

Lecture 9: Genesis – Their Identity, Our Identity

February 3, 2020

History and Identity

Who are you? Who are we?

To get to know each other, we eventually tell stories—history leads to identity.

Illus. Woman with full amnesia every day (psychologist study).

Our Context vs. Their Context

When we approach any literature, we bring with it our own set of questions—from our context.

What are the questions we normally ask of the book of Genesis?

Ans. The origins of the universe and of life.

What were the questions brought to the book by the original audience of Jews?

Ans. They were probably quite different than our questions.

Illus. Pauline Maier, *American Scripture: Making the Declaration of Independence* (1997)

Originally a functional document (last paragraph), then a creed (second paragraph).

Literary Structure of Genesis

To find the original meaning of the book, consider its most basic structure:



Genesis identifies God’s purpose for the Jews as a people through the history of their original family.

Literary Marker of Genesis: תּוֹלְדוֹת (Heb. *toledoth*)

Ten Times in Genesis

2:4	The generations of the heavens and the earth	} Five Main “Acts” in the Drama
5:1	The generations of Adam	
6:9	The generations of Noah	
10:1	The generations of the sons of Noah	
11:10	The generations of Shem	
11:27	The generations of Terah ←(Abraham’s life)	
25:12	The generations of Ishmael	
25:19	The generations of Isaac ←(Jacob’s life)	
36:1	The generations of Esau	
37:2	The generations of Jacob	

The Beginnings of the Two “Halves” of Genesis

<p>“In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth” (1:1).</p> <p>Create: בָּרָא (Heb. <i>bara</i>’) holy – used only of God not necessarily from nothing (<i>ex nihilo</i>) wholly unprecedented</p> <p>Form & Fullness Prose, Not Poetry</p>	<p>“Go forth from your country, and from your relatives and from your father’s house, to the land which I will show you; and I will make you a great nation, and I will bless you, and make your name great; and so you shall be a blessing; and I will bless those who bless you, and the one who curses you I will curse. And in you all the families of the earth will be blessed” (12:1-3).</p> <p>Land & Seed Blessing & Curse</p>
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Our Goals in Reading

Who is God? Who is man?

What is the problem? The solution?