

## **What's the Point....of Genesis? Mark Garner**

*In the beginning, God created the earth and the skies and the seas and everything in them, he gave life to every living thing, and he gives each of us life and breath and everything else. From the beginning, God knew what we needed, and he had already decided to send his Son so that everyone may have the chance to know him and to have the spiritual blessings that come from this. Genesis tells us much about God's nature, and it shows us the beginning of his design to send Jesus.*

### ***God Created The Heavens & The Earth (Genesis 1-3)***

In the opening chapters, we see God's care as he creates the world, and we also see the contrast between human weakness and our Heavenly Father's faithfulness. In the beginning, God brings form and meaning to an empty world; similarly, when we don't know God, our lives are formless and meaningless. Yet when we turn to Jesus, he gives us lasting hope and meaning and peace.

As we read the account of the creation, we often see "and God saw that it was good". He brings light, brings plant life, gives life to the many kinds of animals; and finally our Heavenly Father creates humanity and puts the first humans in a garden where things are idyllic, and where especially they have closeness with their Creator.

When Adam and Eve are deceived and they fall into sin, Genesis illustrates how sin separates us from God; it also harms human relationships, beginning a cycle of hurt and further offenses. Only God has the cure for sin, and only he can heal the wounds and cleanse us.

### ***God & Humanity (Genesis 4-50)***

As Genesis continues, we see our Creator constantly facing human straying; we see a holy God who cannot have fellowship with uncleanness and sin, yet also a loving God who longs to be near us and to give us life and compassion and care. Even when the Lord has to render discipline, we also see his mercy and his forbearance and his patience, as we see with Adam, Eve, and Cain.

When God is grieved by the rampant sins of humanity, he takes care of Noah; and he also preserves a 'remnant' of those who have turned to him, and gives the survivors the sign of the rainbow. We also see how God is with those who simply walk faithfully and humbly before the Lord, like Abel, Enoch, and Noah (Genesis 4-9).

As human wandering and erring continue, our Heavenly Father continues showing his patience and mercy. He finds Abraham, who walks in faithfulness as he simply trusts in God. In God's promises to him, we see his readiness to share his grace with all nations, and we see the great blessing of knowing God and always being with him. Through the times of Isaac, Esau, and Jacob we see a sharper contrast between human nature and God's nature (Genesis 10-36).

Joseph's times show us the vastness of God's understanding and his care, both with individuals and on a broader level (Genesis 37-50). This also foreshadows the greater redemption and salvation that Jesus brings to those who turn to him and hold fast to him. We all need God every moment; our Heavenly Father is always near, and he is ready to give us mercy and care and grace.

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## **What's the Point....of Genesis? Caleb Dillinger**

For those who do not know, "Genesis" means "Beginning." Genesis is the first book of our Bibles. It highlights God's creation, the introduction of sin, the fall of the world and cleansing through the flood with Noah and his ark, the establishment of God's covenant with Abraham, the promise fulfilled through his son and grandson Isaac and Jacob, and ultimately concludes with the creation of the nation of Israel through Jacob's twelve sons and all their descendants. But there is so much more. Genesis contains "side" stories about Lot and Judah and Tamar, interesting characters like Enoch (who never receives a recorded death), Methuselah (oldest man listed in the Bible), and Melchizedek (a mysterious priest who the author of Hebrews likens to Jesus). Genesis is first and foremost a book of stories.

Some Christians have used Genesis to be fact book to prove their belief in the 6,000 year old existence of the world. Others have used Genesis to explain why one skin color is better than another (just Google the "curse of Ham" and you'll be surprised). Still others find the only value of Genesis to be quoting endless pieces of Bible trivia. So you rightfully ask, "What's the point?"

To me, the point has been made clear in the way in which Genesis is told. The point of Genesis is that God interacts in human history because he carefully created the world and loves his creation.

Read the opening chapter of Genesis and you will see that at the conclusion of each day God says "it was good." The creation story ends with God declaring his creation was "very good." God loves creation. Too often humans will put down this earth, claiming we are spiritual beings trapped in mortal bodies. That's not the story Genesis tells. God lovingly created physical forms, including our bodies, and he saw that physical earth and creation was very good!

It's true that we were created in God's image. It's true that his breath forms our life. It's true that sin occurred in the Garden of Eden and created a seemingly unsolvable problem between humanity and God. And it's true that even in Genesis chapter 3 God was ready to send his son Jesus to crush Satan.

There are heartwarming stories in Genesis and there are heart breaking stories too. There are easy to understand stories and there are challenging to understand stories. But the point of Genesis shines through all of that. God interacts in human history. Our good times and bad times are seen and felt by God. You may not identify with every story of Genesis. Honestly, I hope you don't relate to all those stories; rape and incest and murder happen in this book! But we can most certainly declare with confidence that God is present through all the stories, witnessing horrors and providing blessings. God is not a silent judge way up in Heaven. He is alive, he is interactive, and he planned to rescue all of humanity (even you and me) since the very beginning. That's the point of Genesis.