

Regarding the History of Redemption, as the entire Bible points to Christ then every book within it also unfolds a part of the history of Jesus' work of redemption. Genesis, the book that introduces all things, emphasizes the beginning of this history. After the creation, the fall of man brings sin and judgment on the human race (2:4-3:24) and the promise of a deliverer from sin (3:15). Following chapter three, Genesis shows the preparatory stages of His coming: Noah is righteous above all his generation; his son Shem is chosen for the blessing (9:26) God calls Abraham and promises universal blessing (12:3b); and his heirs experience God's involvement, particularly his protection, in their lives. Joseph's statement of God's sovereignty in history caps this history in Genesis (45:4-11; 50:15-21). /TVT adds to this note that we see how even the best of men could not deliver themselves or establish a standard of righteousness that would meet the requirement of God.

Some Key Questions arise in this order: How are we to understand the days of creation? How do they relate to the theory of evolution? What about theistic evolution?...Where was Eden? Were Adam and Eve real persons or is this a teaching parable?...Who were the sons of God in 6:1; Was the flood global or local in its extent?...When did the patriarchs live and die? These questions are discussed in some of the books listed under our "study further" notes ahead.

Archaeologically Genesis has benefitted. Until recently some critics dismissed much of Genesis as folk-tales or stories because little was known of the culture of the time. Excavations have shown, however, the events of Genesis are in agreement with what we now know of the times. For example, the sons of Heth (Hittites) of Genesis 23 were unknown historically for many years. Some argued this was "proof" of the fallibility of Scripture. Then within this century archaeologists proved the existence of a great Hittite empire and of the customs described in this Genesis 23 sale of land (for example, the mention of the trees in the contract.) See the October 1979 ETERNITY ("Key finds in Archaeology") for further examples.

Key areas of study will include the following: Creation (1:1-2:3), the fall and judgment (2:4-3:24), the flood (6-9), the promise and covenant of Abraham (12, 15, 17, 22), the legacy of Jacob's sons (49)

SOME tips on study...Genesis should be read through at one sitting so the broad sweep of its history might not be lost (it is much shorter than most novels...outloud reading time is about 1 hr and 40 minutes). This sort of reading will yield understanding and insight and the genealogies can be fun, too. Some special studies include: investigating the New Testament quotations fr-m Genesis (over 60 of them!), finding and studying the eight names for God used in Genesis..to learn more about him as they reveal different aspects of his person; noticing how many times God is the initiator of the action (he calls, names, invites, etc.)

Genesis in culture finds the book has been the inspiration for many great works of art..inspired by biblical characters, stories, or doctrines. Genesis, because of its primary position in the canon and history, has contributed to many such work. William Blake portrayed God at work in creation in the painting entitled the "Ancient of Days". Franz Joseph Haydn wrote "The Creation" to celebrate Genesis 1 and 2 in music, and John Milton's epic PARADIS LOST traces the fall and judgment of Adam and Eve.