

Genesis: Overview

Opening Question: Discuss the impact and implications of approaching the Bible as a single unified story?

Key Takeaways:

1. Genesis is written as historical narrative and follows this literary genre's rules.
2. Genesis means "In the beginning" in Hebrew and begins God's revelation concerning creation to the nation of Israel.
3. The little "a" author of Genesis was Moses who selectively chose historical details for Israel to understand their identity and role as a nation.
4. In Genesis, as with all narrative literature, there are characters, a setting, a conflict, an anticipated resolution, and scenes which move the plot forward.
5. The conflict is not resolved until later in the biblical narrative and the fulfilment of God's stated desire in Genesis 1 does not occur until Revelation 21 and 22.
6. Genesis through 2 Kings is the backbone of the biblical narrative and carries the story, while other books contribute to the narrative, and still other books contemplate on it.
7. Scenes move the plot along and cannot be understood in isolation.

Discussion Questions:

1. Rather than a book containing a collection of many stories, the Bible is one unified story that begins at the beginning (Genesis) and goes to the end (Revelation). Discuss ways you will approach reading the Bible, beginning with Genesis, as historical narrative. What has made this approach difficult for you in the past?
2. Reading well will include identifying the literary elements of the story as they are revealed. Basic literary elements revealed in Genesis are the story's setting, main character, main character's desire, the antagonist, the conflict, the proposed solution, and the plot line of the story. Define each of these terms as you prepare to identify them in the Bible.

Practical Application:

1. This week, read aloud or listen to the book of Genesis in one sitting or several large blocks of time. This will take approximately three and a half to four hours. If reading, try reading from a Bible that does not include chapter and verse breaks.
2. From your reading, attempt to identify the following: the setting, the main character, the main character's desire, the antagonist, the conflict, and the anticipated resolution to the problem. As this study continues, these will be clearly identified.
3. A story's plot can either be episodic or dramatic/progressive. An episodic plot is a collection of stories each with their own moral tied loosely together by a common theme. A dramatic or progressive plot is a single story with a sequential movement of events to a single climax with a single purpose revealing a single moral. The plot of the Bible is dramatic/progressive. Having read through Genesis in one sitting or large blocks, write down what you know of the progressive plot of the story so far.

Closing Prayer:

Father, Thank You for revealing Yourself and Your desire for Your creation to us through Your Word. May we come to know You more as we understand Your Story. Help us to read the Bible as You intended it to be read so that we may understand it as You intended it to be understood. Amen.