

Title: **GENESIS: The Book of Beginnings**

Text: Genesis 1:1-2 and 50:24-26

Subject: *The Message of Genesis*

Date: Friday Evening—January 31, 2003¹
Rescue Baptist Church—Rescue, CA

Tape # X-42a

Introduction:

Your pastor, these pastors, (Bro. Gistand, Bro. Colar, and Bro. Wells), and myself have often told you that the message of this Book is Jesus Christ and him crucified. We want, so much, for you to see that fact, and see it clearly.

To that end, I have undertaken a huge task, a task I thought about and prayed about and tried to prepare for for a long, long time. Two weeks ago, I began preaching to our congregation through each Book of the Bible in our Tuesday evening worship services. It is my intention to go through the entire Volume of Holy Scripture, book by book, and find the message of each book and its relation to the whole Word of God. That will be the easy part. Here's the tough part—I plan to cover one entire book in each message.

Tonight, tomorrow night, and Sunday morning, I plan to preach to you from the first three Books of the Bible (Genesis, Exodus and Leviticus). If the Lord will speak through me, I am certain that what I have prepared will be both instructive and a great blessing to you.

We will begin, of course, with the **GENESIS: The Book of Beginnings.**

What I hope to do in these three messages is give you a zoom-lens view of these three, very great Books of Inspiration. I trust

the Lord will use what I have to say in these messages to help you see clearly that the message of this Book, from beginning to end is Jesus Christ and him crucified, and that you will be able to grasp more fully the whole truth of God, the whole of Divine Revelation.

We will begin tonight by reading the first three verses of the Book of Genesis.

Genesis 1:1-3 In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth. 2 And the earth was without form, and void; and darkness *was* upon the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters. 3 And God said, Let there be light: and there was light.

Here is a picture of redemption. Now, read the last three verses of Genesis (50:24-26).

Genesis 50:24-26 And Joseph said unto his brethren, I die: and God will surely visit you, and bring you out of this land unto the land which he sware to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob. 25 And Joseph took an oath of the children of Israel, saying, God will surely visit you, and ye shall carry up my bones from hence. 26 So Joseph died, *being* an hundred and ten years old: and they embalmed him, and he was put in a coffin in Egypt.

The Book opens with a picture of redemption; and it closes with a promise of redemption; and everything between Genesis 1:1 and 50:26 shows either our desperate need of redemption or God's marvelous method of redemption and grace by Christ.

EVIDENCE OF INSPIRATION

There is no greater wonder, no greater miracle in the world than the Book you hold in your hand. The Lord God, in great mercy and grace, has given us his Word in one blessed, holy, inspired Volume, and has given it to us in our language. God has given us his Word to read. It is a great book, a tremendous book.

Psalms 138:2 I will worship toward thy holy temple, and praise thy name for thy lovingkindness and for thy truth: for thou hast magnified thy word above all thy name.

One of the most powerful and unanswerable evidences of the inspiration of the Bible is its unity. One message runs through its pages—Redemption. One Person is portrayed, prophesied, presented and proclaimed throughout the Book of God—The Lord Jesus Christ. This Book, written over a period of 1500 years, by 40 different and diverse men, many (most of whom) of whom never knew one another, written under extremely diverse conditions, written in three different languages (Hebrew, Aramaic, Greek). containing neither error nor contradiction of any kind cannot be explained except by one fact—God did it.

2 Peter 1:21 For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake *as they were* moved by the Holy Ghost.

2 Timothy 3:16-17 All scripture *is* given by inspiration of God, and *is* profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: *17* That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.

HOW OLD?

We are so accustomed to seeing the Bible and, I hope, to reading it, that we seldom consider its age. Most anyone who has studied

much history knows the name Herodotus. He was a Greek philosopher and teacher who lived 300 years before the incarnation of our Savior. He has been called “the father of history,” because he was the first historian whose writings have been preserved to us. But Moses, who wrote the first five books of the Bible, had finished his work and was in his grave a thousand years before Herodotus was born!

That's how old the Book of Genesis is. It is the book of beginnings. It takes us back into the very dawn of human history. Yet, as we read it, it is as up-to-date as this morning's newspaper. As I read about Adam and Abel, Enoch and Noah, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, and Joseph and his brothers, I tend to think of them as men I used to know. Their lives seem to mingle with ours. Do you find that to be the case? The Scriptures bring us close to them and bring them close to us

MORE THAN HISTORY

But the Book of Genesis is not merely a history book. If that were the case, it would have little significance to us and would have no influence over us. It would just be facts recorded on paper. The book of Genesis was written to convey to us a tremendous message from our God. I will give you the message in one statement. **Man without Christ is utterly sinful, helpless, inadequate, useless and vain.**

As I have told you many times, the Book of Genesis is the Book of Beginnings. The word “genesis” means “beginning.” Every basic doctrine of the Bible is found in the Book of Genesis. Here we see all the doctrines of Holy Scripture in seed. The rest of the Sacred Volume expands and opens them. But the seed is in this first Book.

The Word of God begins with this message— **Man without Christ is utterly sinful, helpless, inadequate, useless and vain.** That is the message of Genesis. And, as the Book of Beginnings, it strikes the keynote of all the subsequent revelation of our God..

CHAPTERS 1 AND 2—CREATION

I. **OUR INADEQUACY AND INSIGNIFICANCE IS SEEN IN THE FACT THAT WE WOULD HAVE NO EXISTENCE AT ALL WITHOUT CHRIST.—HE IS OUR CREATOR.**

This is what the Holy Spirit shows us in Genesis 1 and 2. *“All things were created by him and for him: and he is before all things, and by him all things consist”* (Col. 1:16-7).

John 1:1-3 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. 2 The same was in the beginning with God. 3 All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made.

Genesis 1:1-2 In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth. 2 And the earth was without form, and void; and darkness *was* upon the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters.

In these opening verses of Genesis the great need of redemption is typically set forth. **“In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth.”** Like everything else that comes from the hand of God, the original creation of the world was perfect, beautiful, and glorious. That was the original condition of man. Adam was made in the image of God. He was endowed with life by the breath of the Almighty. God said, concerning him, he was *“very good.”*

Then something happened. In verse 2 we read, “**And the earth was (BECAME) without form and void.**” The earth became a ruin. Between Genesis 1:1 and 1:2 some terrible thing happened which resulted in the ruin of the earth. No one can say with certainty, because it is not revealed, but perhaps this was the time of Satan’s fall, the time when sin first entered God’s universe.

This much is certain: Satan, the mightiest and most excellent of God’s creatures, was filled with pride. Lucifer dared to oppose the will of his Creator. “*The anointed cherub that covereth*” dared to defy God’s right to be God. As the result of his sin, Satan was cast out of heaven, cast down to the earth. This fall of Satan had far reaching consequences. The earth, originally created by God fair and beautiful, became “*became without form and void,*” a desolate place of ruin. “**And darkness was upon the face of the deep.**”

This is a tremendous picture of what happened in the garden.

Man, who was created in the image of God, fell into sin; and his fall had far reaching consequences. The effects of his sin reached all his posterity. Humanity became a ruin. All future generations were cursed, dead, incapable of bringing forth life, as the result of Adam’s fall. “*By one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin, for all have sinned*” (Rom. 5:12).

“**And darkness was upon the face of the deep.**” Darkness is the opposite of light. God is light. Satan is darkness. And man under sin, being void of all light, is engulfed in total, spiritual darkness. Separated from God, morally blind, spiritually dead, darkness is the condition of all unregenerate men and women. This is the black background upon which God has chosen to display the glory of his grace in redemption by Christ. “*Where sin abounded, grace did much more abound*” (Rom. 5:21). As the

Lord God restored creation from ruin in those first six days of time, so he restores his elect from the ruin of the fall by his redemptive works in Christ.

Experimentally this restoration begins with the work of God the Holy Spirit in effectual grace. The work of redemption and justification was done when Christ died as our Substitute upon Calvary's cursed tree. But we knew nothing about it until "*the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters, and God said let there be light; and there was light*" (John 16:8-14; 2 Cor. 4:4-6).

CHAPTERS 3-6:8—RUIN

II. THE INADEQUACY AND INSIGNIFICANCE OF OUR RACE IS DISPLAYED IN THE FACT THAT WE ARE A FALLEN, RUINED, SINFUL AND CURSED RACE WHOSE ONLY HOPE OF ETERNAL LIFE IS THE FREE GRACE OF GOD IN CHRIST.

That is the message of Genesis 3:1-6:8. During those days, from Adam to Noah, men lived for hundreds of years. What opportunities for advancement they had! I am certain that we have no idea how brilliant and advanced the people who walked on the earth in those days had become, in the knowledge of all things earthly. But, when we read what God has to say about the human race, it is obvious that they had only become more and more corrupt through the ages of time.

Genesis 6:5-7 And God saw that the wickedness of man *was* great in the earth, and *that* every imagination of the thoughts of his heart *was* only evil continually. 6 And it repented the LORD that he had made man on the earth, and it grieved him at his heart. 7 And the LORD said, I will destroy man whom I have

created from the face of the earth; both man, and beast, and the creeping thing, and the fowls of the air; for it repenteth me that I have made them.

Few believed God. Few followed the example of Abel. Few, very few, knew the grace of God. Indeed, when human civilization had reached its highest achievements and greatest potential, the whole race was a mass of iniquity, a running sore of corruption, with its vileness covering the earth. There was not a single exception, except one; and that one exception was an exception that God himself made by the special, supernatural intervention of his sovereign grace.

Genesis 6:8 But Noah found grace in the eyes of the LORD.

CHAPTERS 6-50—REDEMPTION AND RESTORATION

III. We are inadequate, insignificant, meaningless vanity.

BUT, BLESSED BE HOLY NAME, HE WHO IS OUR GOD IS INFINITELY ADEQUATE!

As the Apostle Paul put it, when he was explaining the meaning of this Book, “*Where sin abounded, grace did much more abound!*” That is the message of the rest of the Book of Genesis (6:8-50:26).

- Man chose sin. But before that God chose to save.
- Man broke God’s covenant in the Garden. But before ever man rebelled, the Lord God had made a covenant on behalf of chosen sinners that can never be broken. (Typified in His Covenants with Noah—[*The Bow*] and Abraham—[*The Seed*])

- Man is filled with and motivated by his hatred of God. God is filled with and motivated by his mercy, love and grace to fallen men!
- We deserved God's wrath. But God promised all the blessedness of his covenant to the chosen seed.
- And he found a way to give us that blessedness and still maintain his own holiness, justice and truth—(SUBSTITUTION – Gen. 22). – “*My son, God will provide himself a lamb for a burnt offering!*” – “**JEHOVAH-JIREH!**”

Job 33:24 Then he is gracious unto him, and saith, Deliver him from going down to the pit: I have found a ransom.

Isaiah 45:20 Assemble yourselves and come; draw near together, ye *that are* escaped of the nations: they have no knowledge that set up the wood of their graven image, and pray unto a god *that* cannot save.

- Now, be sure you get hold of this—He who is our God always accomplishes his great purpose of grace! Nothing can hinder it. Nothing can prevent it. Indeed, all things are instruments in the hands of our God, by which he performs it.—Adam's Fall—Noah and His Sons—Lot and His Daughters—Judah and Tamar—Joseph and His Brothers!

SIX MEN

Really, the whole history of the Book of Genesis (a period of 4000 years) really revolves around six men. There is a reason for the prominence of these six men. They are representative of the whole experience of grace.

If you remember the lives of these six men and what they mean, you will have the Book of Genesis at your fingertips. They are Adam, Noah, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and Joseph.

- **ADAM** displays our ruin, our depravity, our sin, and our need of grace. Adam was also a figure of him that was to come, the second Adam, the Lord Jesus Christ.
- **NOAH** portrays our redemption by Christ.
- **ABRAHAM** is the eminent example in the Bible of justification by faith.

Here was a man who lived by faith. Everything that he had was given to him by God, —not by any merit in him, not by any effort on his part, but by God’s free and sovereign grace. God chose Abraham. God revealed himself to Abraham. God called Abraham. God gave Abraham faith in Christ. And God ordered every step of his life. Eight times that Abraham’s faith was dramatically tried. When God tries your faith, read the life of Abraham. You will find your own experiences in his. Abraham shows us what it is to live by faith, what it is to live in this world as the friend of God.

- **ISAAC** exemplifies sonship, our relationship to our God as his own dear children.

If there ever was a boy that was spoiled, pampered and petted by his father, it was Isaac. He was Abraham’s son, pre-eminently so. In the glimpses this book gives us of Isaac we see what it means to be the darling of our heavenly Father’s heart. What a blessed message this is! Our great God looks upon us as the darling of his heart.

1 John 3:1-2 Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God:

therefore the world knoweth us not, because it knew him not. 2 Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is.

- **JACOB** shows us how God’s sanctifying grace causes us to grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ, even as we live in this body of flesh and keeps us.

Jacob was a rascal, a schemer, a man who thought he could live on his own, by his own wits and by his own efforts. He went tried to deceive everybody and ended up being deceived.” (But he was in the grip of grace!) Jacob is a beautiful picture of sanctification, that marvelous work of God in which we in our folly, attempting to live in and gain God’s bless by the energy of the flesh, are led, even forced, graciously forced, into the very situations that drive us into a corner where at last, like Jacob being wrestled to the ground by the angel of the Lord, we discover our nothingness, our sin, our utter insignificance and irrelevance, and we are graciously forced, by sovereign, irresistible grace, to give up. And when we give up our trying, we begin to live. That is what happened to Jacob when he was conquered by God at the Brook of Peniel (Gen 32:22-32). The Lord Jesus Christ, the Angel of God, wrestled him to the ground, forced him to confess his name, broke his thigh, and gave him a new name. As a broken man, limping the rest of his life, he he limped through this world as Israel, a prince of God.

- Now, he had enough (Gen. 33)—Christ!
 - Oh, how I thank God for the unbreakable grip of his grace (Mal. 3:6).
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- **JOSEPH** represents our ultimate glorification.

Without question Joseph is typical of our Lord Jesus Christ, throughout the closing chapters of Genesis. But he is also typical of every believer. This man, beloved of his father and mistreated by his brethren, living through constant conflicts, trial and heartaches, opposed on every hand, was suddenly lifted from the darkness of a prison house into the glory of Pharaoh's throne to reign and rule as the second person in the kingdom. So it shall be with us! When we are at last in the place our God has prepared for us, we will look upon all hell and say exactly what Joseph said to his brethren.

Genesis 50:20 But as for you, ye thought evil against me; *but* God meant it unto good, to bring to pass, as *it is* this day, to save much people alive.

This is the message of the Book of Genesis.— **Man without Christ is utterly sinful, helpless, inadequate, useless and vain. But, blessed be God, there is in Christ our God and Savior an infinite, superlative adequacy of mercy, love and grace for our immortal souls!**

¹ Danville (Tuesday – January 14, 2003)—Todds Road Grace Church, Lexington, KY (Wednesday - 01/15/03)—First Baptist Church, Almont, MI (Sunday AM – 01/19/03)—Rescue Baptist Church, Rescue, CA (Friday 01/31/03)