

Genesis Introduction

Overview

Reggie Sanchez, Gospel Community Church, 1/28/2018

I. Authorship, Date, General Features

1. My Personal History with Genesis

I am very excited to begin our Genesis series today and I am filled with anticipation of the good things God might do in this series during this next season in our church. I have a very special personal history with the book of Genesis that began about 10 years ago when I was in my theological training for the ministry. I remember learning the rich connections that this book has to itself, to the rest of the Old Testament, to Christ, and to all believers, and as I studied this book, I was riveted by these things and overwhelmed with joy. During that season of life, I was between jobs for about 6 weeks and I remember that during that time God had me locked up literally about 14 hours per day for a month doing nothing but devouring Genesis and its connections to the rest of God's Word. It was one of the sweetest seasons with God that I can remember.

When that season of unemployment ended and I went to the job that God had prepared for me, after a year or so I eventually taught a Bible study through Genesis for our office and had the privilege of seeing God save my manager, who to this day, is a strong believer and serves God in faithfulness. In other venues when I taught through this book I have seen God save others as well. Without question, one of my absolute favorite things about teaching through Genesis is to watch people's confidence in God's Word grow and to see them cherish it more and more. That is such a priceless and precious thing to see come to pass in someone. So I am excited for us to begin this series and in today's message we will cover some important introductory issues pertaining to Genesis, and then next week we will begin going through it Lord willing.

2. Authorship

Let's begin by considering authorship, date, and setting. Moses is the one who authored the book of Genesis as well as the first 5 books of the Bible, which, in addition to Genesis, are Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy. These 5 books are often called the, "Pentateuch," which is a Greek Word that simply means, "five books." These 5 books are also sometimes referred to as, "The Books of Moses," or, "Moses," and other times the Jews would call it, "The Torah," or "The Law." Depending on the context of the passage, "The Law," can have a broad OT meaning, or it can refer to a specific Law, or to the 5 books. Getting back to authorship, I want to add that though Moses authored the first 5 books of the Bible, that obviously excludes the end of Deuteronomy which records his death. I believe Joshua wrote the end of Deuteronomy.

In academia, there is no end to the debates of scholars who question the authorship of Moses. I am not going to bog you down with that and will instead appeal to the greatest mind of all, the only true scholar, in fact he is the only one who knows everything, and we shall see what he had to say about the first 5 books of Scripture and who wrote them. The Word of Christ shall be sufficient to establish the authorship of Moses and the validity of Genesis as Scripture.

In Matthew 19:3-6 Jesus was teaching about divorce, and in teaching about divorce he appealed to Genesis as that which God himself used to communicate his will concerning divorce, and the obvious implication in this teaching is that it is Scripture, it is authoritative, and we are expected to obey.

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In Mk. 12:26-27 Jesus was defending the reality of the resurrection of the dead from the OT against the Sadducees who deny it. In so doing Jesus reminds them of the burning bush episode in Exodus 3:6, wherein God revealed himself as the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, all men who had been dead for centuries, and in that text Jesus sees that when God referred to these figures in the present tense, it proved they were still living. Again, Exodus is seen as Scripture here by Jesus and he also makes reference to the fact that this is in, “the book of Moses,” which is a clear declaration of Mosaic authorship.

In Luke 5:12-14 after cleansing a leper, Jesus commands this man to go to the Temple and make the offering prescribed by the Law of Moses and show himself to the priests. The offering prescribed by Moses, are the offerings for leprosy that Moses wrote about in Leviticus 13:1-46, and so here we see Christ interacting with Leviticus as authoritative Scripture and as something written by Moses.

In John 3:14-15 Jesus was talking to Nicodemus and predicted his death on the cross when he said, “As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of Man be lifted up, that whoever believes in him may have eternal life.” This episode Jesus is referring to happens in Numbers 21:4-9, that Jesus says points to his death on the cross. So again, Numbers is considered Scripture by Jesus and he mentions Moses here as well.

In Matthew 22:37 Jesus was asked what the greatest commandment is from the Law of Moses. Jesus responded by saying that the greatest commandment was to, “...love the Lord your God with all of your heart and with all of your soul and with all your mind.” He is quoting Dt. 6:5 here and is obviously acknowledging it as Scripture within the Law of Moses, which again, Moses wrote.

So we can see that Christ used all 5 books of Moses as authoritative Scripture in his teaching. Furthermore, in these texts, whether by implication or explicit declaration, Jesus sees Moses as the author. In other places Jesus speaks of Moses as the author of these 5 books and when he does so, he paraphrases, by calling these books, “Moses,” or “the Law of Moses.” In the parable of Lazarus and the rich man, the rich man is in hell and wants to go back and warn his loved ones, but he is forbidden by Abraham from doing so and it is said that his family has, “Moses and the prophets; let them hear them.” Moses and the prophets is a way of referring to the Old Testament of which, “Moses,” is representative of the first 5 books.

In addition to this text we have the famous text in Luke 24:27 where Jesus told the men on the road to Emmaus that he had to die and rise again, and in recording this event Luke tells us that Jesus taught them, “...beginning with Moses and all the prophets, he interpreted to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning himself.” So Jesus again takes, “Moses,” which represents the first 5 books of the Bible, and Luke calls it Scripture, and Jesus claims that the substance of what Moses wrote in these 5 books speaks to Christ.

So when we look at Jesus and what he said about Genesis, the books of Moses, who wrote them, and if they are authoritative, the only conclusion is that Genesis really is the literal Word of God, and Moses is the author. For me, if Jesus says that, I don't really need anyone else's opinion on the matter.

3. Date and Setting

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So Moses is the author of the book and he wrote Genesis sometime between the Exodus and his death, which places this book at around 1450-1400 B.C or perhaps even as late as 1300 B.C. Moses was educated in Pharaoh's house and therefore would be well informed on the various other religious ideas of his day. It is also likely that part of this education included gaining a knowledge of the oral traditions that contained the information from Genesis. In addition to receiving this education as preparatory for writing the Pentateuch, Moses also spent prolonged periods of time with God himself and spoke to him face to face. Therefore, God himself may have verbally given him leading, instruction, and guiding in composing these books, which is not always the case with every book in the Bible.

II. Genesis as Story

1. Genesis is the beginning of a big story.

In order to understand the book of Genesis in the most enriching way possible, I believe it is absolutely crucial to approach it understanding that it is a story, and not only that, but it is the beginning of God's larger story that covers the entire Bible. Like all stories, the Bible has a clear beginning, middle, and an end, and Genesis is the beginning of the story. As is true of all stories, whether they be movies or books, we have to allow the story to unfold and tell itself on its own terms. This is called, "Progressive Revelation." What it means is that, as with any story, we progressively gain more knowledge and understanding of the larger story as we journey through the unfolding of the story. While I joyfully concede that a person could be saved off of one Bible verse that contains the Gospel within it, at the same time I want to also say that it is absolutely impossible to know God's Word in a solid and thorough manner without understanding the beginning of the story. Do you ever watch movies or read books by beginning with the 5th movie or 5th book in a 6 part story? Of course not! But unfortunately, we treat learning the Bible that way. We give out New Testaments, which is a good thing, but the New Testament is replete with explaining how the Old Testament is fulfilled in Christ. If you have no grasp of the Old Testament how can you have a good grasp of the New? You cannot, and it is my exhortation to you not to be content to just know enough to be saved. Rather, hunger and thirst to know God's Word and grow in understanding. Having a stronger grasp of the Word of God is like having a greater amount of firewood in the fire pit. Once the flame is lit, if there is more fuel in the pit, the fire can rage and burn hotter and brighter. Similarly, when the wood of God's Word is piled deep and high in our hearts, and when the Holy Spirit lights the fire of God within us, having a large pile of wood within us fuels a hot, blazing, and lasting fire for the Lord.

One man said that you can never really understand a portion of the Bible as you ought to unless you understand where it originated from and where it is going. In other words, you must know its connections to the rest of the Scripture. I agree with that. It is much harder work to understand the Bible this way, but it is so worth it because it is so enriching. So if you don't know the Bible as a story, if you don't know how it connects to the rest of Scripture that's okay for today, but I would encourage you to give yourself to fixing that by learning and enjoying the process of gaining a more thorough understanding of your Bibles.

So we must embrace the Bible as a story that contains exciting plots, and twists, and unexpected things, and they all come to a wonderful head in the glory of Jesus Christ. If we will let the story tell itself, rather than importing what we want the story to say onto the real story and thereby twisting it, we will find a wonderful simplicity, clarity, majesty, and glory in this great story.

Genesis specifically is a story of origins. In fact, the Greek word for Genesis means origins and the Hebrew word for Genesis means, "in the beginning." In the book of Genesis, some of the most fundamental questions about the issues of life are clearly addressed and answered. Most people wrestle with the question of who is God? Most people wrestle with the question of wanting to know where everything came from? Most people wrestle with the question of wanting to know where they themselves came from? Most people, especially suffering people, want to know where evil came

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from? What is unique and special about human beings? Where did all of the nations and people groups in the world come from? What is the deal with Israel and where did Israel come from? What is the origin of goodness, and love and peace and is there any hope in this world that is so filled with heartache? Genesis, because it records a real and true history of a real God, a literal people who actually existed, and literal events that actually took place, it wonderfully and clearly answers these questions for us.

It is important for us to know the origin of things, because origins is a key and fundamental part of every person's identity. Virtually every story's major plot lines and major characters have the origin of the plot and the origin of the character revealed within them. Good stories help you understand the origins as a crucial component to understanding the overall story, and the Bible has given us many answers to the origin of the most important things we need to know. Genesis records the stories of the origins of the answers to the questions I just put forth, and then as the story unfolds, the story not only tells us what happened, but also, it provides its own interpretation and meaning to the stories that unfold, and if we will discipline ourselves to listen to it, we can find the liberating truth of some of the most crucial questions in life as the Bible progressively reveals it.

2. The Story of the Triumph of God's Word

One of the key features to the story of Genesis and the entire Bible is the story of the power and triumph of God's Word over all things. In Genesis we see that God's Word is the incredible force that creates and sustains all things in the universe. In this study we will see that God's Word gives the design and purpose for all of creation, including humanity. In this study we will see that God's Word creates good things. In this study we will see that God's Word defines sin and warns about the consequences that will follow sin, and when sin enters the world, the consequences of sin unfold exactly as God's Word decreed it would and the entire creation is cursed by the Word of his power. In this study we will see that God, through the Word of his promise, gives hope to creation that is cursed by providing a promise that the seed of the Woman, whom we will see is none other than Jesus Christ, will come and destroy the Serpent and his works, namely, the introduction of the curse through sin and death. It is also promised that there will be hostility between the Seed of the Woman and the Seed of the Serpent, but ultimately the Seed of the Woman will be victorious, and Genesis records how this begins to play out in human history.

As the story unfolds we see that the only thing that can undo the curse, which came by God's Word, is the promise of God which is also by his Word! This promise unfolds and plays out throughout the entire book of Genesis as well as the rest of the Scripture. Throughout the story we see that sin, the persecution of God's people, natural disasters, the misguided and worldly thinking and mistakes of God's people, the sins of God's people, Satan himself, wars, and doubts cannot thwart or stop the Word of God's promise.

3. The Seed Promise and Primeval History: Chapters 1-11

The first 11 chapters of Genesis comprise what is known as the Primeval history. The word primeval speaks to things associated with the very first age of human history. Genesis 1-11 carry us through the very beginnings of time. In this section we have the record of creation, the fall, and the seed promise that open the book up in the first three chapters as this all plays out in the lives of the first human beings created, namely, Adam and Eve. Chapters 4-11 are dominated by the Seed promise and every single event in those chapters is an outworking of that promise. The Seed promise is central to major events like the murder of Abel by his brother Cain, the story of Noah and the flood, and the Tower of Babel episode as well. So as we study through these passages that contain the history of the most ancient of times in human history, we will see the centrality and dominance of the promise of God.

4. The Abrahamic Covenant and the Patriarchs: Chapters 12-50

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As we get to chapter 12 we will meet Abraham, and more significantly, we will encounter a series of promises made to Abraham which make up what is called, "The Abrahamic Covenant." The promises are stated and developed beginning in chapter 12 all the way through chapter 17. The Abrahamic Covenant essentially takes the Seed of the Woman promise and gives much more development and fleshing out to that promise. The Abrahamic Covenant is often summed up as God promising to give Abraham a special Land to live in, an offspring that is vast and numerous, and the blessing of knowing God and being his people. The Covenant promises to Abraham literally drive and shape every single thing that unfolds from Genesis 12-50. All of the historical episodes take place as out-workings of that promise in some form or another, and once we realize that, Genesis becomes wonderfully clear and understandable!

As we see the Abrahamic Covenant shape the history of Genesis, we see this history shaping Covenant dominate the lives of 3 prominent figures, whom the Bible refers to as, "The Patriarchs." These 3 figures are Abraham, his Son Isaac, and Isaac's son Jacob. These 3 men are considered to be the fathers of the faith as well as the fathers of the nation of Israel through the Abrahamic promise. It is to Abraham that God first makes the promises of Land, Seed, and Blessing, and he makes them to Abraham even though Abraham's wife Sarah, is barren and very old. But, by the power of God's Promise, eventually Abraham does have a son by Sarah, despite the impossibilities of old age and barrenness, and that Son is Isaac. The life of Abraham is of huge significance in Genesis and the entire Bible. We first meet Abraham in chapter 11 and his death is recorded in chapter 25 and he therefore receives much more detail and attention than any character we will meet before him, because his life, and God's dealings and promises with him are of such importance in all of the Bible.

Isaac serves as the fulfillment of God's promise to Abraham for offspring. The Scripture makes no secret that his birth was miraculous and that it is in Isaac and through Isaac that all of the Abrahamic promises will come to pass. Isaac is born in chapter 21 and he has a prominent role in the story through chapter 27 and then disappears until his death is recorded in chapter 35. Of the 3 patriarchs, Isaac has the least written about him, but his significance is that he represents the power of God to fulfill his promise to Abraham despite what is impossible with man.

The third patriarch is Jacob who is one of Isaac's sons and later is renamed, "Israel." Jacob, the man who is named "Israel," emerges as the most prominent of the Patriarchs in Genesis as is made crystal clear just by the sheer volume of material on Jacob's life in this book. His birth is recorded in chapter 25 and his death is recorded in chapter 50 and thus his life takes up half of the book of Genesis. It is from Jacob that the 12 tribes of Israel are descended, and it is Jacob's son Judah among those 12 tribes who is promised to have a descendant who will be a lion who will one day reign as God's King over all peoples.

Throughout the lives of the Patriarchs we see the Abrahamic Promise still prevail despite their many sins, blunders, and misguided attempts to fulfill God's Word by their worldly schemes. We also see that it is the Abrahamic Promise that shapes and gives meaning to the major events in the lives of the Patriarchs. Whether it is Abraham's war against the kingdoms near and within Canaan, or the judgment on Sodom and Gomorrah, or God's dealings with Pharaoh and the Egyptians during the famine in Abraham's life, or his dealings with Abimelech and the Philistines, the birth of Isaac, the obtaining of Rebekah as a wife for Isaac, the birth of Jacob's children, or the great famine that ultimately leads Jacob and his offspring into Egypt at the end of Genesis, which sets the stage for the book of Exodus, in all of these things, the Abrahamic Promise is giving a God-centered meaning to every single historical episode that takes place in their lives.

III. Hermeneutics and Genesis

1. Promises are fulfilled in stages

One of the critical interpretive issues in the book of Genesis is understanding that the promises of God, specifically the Seed of the Woman promise and the promises contained within the Abrahamic Covenant, are fulfilled multiple times

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over. Throughout the lives of the people of the book of Genesis, we can see the same promise being fulfilled over and over again in numerous ways, however, none of the promises given in the book of Genesis has its final, ultimate, and consummate fulfillment within the book of Genesis itself, but rather, come to a final, complete, and ultimate fulfillment in Christ and eventually in his making all things new in the New Heavens and the New Earth.

This is very important for us to understand because it is essential that we recognize the promise is being fulfilled in the events of Genesis so that we can worship and appreciate how God fulfills his Word. At the same time, it is also important for us to recognize that even though the promise may have some level of fulfillment in the lives of the people of Genesis, there still awaits a final and ultimate fulfillment yet to come. Recognizing this component of fulfillment causes us to look forward to Jesus Christ and to how he will bring these promises to their consummate realization in himself. So, the promises are fulfilled multiple times in the book itself, but they are never ultimate, later on they are also fulfilled throughout the rest of the Old Testament, but again are not ultimately fulfilled in the Old Testament. Ultimately, they are fulfilled in Christ and then believers in Christ are eventually made sharers of those promises.

For example, God promises Abraham in Genesis chapters 12, 15, and 17 that he will have vast offspring, and that in his offspring all of the Abrahamic promises will be fulfilled. The birth of Isaac is a fulfillment of that promise (Ge. 15:1-6; 17:15-19; 18:10; 21:1) and Isaac himself enjoys some of the fulfillments of the other Abrahamic promises in his life. However, Isaac dies and the promises have not yet realized an ultimate fulfillment so we must keep looking forward to his descendants to see the promises come to pass. Jacob comes on the scene and his birth is another fulfillment of the Abrahamic promise since he is the literal son of Isaac and the literal grandson of Abraham as well as the heir of the covenant promises. There are wonderful fulfillments of the promises in his life. However, they are non-ultimate and we must keep looking forward for the final fulfillment. Jacob has 12 sons and through them the 12 tribes of Israel descend and these sons represent a fulfillment of the seed promise. Again, it is non-ultimate and so we keep looking forward. In the book of Exodus the nation of Israel represents another fulfillment of the seed promise to Abraham, but again the promises are not ultimately and finally fulfilled in Israel.

Eventually, the first verse of the New Testament, namely, Matthew 1:1 will tell us that Jesus Christ is the seed of Abraham. Galatians 3 will also tell us that it is Christ himself who is the true heir of the Abrahamic Covenant promises. At the end of Galatians 3, Paul then tells us that all believers in Christ also become the seed of Abraham and heirs of the promise. Finally, Revelation 21-22 will show us what those promises look like in their final and consummate fulfillment in the New Heavens and the New Earth. So we can see the promise has many first level fulfillments before finding its ultimate fulfillment in Christ. This is a crucial concept to understand.

If you believe the promises in Genesis have their final fulfillment in the first-level fulfillments of Genesis, you will stop looking forward for the consummate fulfillment that comes in Christ and will thus miss virtually all of the Christ-centeredness of Genesis. On the other hand, if you only see the fulfillment of these promises in Christ and do not believe they were fulfilled at all in the lives of the people of Genesis, then you will not understand the lives of these people at all, because the historical episodes in their lives are all unfolding in light of the power of the Word of God's promise. Without recognizing the promise is at work in their lives, the historical episodes in Genesis will either be merely moral examples or strange stories, and you will miss the richness of God in these accounts.

If you want to have a grasp of how God's Word is connected you must realize that God's word is the story of creation, fall, the promise of redemption, the warning of judgment, and the outworking of those things in human history as it progressively unfolds in the story of Scripture. I believe with all of my heart that if you grasp that, you have the key to understanding how the Bible holds together. It is about promise and fulfillment, and the fulfillment of the promises has many out-workings prior to its consummate and ultimate fulfillment.

2. Typology

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The final key issue that I believe is very important in grasping the Christ-centeredness and message of Genesis is to understand what typology is. Typology is a form of prophecy. But it is not a prophecy that verbally predicts something to come in the future such as the prophecy of Ge. 49:8-11, which predicts the Lion King will descend from Judah and rule all people. Rather, typology is a person, event, or object that embodies the promise of God in such a way that it gives a clear pointer to how the promise of God will be fulfilled in Christ. Every valid type in the Bible is a literal, historical, and actual person, event, or object, and it is very hermeneutically clear that it has a real, tangible, actual, and literal connection to God's promise as can be clearly demonstrated from Scripture.

The fulfillment of a type is referred to as an anti-type. The anti-type, just like the type, is also a real, literal, historical, and actual person or event and it also is very clearly, tangibly, and literally a fulfillment of the promise that can be easily demonstrated in the Scripture. Understanding that a type and its antitype is literal, historic, and must have a clear and obvious connection to God's promise, brings hermeneutical accountability to typology because you can measure the validity of the type by examining whether or not the type and antitype are real and literal, and whether or not they have a real and literal connection to God's promise. This is absolutely huge hermeneutically because it enables us to see real and valid types in the Scripture, yet at the same time it also enables us to guard against wild speculations and allegorical misuses of the Scripture. Oh how I hope we see this more and more clearly as we go through Genesis.

Some people wrongly speak of typology as allegory and vice versa and in so doing show that they misunderstand both. Allegory is very different from typology. As I mentioned earlier, typology is something real, literal, and historical that has a real and literal and historical connection to the promises of God that can be easily tested and measured by solid interpretive principles. Allegory on the other hand, finds deeper meaning in things in a way that the deeper meaning is in no way literally and historically connected to the person, event, or object. With allegory, the true meaning of the text is detached from any literal sense of what is going on. This is extremely different than typology, it is often a misuse of the Scripture, there is no hermeneutical accountability to this kind of interpretation, and we must be on guard against it. Allegory finds deeper meaning in things apart from the literal and historical nature of them, whereas typology finds a deeper spiritual connection to God's literal promises IN the literal and historical nature of the type and anti-type. This distinction between typology and allegory is so important! To make things clearer, I would like to give you an example of each.

A. Joseph as a Biblical Type

Joseph is one of the most wonderful and clear types in the Bible whose life creates a wonderful prophetic picture of what will come in Christ. Joseph is a literal and historical person. He is literally a descendant of Abraham, he literally rises to power in Egypt by a literal betraying of his brothers and through a literal enduring of unjust suffering. But as he humbly submits to his suffering he is literally exalted to a position of power, where, as the seed of Abraham, eventually he has authority over a 7 year storehouse of grain during a severe famine, wherein the nearby world is starving. As the surrounding nations come to Joseph, the literal seed of Abraham, he literally blesses the nations by providing them with grain, which is the bread that gives life. All of these things are literal, historical, and measurable and are wonderful out-workings of the Abrahamic promise to bless the nations through the seed of Abraham. Painting this picture of Joseph is very easy to measure hermeneutically.

The anti-type, or fulfillment of this prophetic picture given through the life of Joseph, is Jesus Christ, who also is literally the seed of Abraham, who was literally betrayed by his own kinsmen, who literally endured unjust suffering, yet who through that unjust suffering literally rose and ascended to a literal position of power whereby, through his Gospel he literally blesses the nations, by giving of his literal self to them as the bread of life. Joseph as the type and Christ as the anti-type can all literally and very easily be shown from the Scriptures to be historically true and thoroughly connected to the promises of God. That is good typology and good hermeneutics.

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B. Biblical Allegories

To give you an example of allegory, in Genesis 25:1-2 we read that after Sarah died Abraham took another wife whose name was Keturah and she bore him 6 sons and Abraham gave them gifts when he was near the end of his life. I have heard some people say that these 6 sons represent 6 spirits of virtue or wisdom. Origen said that the death of Sarah was the perfection of virtue and that Abraham's marriage to Keturah represented his continual pursuit of wisdom and knowledge. These types of so-called deeper meanings of the text are completely foreign to the text. If you read Ge. 25:1-2 none of these things are even remotely alluded to in the actual text and finding this kind of "meaning" is completely allegorical and has no hermeneutical control or accountability. The typology of Joseph on the other hand is real, literal, historical, easy to test hermeneutically, and is therefore vastly different than allegory.

III. Genesis is Dripping with Christ

1. Christ is the Center of Genesis

Finally, the last point I want to close this introduction with is that Jesus Christ is the central theme of all of the Bible and the book of Genesis is dripping with his glory. From Luke 24:27,44 we can see that Jesus sees himself as the grand subject of the books of Moses, and for our purposes, the book of Genesis is included in that (read). All the Scripture, which in context is the Old Testament, in one way or another, contributes to pointing us to Christ. This is Christ's own hermeneutical key to understanding the Old Testament.

In John 5:46 Jesus was in a dispute with the Jews over healing a man on the Sabbath, which the Jews felt was a violation of the Law of Moses. As he was debating them he told them that, "If you believed Moses, you would believe me; for he wrote of me." Again, Jesus clearly declares that the substance of what Moses wrote in the first 5 books, including Genesis, points to Christ, looks to Christ, and is fulfilled in Christ.

In John 8 the Jews who are trying to kill Jesus are having a debate with him about his origins, wherein Jesus claims to be the Great I am who preceded even Abraham. These Jews claim to be God's true people because they are physically descended from Abraham, but Jesus bursts their bubble by telling them they are from the devil because they are trying to kill him and their actions are therefore demonic. Jesus then speaks of Abraham in John 8:56 and claims, "Abraham saw my day and rejoiced," which I believe is a reference to Genesis 15:1-6 and I will argue more for that view when we get there. The point I want to make now is that Jesus, clearly sees that Abraham has a joyful forward looking faith in God and his promises which will culminate in Christ! The book of Genesis, which Jesus sees as Scripture that was written by Moses, is a Christ-centered book and he is the great subject of it!

The Apostle Paul also speaks in this way in 2 Corinthians 1:20 by seeing all of the Old Testament promises as fulfilled in Christ when he said, "For all the promises of God find their yes in him..." Paul also said in Ephesians 1:9-10 that the mysteries and purposes of God are to sum up all things in Christ, of which the content of Genesis is a part.

As we journey through this great book we will see through the literal reading of the text, through God's promises that he makes, through the progressively revealed message of Scripture, and through many wonderful prophetic types, that Jesus is everywhere in Genesis. He is the sovereign creator and sustainer of the Universe. He is the 2nd Adam who will come as the Seed of the Woman and crush the Serpent's head and undo the curse. He is the innocent and slain brother whose blood speaks a better word than that of Abel. He is the greater Noah who, in him, provides a consummate and final deliverance from the curse through his vessel of salvation. He is the Seed of Abraham who is going to bless the nations that were cursed at Babel with the knowledge of God. He is the greater Isaac who is sacrificed and raised from the dead to secure the inheritance of the Abrahamic promise for his offspring. He is the Melchizedekian King-Priest who builds the house of God. He is Jacob's tower that connects heaven and earth. He is the greater Joseph who, through his

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suffering comes to power to provide the bread of life for the nations. He is the descendant of Judah to whom will be the obedience of Israel and the nations, and there is much, much, more!

I can't wait to explore God's Christ-centered Word with you. All of the teaching is not going to center on the distractions of obscure issues in Genesis that those who love fruitless speculations want to pontificate about. I am not going to dwell incessantly on speculative 'end times' things. All the things we look at, Lord willing, will lift up and adorn the glory of Jesus Christ, and if you want me to obsess over obscure and unclear issues in this study you are going to be disappointed. However, if you want Jesus, by God's grace, he will be lifted up to you and you will have him! May God minister to us deeply in this season.

We often read stories of other people to step out of our own story for a while, and, in considering the stories of others, we hope to find answers and meaning to our own stories. The purpose of the story of your life, is for you to be caught up in the story of God's glory in Christ as he sums all things up in him. No matter how painful, difficult, or seemingly insignificant your own story may seem to you, when you become a part of the story of God's redemption in Christ, you become part of the most epic story in human history and the meaning of your life, and every detail that unfolded, is replete with significance and splendor because it is all a contribution to the telling of the story of the glory of God in creating and redeeming the universe in Jesus Christ. May you find great Christ-centered meaning in our study in Genesis and be thoroughly enriched with the knowledge of God.