

GENESIS

IN THE BEGINNING: INTRODUCING GOD

GENESIS 1:1-2

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WEEK 1

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GENESIS 1:1-2

INTERPRETIVE CONSIDERATIONS

TEXT TRANSMISSION

ORAL TRADITION – the Bible is a series of “fireside” stories and tales passed along through the generations and finally written down with the advent of writing.

TEXTUAL REDACTION – Since the stories come from divergent sources someone had to edit (or redact) them to make sense and have some form of unity

VERBAL INSPIRATION – God, the only eyewitness, recounts the events prior to Moses day so that what he writes is accurate.

TEXT CRITICISM

ASSUMPTIONS

Assumes that All religion evolves from polytheism to monotheism

Polytheism – The worship of many gods

Monotheism – The worship of one god

Assumes that ceremony and liturgy (cult) take generations to evolve.

- WORSHIP USUALLY BEGINS OUTDOORS AND MOVES INDOORS, I.E. JOB, ABRAHAM, AND MOSES MAKE OUTDOOR SACRIFICES -> MOSES MOVES WORSHIP TO A TENT -> SOLOMON MOVES WORSHIP TO A BUILDING.
- WORSHIP MOVES FROM FAMILY PRIESTHOOD TO PROFESSIONAL PRIESTHOOD.
- BUT ASSUMES THAT GOD DOES NOT COMMUNICATE HOW HE IS TO BE WORSHIPPED.

- CAIN AND ABEL MUST HAVE HAD SOME DIRECTION ABOUT THEIR SACRIFICES.

"But Abel brought fat portions from some of the firstborn of his flock. The Lord looked with favor on Abel and his offering, but on Cain and his offering he did not look with favor. So Cain was very angry, and his face was downcast." (Genesis 4:4-5, NIV)

- ABRAHAM TITHES TO MELCHIZEDEK

"Then Melchizedek king of Salem brought out bread and wine. He was priest of God Most High, and he blessed Abram, saying, 'Blessed be Abram by God Most High, Creator of heaven and earth. And blessed be God Most High, who delivered your enemies into your hand.'" Then Abram gave him a tenth of everything." (Genesis 14:18-20, NIV)

- DOES THIS ASSUMPTION EMANATE FROM A BELIEF THAT GOD IS INVENTED BY MEN?

Assumes that more than one name for God, in a culture or religion, is uncommon.

- Hebrew name number 1 Elohim –
 - translated “God”
 - considered the generic name of the angry OT god.
- Hebrew name number 2 YHWH
 - Pronounced Yahweh – anglicized to Jehovah
 - Translated as LORD
 - Often identified as the covenant name because it is more “relational”
- But OT contains many names for God that reflect the circumstance.

Assumes multiple documents and multiple stories

- Julius Wellhausen (1844-1918) was a German scholar who developed a 4 source theory called the Documentary Hypothesis for the five books of Moses.
- In Wellhausen’s defense, most literature was getting the same scrutiny at the time. W simply turned his sights on Scripture.
- Wellhausen’s sources are annotated with the letters JEDP

- J – The ritual document/story that focuses on Jaweh or Jehovah
 - E – The oldest document/story that focuses on the judgmental Elohim
 - D – the revised law book or Deuteronomy text. Wellhausen says this was created in the days of Josiah’s Kingship (about 620BC)
 - P – The document/story that elevates the position of the Priests and codifies their work. Wellhausen considers this an invention of the Davidic Empire period (about 950BC)
- Wellhausen posits that the final edition is put together sometime just prior to the Septuagint (LXX) translation done in Egypt around 70BC.

CONCLUSIONS OF THE TEXTUAL CRITICS

- Moses did not write the first five books of the Bible (he may have contributed)
- Someone pieced together the pieces to fit the story that they wanted to be told.
- That piecing together came very late since religion could not have progressed that far in the time of Moses (or David for that matter)

PRESUPPOSITIONS

THE BIBLE ASSUMES GOD IS.

Everything and every argument must have a starting point.

"And without faith it is impossible to please God, because anyone who comes to him must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who earnestly seek him." (Hebrews 11:6, NIV) ¹

"God said to Moses, "I AM WHO I AM. This is what you are to say to the Israelites: 'I AM has sent me to you.'" God also said to Moses, "Say to the Israelites, 'The Lord, the God of your fathers—the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob—has sent me to you.' This is my name forever, the name by which I am to be remembered from generation to generation." (Exodus 3:14-15, NIV)

"John, To the seven churches in the province of Asia: Grace and peace to you from him who is, and who was, and who is to come, and from the seven spirits before his throne," (Revelation 1:4, NIV)

NO OTHER CREATION MYTH ²DOES THIS.

- Most assume a pre-existing something

¹ *The Holy Bible : New International Version.* 1996, c1984. Zondervan: Grand Rapids

² The word *myth* in our culture usually denotes an explanation for what is that is untrue. This is not the meaning of the word here. The meaning here is simply “an explanation for what is.” The truth of the explanation is not in question.

- Earth and sky - Greece, Babylon
- The Sun and the Nile - Egypt
- A gas cloud - Shinto, Evolutionists
- Yet ALL have some explanation for the origin of the universe.

SINCE GOD IS THE COMMUNICATOR, IT IS WHAT MATTERS TO HIM THAT IS RELATED.

- The information will not be exhaustive
 - We do not know if Adam had a navel, for example, the question is irrelevant to the theme.
- The information will be thematic.
- The history of Redemption
 - God's Love
 - God's Rescue of mankind

THE BIBLE WILL HAVE THE LITERATURE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE LANGUAGE AND CULTURE IN WHICH IT WAS WRITTEN.

- Hebrew literature makes a general statement and completes it with a specific statement or a series of specific statements.
- The general statement of Genesis 1:1 is followed by a specific statement of how that creation took place in Genesis 1:2-31
- The general statement of Genesis 1:26-27 is followed by the specific statement of man's creation in Genesis 2.

HEBREW OFTEN MIXES POETRY WITH PROSE.

- The language is naturally lyric.
- An example of the poetic is Genesis 1:27

"So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them." (Genesis 1:27, NIV)

