



Lesson One: The Holy Scriptures

“I solemnly declare that I do believe the Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments to be the Word of God and to contain all things necessary for salvation...”

*--Book of Common Prayer,
Ordination Vow: p. 526*

Q. Why do we call the Holy Scriptures the Word of God?

A. We call them the Word of God because God inspired their human authors and because God still speaks to us through the Bible.

-Book of Common Prayer, p.853

Redemptive History - The story of salvation from Creation to the New Jerusalem as recorded in the Bible.

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Assumptions about the Bible

As the Word of God, the Bible...

- ◆ reveals the triune God
- ◆ reveals His plan of salvation for human beings
- ◆ is authoritative

As the word of man, the Bible....

- ◆ is a collection of literary works
- ◆ is written by human authors inspired by the Holy Spirit (See II Tim. 3:16* and II Peter 1:21*)

Trifocal approach to interpretation

Literary Perspective

- Considers the original Writer => Document => Audience
- Approaches the individual books of the bible as whole and single units with a unified structure in their finished literary format.

Canonical Context

- canon- literally means “rule” (derived from the Greek *kanon* which designated a carpenter’s rule.) The term in Christianity refers to a group of books acknowledged by the early church as the rule of faith and practice.
- The perspective of canonical context considers the relationships and functions of the various books of the Bible as given to the faith community as a whole.

Redemptive Historical Perspective

- The orderly flow of God’s acts and revelation in time and space in relationship to human beings.
- Recognizes that God’s relationship with humanity develops over time and historical context.

12 Periods of Redemptive History:

- Part 1: Creation in Harmony
- Part 2: Creation in Alienation
- Part 3: Election and Promise
- Part 4: A Holy Nation
- Part 5: A Nation Like the Other Nations
- Part 6: A Royal Nation
- Part 7: A Divided Nation
- Part 8: A Restored Nation
- Part 9: Jesus and the Kingdom
- Part 10: The Apostolic Era
- Part 11: The Kingdom and the Church
- Part 12: The New Jerusalem



Primeval History

Genesis 1-11

Q. What do we learn about God as creator from the revelation to Israel?

A. *We learn that there is one God, the Father Almighty, creator of heaven and earth, of all that is, seen and unseen.*

Q. What does this mean?

A. *This means that the universe is good, that it is the work of a single loving God who creates, sustains, and directs it.*

-Book of Common Prayer

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A GOD-CENTERED FOCUS ON CREATION

There are two accounts of creation. They are different, yet harmonious and complimentary.

Only through the lens of God's revelation can we understand the special significance of human beings.

God Makes a Home for Man (Gen. 1:1-2:3)

- More Poetic -- The account is schematized and symmetrical
- Fiat Creation -- "And God said..."
- Portrays God as *ruler*, by whose command the world comes into being. God stands apart and over the creation as Creator-King. Portrays man as appointed Steward.

Linguistic Symmetry

- ◇ repetition & balance creates sense of the harmony of creation
- ◇ structure creates emphasis on days 4, 6, and 7
- The Fourth Day
 - * introduction of *governance*
- The Sixth Day
 - * climax of creation
 - * "in the likeness and image of God" vs. "according to kind"
 - * ordained to be *rulers* over all creation
 - * mankind is declared "*very good*".
- The Seventh Day
 - * Distinctive day -- the only day God consecrates
 - * The day of rest
 - * "good" => "very good" => "holy"

Schematic Symmetry

- ◇ "The sequence of the days reveals the orderliness of creation, rather than the order of creative events."¹
- ◇ The first three days depicts the formation of the world's realms; the second three days depicts the filling of the world's realms.
- ◇ climactic sequence: inanimate => animals => humans

¹ VanGemeren, *The Progress of Redemption*, p. 47



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Q. What does this mean about our place in the universe?

A. *It means that the world belongs to its creator; and that we are called to enjoy it and care for it in accordance with God's purposes.*

-Book of Common Prayer

"I believe in God, the Father Almighty, creator of heaven and earth."

-Apostles Creed

Q. What does this mean about human life?

A. *It means that all people are worthy of respect and honor, because all are created in the image of God, and all can respond to God's love.*

-Book of Common Prayer

- ◇ The seventh day stands apart as unique and holy. The male and female were blessed but not consecrated. Readers are left with a question: *How do men and women enter into Holiness and Sabbath Rest?* (See Hebrews 4:4-11)

God Makes Man At Home in the World (Gen. 2:4-25)

- Narrative Form
- Action Creation- God is involved through action
- God as *potter, gardener, builder.*

The Covenant Name

- The covenant name, Yahweh, is used 10 times.
- The God who blesses. Gen. 12:2,3
- The God who establishes holiness. Exodus 19:6
- The God of Covenant Faithfulness who reveals himself. Ex. 34:5-7
- **Yahweh is Elohim: The Redeemer of Israel is the Creator!**

The Garden

- Beautiful place vegetation and rivers.
- God provided irrigation and food and work
- Latent potential: "There's Gold in them there hills!"
- Setting: Man and woman are placed, expelled and hope for return. (See Rev. 22:1-5)

Permission, Prohibition and Promise (Gen. 2:16-18)

- Any tree, but...
- The Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil is the symbol of Temptation
- The Tree of Life is the Symbol of Hope
- Suitable Helper

Family Unit

- Develops Man's relationships to the garden and animals
- The institution of Marriage.
- Woman is distinct but complementary help-mate.
- Family unit is the means by which God extends his Glory and blessed presence to the earth.

Conclusion

- Genesis 1&2 has a theological focus rather than a scientific focus.
- Yahweh is the Creator God and has a special interest in mankind.
- It reveals God as the God of order and concern.
- The Creator delights in creation, declaring it good and very good.
- He is Holy and created a special Holy Day.



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polemic-a disputation or argument made against another way of looking at the world.

“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God and the Word was God. He was in the Beginning with God....And the Word became flesh and lived among us...”

-John 1:1-2,14

The Messianic Focus of God’s Rule on Earth

The plan of God the Father involves Jesus the Son as the cosmic Redeemer. (See Col. 1)

The rule of God on Earth is mediated personally through the Messiah. The *proto-evangelium* or the “First Gospel” is found in Gen. 3:15. It is the promise of the “seed” of the woman who will crush evil.

The Creator and Man

The Image of God

According to Genesis man and woman are made from the “dust of the ground” but are granted life by the “breath of God”. God has created humans, male and female, in the “image and likeness” of God. See Richard Pratt’s, *Designed for Dignity*.

This means that humans possess a royal dignity. The outworking of God’s gift of his image and likeness is a charge to be stewards of the creation, to be accountable to the King of Creation (commandments given), to communicate, to affect things, to show power, and to care. In this way, humans reflect the Glory of the Creator.

The Hope of Humanity

“In the dynamic tension between the event of creation and its purpose lies the human factor of possibility.”²

While the creation was declared good, it merely constitutes the beginning of the story. There is a sense that “good” even “very good” does not indicate “perfection” but suitable for the purposes of God. The Garden of Eden is land to be tended; it is filled with possibilities. The cultural mandate to rule and fill the earth press the story forward.

² VanGemenen, *The Progress of Redemption*, p. 63



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THE GENERATIONS FROM ADAM TO TERAH

The Toledot Formula

“this is the account of” (Hebrew: *toledot*) is used ten times in the book of Genesis revealing the literary structure of the book.

The TOLEDOT formula occurs five times from Adam to Abraham and five times from Abraham to Israel in Egypt.

The structure reveals that Israel has a common ancestry in Adam with all of the nations. Therefore, Israel shares a common history of grace, rebellion, and revolution. The Toledot structure reveals God’s gracious election of particular families to be the progressive means of redemption for the human race.

The Genealogies Link

- ◆ Adam and Abraham
- ◆ Garden of Eden and Canaan
- ◆ The old humanity and the new humanity (Israel)

The Genealogies Demonstrate Godliness at an Individual Level

- ◆ Enoch and Noah “walked with God” (5:22, 24, 6:9)
- ◆ Lamech expressed hope in the grace of God’s comfort in a world affected by judgment. (5:29)
- ◆ Noah is chosen as the father of mankind after the flood. (9:1)
- ◆ Shem received a special blessing (9:26-27)
- ◆ Lord confirms blessing to Abraham, son of Terah (12:2)

Central Story of Flood Contains the Dominant Themes

- ◆ Sinfulness of man
- ◆ Judgment of God
- ◆ The Grace of God (Salvation)
- ◆ Patience of God (Covenant)
- ◆ Promise of God

A Bridge between Creation and Abraham

- The literary tension is between God’s rule and human’s rebellion.
- The climax of this tension is the Tower of Babel.
- Genesis 1-11 sets the stage for a special agent of God’s redemption: Abraham.



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A World of Revolution

The contrast of the beginning (creation) and the end (the Tower of Babel) indicates that something radically wrong has happened to creation.

- ◆ “Let us make man” vs. “Let us make...bake...build...make a name for ourselves...”
- ◆ God’s command to fill the earth vs. the unity and consolidation of the people of Babel.
- ◆ A family unit in fellowship with God vs. community in rebellion.
- ◆ The world of harmony and order vs. world of confusion.

A World of God’s Control

The literary development of Genesis 2-11 “traces the continuity of God’s blessing on human beings (even in their rebellion!) and the particular of God’s blessing on individuals and their families.

Jesus and the Kingdom

Not only do we only know God through Jesus Christ, but we only know ourselves through Jesus Christ; we only know life and death through Jesus Christ. Apart from Jesus Christ, we cannot know the meaning of our life or our death, of God or of ourselves.

Thus without Scripture whose only object is Christ, we know nothing, and can see nothing but obscurity and confusion in the nature of God and in nature itself.

-Blaise Pascal, Pensées

The Gospel of Matthew

The Author: Matthew a Jewish Tax Collector

Matthew 9:⁹ *As Jesus passed on from there, he saw a man called Matthew sitting at the tax booth, and he said to him, "Follow me." And he rose and followed him.*¹⁰ *And as Jesus reclined at table in the house, behold, many tax collectors and sinners came and were reclining with Jesus and his disciples.*¹¹ *And when the Pharisees saw this, they said to his disciples, "Why does your teacher eat with tax collectors and sinners?"*¹² *But when he heard it, he said, "Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick."¹³ *Go and learn what this means, 'I desire mercy, and not sacrifice.' For I came not to call the righteous, but sinners."**

Some modern scholars believe that because the Gospel of Matthew relies on the Gospel of Mark as a source that the author could not have been an eyewitness. However, all of the earliest church leaders attributed this Gospel to Matthew the tax collector.

Papias (70-155 AD): *"For Matthew compiled the sayings [the logia of Christ] in the Hebrew language; and each interpreted them as best he could"* (Eusebius, Church History, Book 3, Chapter 39.15-16)



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Recipients³:

Many elements point to Jewish readership:

1. Matthew's concern with fulfillment of the OT (he has more quotations from and allusions to the OT than any other NT author); his tracing of Jesus' descent from Abraham (1:1–17)
2. His lack of explanation of Jewish customs (especially in contrast to Mark);
3. His use of Jewish terminology (e.g., "kingdom of heaven," where "heaven" reveals the Jewish reverential reluctance to use the name of God; see note on 3:2);
4. His emphasis on Jesus' role as "Son of David" (1:1; 9:27; 12:23; 15:22; 20:30–31; 21:9,15; 22:41–45).

This does not mean, however, that Matthew restricts his Gospel to Jews. He records the coming of the Magi (non-Jews) to worship the infant Jesus (2:1–12), as well as Jesus' statement that the "field is the world" (13:38). He also gives a full statement of the Great Commission (28:18–20).

Date and Place of Writing⁴:

Some have argued on the basis of its Jewish characteristics that Matthew's Gospel was written in the early church period, possibly the early part of AD 50, when the church was largely Jewish and the gospel was preached to Jews only (Act 11:19). However, those who have concluded that both Matthew and Luke drew extensively from Mark's Gospel date it later—after the Gospel of Mark had been in circulation for a period of time. Accordingly, some feel that Matthew would have been written in the late 50s or in the 60s. Others, who assume that Mark was written between 65 and 70, place Matthew in the 70s or even later. However, there is insufficient evidence to be dogmatic about either view.

The Jewish nature of Matthew's Gospel may suggest that it was written in the Holy Land, though many think it may have originated in Syrian Antioch where there was a large population of Jews.

³ <http://www.biblica.com/niv/study-bible/matthew/>

⁴ <http://www.biblica.com/niv/study-bible/matthew/>



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Purpose⁵:

Matthew's main purpose is to prove to his Jewish readers that Jesus is their Messiah. He does this primarily by showing how Jesus in his life and ministry fulfilled the OT Scriptures.

Although all the Gospel writers quote the OT, but Matthew includes nine proof texts unique to his Gospel (1:22–23; 2:15; 2:17–18; 2:23; 4:14–16; 8:17; 12:17–21; 13:35; 27:9–10) to drive home his basic theme: Jesus is the fulfillment of the OT predictions of the Messiah. Matthew emphasizes Jesus' Davidic lineage.

Matthew even finds the history of God's people in the OT recapitulated in some aspects of Jesus' life (ex. The Flight to Egypt, the 5 discourse→5 Books of Moses, the Mount of Transfiguration→Sinai).

⁵ <http://www.biblica.com/niv/study-bible/matthew/>