
Creation Answers

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Who does this newsletter?

This newsletter is produced by Wayne Spencer of Creation Education Materials on a Quarterly basis. Its purpose is to bring creationary research within the reach of Christian families and provide up-to-date reliable information on the creation issue. Wayne Spencer is a creation researcher and former teacher who has presented papers at the International Conference on Creationism and contributed to radio programs for the Institute for Creation Research.

This newsletter is meant to help people plug into creation resources and get informed about creation and evolution. It is provided free of charge on request. Using the Adobe Acrobat Reader, available for download on the internet, is the best way to view the newsletter. There are no restrictions in copying this newsletter or passing it on to others. To request to be placed on the e-mail list, send a request to Wayne at w.spencer@attbi.com.

More information on Wayne Spencer's education and publications can be found on the **creationanswers.net** web site. You'll also find a variety of articles, teaching aids, and how to contact creation organizations. <http://creationanswers.net>

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A Personal Note from Wayne Spencer

Greetings. I would like to apologize for the lateness of this newsletter. Normally the last issue of the year would be sent out around the end of December. In December I was quite busy with work and urgent projects and the newsletter had to be delayed. I will plan on doing 5 issues of the newsletters in 2003.

As we head into a new year, I will be beginning a new ministry in the Dallas area. For a few years I have been involved in a local monthly meeting known as COSMOS, which was an outreach of my church. This ministry is ending but a new monthly meeting for discussing creation, science, and apologetics issues will be begun in the Dallas metroplex area to carry on something similar to COSMOS. This new meeting will be intended for anyone high school age and up who would like to be better informed about creation, evolution, and apologetics issues. Nonchristians will be welcome though the information presented will be from a young-age Biblical creationist point of view. The location and details for the new monthly meeting are still being worked out.

I will send one (and only one) announcement about the new meeting to this newsletter list when plans are finalized. Many on this list are in the Dallas-Fort Worth area. There will be a separate e-mail list for those who would like to receive the monthly meeting announcement. If you would like to receive the meeting announcement, send me an e-mail.

Wayne Spencer, M.S., Physics

The Book of Beginnings

The following is taken from the introduction to the book of Genesis on my web site. This is an abbreviated form of that article, which is found under the "Intelligent Christianity" area on creationanswers.net. This is also based on material in a book about Genesis 1-11 that I am working on.

Bible scholars have said that the New Testament is built on the Old Testament and the Old Testament is built on the book of Genesis. Mankind's sin is a major theme in the book, along with how God makes covenants with people to give hope to mankind. Genesis also explains how sin came into the human experience and gives the first hint of God's plan to send a Savior to redeem fallen man (Gen. 3:15). Genesis illustrates how the infinite-personal Creator-God relates to fallen man, especially to those who were his chosen representatives in the world. He is supremely both Judge and Provider. He is sovereign over the direction of history. Genesis shows God acting as Judge of all unbelieving men but also shows that He relates in a very personal way to those who believe Him. Genesis begins with the Creation account itself, which shows that the God of the Bible is the true God of all people and that he has provided all that we have.

In the time when Moses first wrote down the Torah, the "Law of Moses," there were many idolatrous beliefs in the world. Moses was brought up in the educational system of the Egyptians (Acts 7:22), who had an animistic form of religion. The plagues of Egypt were carefully designed by God to be a systematic refutation of the false religious ideas of the Egyptians. The Egyptians, as well as some other peoples in the ancient world, worshiped the Sun, a god they called Amen Ra (Ra pronounced

"ray"). Genesis refutes this sort of belief by virtue of the fact that from the first day to till the fourth day of the Creation week there was no Sun. Exactly what the light was like on those days we don't know except that it must have come from a particular point so as to provide a day/night cycle for Earth, but God did not need an object like the Sun in order to provide light. God established himself in Genesis as THE source of every good thing. Nature displays the glory of God as it gives tangible illustrations of His greatness, intelligence, power, and goodness. Yet, Genesis 1 shows that God is separate from the universe he made, because he existed before it, "In the beginning God...." God's world (general revelation) does agree with God's revealed word (special revelation), provided both the natural data and the scriptural data are interpreted correctly. This shows the objective truth of the Bible. When the Bible speaks of God as Creator, it often emphasizes that the God of the Bible is the only god and so we must revere and worship only Him. In Genesis God is constantly "introducing" himself and showing to certain individuals the essentials about His own nature and character. For Noah, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob God clarifies who he is and how he will make special covenants and provisions for them.

Genesis not only addresses who God is as Creator of all people, but also shows how God chose to work by calling out from among the world's people Abraham; and he made a covenant that would be for all Abraham's descendants. Thus the origin of the Hebrew people is a significant theme in Genesis. But this theme is developed in a very interesting way. Genesis alternates its focus throughout from focusing on a certain family

to focusing on the world or a region of nations. This alternating focus from global to family shows God's sovereignty and authority on both levels and shows how God relates to both fallen unbelievers and fallen believers. Abraham and his descendants would become a nation that would be God's chosen representatives in a fallen world. Genesis does not depict God's representatives as perfect people. Rather they were considered righteous because they believed what God told them (Genesis 15:6; Romans 3:28-5:2) and this is also how we receive righteousness today through faith in Christ.

Genesis touches on the origins of many different peoples that are mentioned later in the Old Testament. In the later chapters (36 - 50) Genesis alternates its focus from the ungodly descendants of Abraham through Esau, to the godly line in the descendants of Jacob. It is as if Genesis adjusts its "field of view" in a manner like using a zoom lens on a camera. In some sections, it zooms out to take a wide field of view that addresses all people, such as in Genesis 1 and the Flood account. In other sections it zooms in to focus on what God did in the lives of certain people.

Archeology has confirmed the historical accuracy of Genesis in a number of ways. Cities from the time of Abraham, writing from ancient times, and cultural practices which show up in Genesis are very much in agreement with Archeological research. At the same time, there are still some unanswered questions about the places, events, and the cultural background of what Genesis describes. Genesis, however, should be viewed as historically accurate, though it is not meant to be a complete history of ancient times. It is written as an epic historical narrative, which

has multiple "main characters."

Genesis shows how families grew into nations. It is interesting to see the connections between individuals mentioned in Genesis who became nations of peoples mentioned later in the Old Testament. You can also trace how one person's disobedience to God, such as Cain or Noah's son Ham for instance apparently had far reaching effects that led to wicked nations of peoples God would later judge severely. When the Israelites conquered the land of Canaan, this was working out the curse pronounced on Ham's son Canaan in Genesis 9 and prophetic statements God made to Abraham in Genesis 15:13-16. In Genesis you can also see how certain individuals among the descendants of Abraham had very important positive influence on a multi-national scale, such as Joseph. God graciously provided not only for Jacob's entire family but also for many other people in the ancient world who came to Egypt to get food during a great famine. Genesis gives a unique perspective on how God sovereignly uses individuals to affect history.

Genesis covers thousands of years of Earth's early history. We must remember that the writer, Moses, was educated as an Egyptian and this would have included their polytheistic animistic religious concepts. Also, the various other peoples of the time encountered by the Israelites were steeped in idolatry. Genesis and Exodus are very complementary to each other as Bible books. Exodus begins the story of the Hebrew people essentially where Genesis leaves off. Genesis and Exodus may be written with a related purpose in mind. Together they give the account of how the Hebrew people became a nation and how

God directed and called them to follow him under the Levitical sacrificial priestly system. They both show how the true God is unlike the false gods of the time, as well as how God wanted to be personally involved in the lives of his chosen people as their first priority. God would not tolerate being one god among many, as all the other peoples of the time, but he insisted on exclusive worship of himself and obedience to his commands. Both books reveal God's nature and character in leading people out of idolatry to the one true God, the infinite-personal Creator-God.

This God is not just the god of certain people, he is the judge of all people but he relates to those who believe Him in a very personal way. God thus provides for his people through judgement and in spite of judgement. Adam and Eve, Noah, and Noah's sons all had to live with the various consequences of God's judgement but God still provided a way for them through the judgements and he blessed them in certain ways in spite of the judgements. The banishment from the Garden of Eden, the global Flood, and the confusion of the languages are all major judgement events in Genesis that those who believed in him had to live through or live with. In Genesis, the character of Noah, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and Joseph provide many lessons to the Jews on the character God wanted them to have. Before God gave the Jews stipulations about law for them as a nation, he taught them about character from the lives of men of faith outlined in Genesis.

Genesis does not just present God as the God of the Jews but as the God of all people who has chosen out a people for himself and called them to serve Him in the world. God's sweeping redemptive plan was to bless the whole world through the

descendants of Abraham (Gen. 12). God did not want the Jews to forget their origins as human beings or their origin a people. They would be God's chosen people, but they were to be his chosen people in order to represent Him to the unbelieving world. They were not representing him to the world because they were better, but just because of God's sovereign choice. The entire book of Genesis covers many years of history, from Creation to the end of the life of Joseph.

Genesis shows through its accounts on the lives of Noah, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and Joseph that God is faithful to his covenants over many generations. Genesis sets the stage for God to call out a people as His own from among the nations. Genesis ends with Abraham's descendants having become a nation in size, though they were slaves at that point and were not organized as a nation. Exodus addresses more about how the Lord organized them into a theocratic nation (though without a land at that point) and deals with God's requirements for the Jews, his call on them as a people.

Genesis is important for understanding God's covenants with mankind. These covenants give insight to God's plan for history. In Genesis 1 and 2 we have the Adamic or Edenic Covenant regarding the garden and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. The time from Adam to Noah could be said to be governed by a covenant, though little is known about it. It is implied in the account of Cain and Abel in Genesis 4; God had certain expectations for how they were to come to him. The sacrifice of an animal by Abel hints at something similar to the more elaborate sacrificial system to come later in the time of Moses. Then in Genesis 6 and 8 God made a covenant with Noah at

the time of the Flood. Beginning in Genesis 12 God makes a covenant with Abraham that carries through to his descendants and event to all generations of the descendants of Isaac, who was the “child of promise.”

The book of Genesis tells us much about God’s nature and character and gives important background for understanding the Old and New Testaments. It is the book of beginnings.

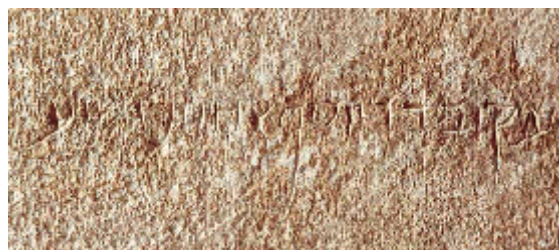
The James Ossuary

In 2002 there was an interesting archeological discovery. There are a number of confirmations from historical and archeological research that what the Bible tells us is reliable about the life of Christ. He was God in human form and came to give up his life to pay for sin.

The recent finding from archeology is something called an ossuary. It is basically a bone box. Sounds kind of morbid, but bear with me. In the first century apparently burial space was sometimes hard to come by and so after someone was buried, about a year later, they would be dug up from the grave and their bones would be put into a box and stored elsewhere. Usually the box was carved out of limestone rock. These boxes are called ossuaries and many of these have been found from around the first century. One particular ossuary has made some news this past year because of a unique inscription on it. Its inscription says in Aramaic, “James, son of Joseph, brother of Jesus.” The pictures shown here are from the Biblical Archeology Society.



The box (which was empty) has been examined by a number of experts and most consider it to be authentic. Handwriting experts date it to sometime between 10 and 70 A.D. This would make sense since James the brother of Jesus is believed to have died around 62 A.D.



All three of the names, James, Joseph, and Jesus were common names in the first century but it is unusual for a brother to be mentioned on an ossuary inscription. If this ossuary is authentic, this points to the Bible being accurate about the family Jesus was born into. If you’d like to read more about the James ossuary, on the internet, go to <http://www.christiananswers.net/q-eden/james-ossuary.html>

Creation 2003 Conference

Answers in Genesis is sponsoring an excellent conference May 22-26, 2003. Pastors can attend free if they register early. Go to <http://www.Creation2003.info> to get details.