

Genesis & A Biblical Worldview

Bethany Bible Church, Adult Sunday School Class, April 15, 2012

Introduction

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God

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Creation

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Man

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Sin

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Grace

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Culture

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Purpose

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7 Basic Building-Blocks from Genesis

This is a study about something very important--something that few people think about or discuss; but that every thinking human being possesses and uses every day. In fact, in some ways, it is the most important thing we can know about a person. It's something called a "worldview".

1. WHAT IS A WORLDVIEW, AND WHY IS IT IMPORTANT?

A worldview is the fundamental orientation of someone's heart that governs they way they live in and look at the world. It's made up of a set of presuppositions--often organized around an all-encompassing "story"--that serves as the "lens" through which they choose to view the world and interpret reality. It provides them with the foundation by which they think about life. When people have significant 'philosophic debates' with each other, or when one group within a culture seek to impose its view of things upon another, it's almost always because of a clash of irreconcilable worldviews.

There are many different categories of worldviews--most of which we're quite familiar with and encounter in everyday discourse with others (Atheism, Deism, Naturalism, Nihilism, Existentialism, Pantheism, Postmodernism, etc.). But our study is concerned with the worldview we could call a "Christian worldview"--or perhaps more specifically, "Biblical Theism". Understanding our own worldview as Christians is vital to our being able (1) to defend our worldview amid the marketplace of competing ideas, (2) protect ourselves from the confusion that other worldviews might bring, and (3) to live a coherent, consistent Christian life.

The source material for our worldview is not primarily drawn from science, or reason, or intuition--although we neither deny the value of those other ways of knowing things, nor hesitate to make full use of them when appropriate. Rather, the primary source for the material of our worldview--the source that governs our use of those other ways of knowing things--is divine revelation. And in this study, we will examine how the the Old Testament Book of Genesis (and specifically, the first 11 chapters and the first three verses of chapter 12) gives us some of the basic categories upon which to build a consistent biblical/theistic worldview.

2. WHY SHOULD WE LOOK TO GENESIS FOR OUR WORLDVIEW?

Genesis ought to be fundamental to building our worldview because it presents itself to us as the biblical book of "beginnings". According to Dr. Henry Morris, the Book of Genesis proposes to give us God's own authoritative revelation concerning the origin such basic worldview concerns as the universe, order and complexity, the solar system, the atmosphere and hydrosphere, life, humankind, marriage, evil, language, government, culture, nations, religion, and the chosen people.¹ There would be no better book for us to look to for the foundational concepts of a truly biblical/theistic worldview than Genesis--the book of beginnings!

In another commentary that he wrote on the Book of Job, Dr. Morris said that "a correct and complete doctrine of creation is the answer to all the problems that burden this present hurting world."² He drew this conclusion from the fact that, at the end of Job--after Job and his friends had become completely confused and in despair over the greatly vexing problem of suffering--God answered the complexities by declaring His mighty work of creation. "If God himself laid such stress on [creation] in dealing with this most vexing of all human problems, we would also do well to give it priority when dealing with this or lesser problems."³

Our approach to the Book of Genesis in building our worldview will be to treat it as a literal, historical, reliable record of the origin of the most basic matters with which a cohesive, comprehensive worldview would concern itself. We can feel confident in doing this because our Lord and His apostles also treated Genesis in this way. (For examples of this, see Matthew 19:4-6; Luke 17:26-30; Acts 17:24-28; Romans 1:18-20; Ephesians 5:31; 2 Peter 3:3-7; Jude 7.)

3. WHAT BASIC WORLDVIEW CATEGORIES WILL WE DEVELOP FROM THE FIRST FEW CHAPTERS OF GENESIS?

I. GOD.

(1:1)God existed before creation; and created all that there is.

(1:1-3)God is Triune and speaks.

II. CREATION.

(1:1-31)God is a God of order, and His work of creation reflects His reasonableness.

(1:31-2:3)God's original creation was good, and He took pleasure in it.

III. MAN.

(1:26-30)Man is made in God's image as the crowning work of creation.

(2:4-17)Man was made for relationship and obedience.

(2:18-25)Man is male and female by design; and marriage was instituted by God.

IV. SIN.

(3:1-24)Man sinned; and is now fallen and in need of a redemption.

(4:1-26)Sin has spread throughout all of humanity, and has brought ruin on creation.

(5:1-32)Death has resulted from sin and affects all.

V. GRACE.

(6:1-8:22)God judges sin, but also provides grace.

(9:1-7)Human life is sacred and must be valued justly.

(9:8-28)God enters into covenants with fallen man.

VI. CULTURE.

(10:1-32)All the various nations in humanity flow from a common source.

(11:1-9)Humanity, though of one race, has been divided through language.

VII. PURPOSE.

(11:10-12:3)God chose one people, from out of divided humanity, through whom He would provide the Redeemer by whom all the families of the earth would be blessed.

¹Henry M. Morris, *The Genesis Record: A Scientific & Devotional Commentary on The Book of Beginnings* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1987), pp. 18-21.

²Henry M. Morris, *The Remarkable Record of Job: The Ancient Wisdom, Scientific Accuracy, and Life-Changing Message of an Amazing Book* (Santee, CA: Master Books, 1988), p. 87.

³*Ibid.*