

Lecture Four - Genesis

If you open a Bible at Genesis to read, you will find yourself following a narrative that does not end until you finish the Book of Kings.

You will recall from earlier lectures that we trace the beginnings and growth of Israel through the stages of early settlement, rural, village and pastoral. Our study will lead us to their enslavement in Egypt.

Before turning to the study of Genesis, it is important to understand that we must encounter the Books of the Bible on their own terms. In other words, we have to avoid the way people often misrepresent scripture and ancient history in order to preserve what they already believe. Serious study of the world of the Bible will confront many of the thought patterns and conclusions we might take for granted in our understandings of scripture.

To open yourself to the Old Testament message is to take the risk of changing views you might have about what makes up religion, morals, history, or what is sacred. For many of us this would be a wonderful thing!

The Old Testament contains many voices – The sternness of the Lawgiver, the searching of those wanting wisdom, the advice of the Sages, the sense of God’s guidance through History, the delight, fear, sorrow, anger and hope of people freely expressed before God. You will also hear the prophet’s cry or warning, and call for immediate change.

There is one God who created the World, and His Lordship is over all things, for all time.

The Bible uses Figurative and Symbolic Language
What Figures of Speech do you use?

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An Example of Figurative Language in the Bible:

The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want.

He maketh me to lie down in green pastures: he leadeth me beside the still waters.

He restoreth my soul: he leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for his name's sake.

Figurative, BUT expressing the Truth about God.

The Proper words we would use to describe God’s Character here would be Omniscient, Omnipotent and Providential.

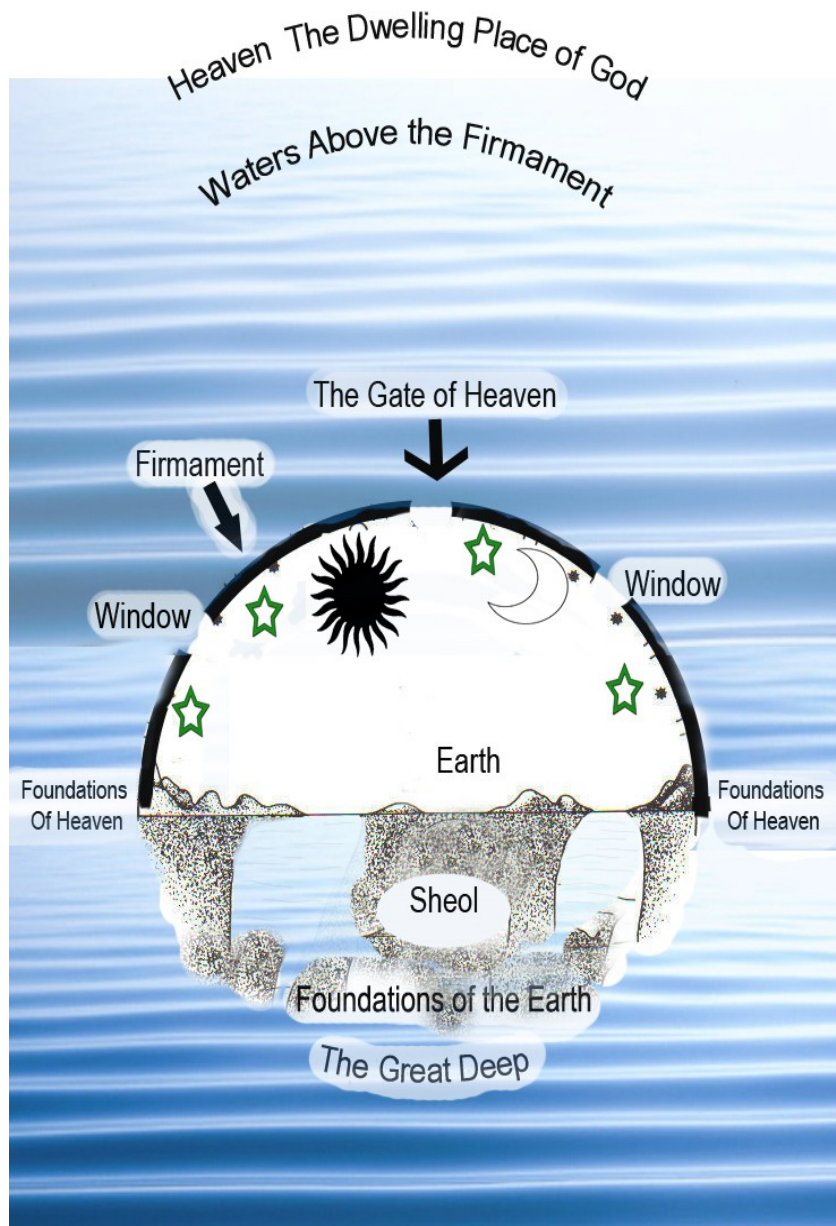
What Does This Mean?

But when you give alms, do not let your left hand know what your right is doing, so that your almsgiving may be secret. Mt.6

Getting ready to understand Genesis Chapters 1-11

Genesis 1-11

Primeval History



The First 11 Chapters of Genesis describe in the form of a story the ORIGIN of the world, and how the Human race came to be.

Often Scholars will use examples of early civilizations creation stories to show a similarity of thought between the ancients and the Hebrew Account.

Here is an example: (one of Many)

Comparison of Genesis' first Creation Story with a Babylonian creation story (Enuma Elish)

The *Enuma Elish* has about a thousand lines and was originally found to be recorded on seven clay tablets. Its main original purpose, was to elevate Marduk, the chief god of Babylon, above other Mesopotamian gods.

According to archaeologists, it was originally written circa 1120 B.C.

Comparison of Source	Jewish Creation Story Genesis 1:1 to 2:3	Babylonian Creation Story Enuma Elish
Assumed Date	8th or 9th century BCE	Late 12th century BCE
Date of writing (conservative belief)	13th century B.C During the life of Moses	Late 12th century B.C.
Creator(s) of the universe	A single God, YHVH.	Two Deities fighting
State Before Creation	No form to the earth, all covered in darkness.	Chaos- enveloped in darkness.
First Action	Creation of Light by the Word of God	Light created.
Next Action	Firmament created - a rigid dome set on the foundations of Heaven set the earth separating the earth from heaven.	Firmament created seen as a rigid dome.
Next Action	Dry land created.	Dry land created.
Next Action	Sun, moon, stars created.	Sun, moon, stars created.
Next Action	Creation of men and women.	Creation of men and women.
Final Action	God rests and sanctifies the Sabbath.	Gods rest and celebrate.

Notes to Consider:

The Hebrew God has no origins. He was before all things .

He is the source of Creation. Creation is shaped by Him and conforms to his will, design and purpose.

And:

It was Good