integrity.

D. An unselfish man.

Note that Joseph served for Pharaoh and Egypt, not for himself. Wipe out greed in politics, and vice is half gone.

III. THE RING, THE ROBE, THE CHARIOT, THE HOMAGE SPEAK OF LOYALTY AND DIGNITY.

A. A curse to American politics is the unfair pressure and petty fault-finding exerted against office holders — they become targets.

1. It martyred at least two Presidents.

2. See Romans 13:1-7. Christian citizens ought to respect and be loyal to the laws and public men of the land. Either may be judged and perhaps changed by proper methods.

B. A curse to local politics is the undignified and unfitting series of displays, either forced upon, or chosen by, its protective officers, firemen and police (Raffles, benefits, drawings, dances, etc.).

IV. CONCLUSION

A. The power of Joseph lay in his trust in God, and God's help to him.

B. Christian citizens need to ask God's help for public servants — first being themselves Christian.

(A man taking high public office said to his friends, "Pray for me — I need it.")