

The Bible for Grown-Ups2

“In the Beginning”

So last week, we began a journey looking at how we got The Bible. Doctor Luke and many others started keeping account of the life and words of Jesus. As Gentiles learned more about this Jewish carpenter, turned Rabbi, and who claimed to be the Son of God. These Gentiles became enamored with the sacred texts of the Jews. As they looked into the Law and the Prophets, they were introduced to something new. These writings were the backstory of their new faith. To their amazement, they discovered that the Jews, whose religion was older than the religion of the Greeks or Romans, had always believed in one God, Yahweh. One God was new to them. Ancients didn't convert from one religion to join another. They just added a new god to their group of old gods.

-The first line of the first book of the Torah would cause the ancient world to rethink everything.

Genesis: Greek for “Origin”

Genesis 1:1

“In the beginning God...”

-Moses was the author of the first five books of the Bible. Those new followers of Jesus found out that the Jews, whose religion was older than the religion of the Greeks or Romans, had always believed in one God.

-In the 19th and 20th centuries, archaeological discoveries created doubt regarding the origins of the Genesis creation account. Egyptian, Babylonian, and Canaanite creation texts were discovered that were very similar to the account found in Genesis. The initial reaction was that the Hebrews borrowed from other ancient creation stories. This view has been

abandoned.

-Genesis stands in startling contrast to the other creation stories.

-Genesis is a worldview unto itself.

-When Moses began with “In the beginning” the universe was thought to have always existed. For something to have a beginning meant something had to have a cause. God was that cause!

Genesis 1:1

In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.

-Moses point was not how God created the world, but that God created the world.

-It was not created by Egypt’s Amon-re or Babylonia’s Marduk. Genesis is nothing like the Egyptian, Babylonian, or Canaanite creation myths where the gods created themselves from body parts and fluids.

Genesis 1:26-27

Then God said, Let Us make man in Our image...

-In the Jewish texts, mankind is the pinnacle of creation. Dignity is established in the beginning. This was unheard of. There was no parallel anywhere. What came next was equally unimaginable!

-Moses introduced a radically different, unparalleled, and untested worldview.

-In the opening line of the Hebrew Bible, they realized that the Jews had it right all along.

...according to Our likeness; and let them rule over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the sky and over the cattle and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth."

27 God created man in His own image, in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them.

-This fueled their interest in the Law and the Prophets and moved them to quickly accept and adopt the Jewish text as their own sacred Scripture.

-We are introduced to God who saves, redeems, delivers, and never gives up on us.

-Thus the stage was set for the inclusion of the Hebrew Bible in our Christian Bible.

That inclusion was not without its difficulties. Please don't miss episode three next week!

Bottomline – Jewish monotheism gave the world a God Who created us on purpose with purpose.