

Genesis: Chapter 1

Opening Question: To whom was Genesis originally written and why?

Key Takeaways:

1. Genesis 1:1 is the chapter title; verse 2 “now” begins a disjunctive clause, where the narrator breaks in to explain that the earth had not yet been formed (invisible, formless) and did not yet exist (void); verses 6–8 are God creating the heavens; verse 26–28 God states His desire for man (“adam”), not to rule “over” but to rule “among,” where ruling is to be understood as bless at the ruler’s expense for the benefit of those being ruled. The opening scene ends in chapter 2, verse 4.
2. Stuff was there before the story began, including the waters and the darkness, this is the story of God creating the heavens and the land. The heavens are the blue expanse where the rain comes from, and the earth is the dry land (1:8). The word for earth will be used all through the story as the land, becoming the land of Israel.
3. There is a big “A” author superintending this whole story.
4. Every word in the beginning of the story is loaded with importance and sets up the entire story. Key phrases to pay attention to: “God saw that it was good,” seed multiplying “after to their kind,” “God said,” “It was so,” and “God called.”
5. The story is looking for “the be like one” or “mashal” who has the same character as God.
6. “Tov” is “good, beautiful, right” and God is the sole determiner of Tov.

Discussion Questions:

1. Read aloud together Genesis 1:1 to Genesis 2:4 and discuss the details of the opening scene. What do you learn in this scene about God and His creation that will inform you as you read the rest of the story?
2. To whom and for what purpose was Genesis written and why is this important to remember as you read the biblical narrative?
3. How does understanding “mashal,” translated “rule” but actually meaning “be like,” and “over” actually meaning “among” inform your understanding of God’s stated desire in Genesis 1:26–28?

Practical Application:

1. Relisten to this week's podcast (approximately 30 minutes) as you prepare to understand Genesis. Take notes on what to be looking for in the story.
2. Reread the opening scene of Genesis (1:1–2:4) and consider how this scene sets up the continuation of the story.
3. Over the course of this week relisten to the book of Genesis (approximately 4 hours). How does listening to the story as a unified narrative impact your understanding of the book?

Closing Prayer:

Father, we marvel at Your Word and Your desire to reveal Yourself to us through the biblical narrative. Thank You for the opportunity to know You more through Your Word. Amen.