

Discussion Notes

Where do we go from here? Genesis-Revelation

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How does our story start? The beginning of a story makes sense of the rest. Genesis 1-3 sheds light on our God-given nature and purpose. Here we begin again, rediscovering the origin of our humanity and hope. This nine-week series will ask questions like: Who made us? Who are we? Why are we here?

The Primacy of Narrative

- Getting to know a person requires hearing their story.
- Every day we have an incredible amount of experiences and we are the ones who translate those experiences into meaningful narratives.
- Science and Philosophy cannot be the only source of meaning for human beings because they are focused on unchanging principles or laws.
- Postmodernity is helpful on this front because it reminds us of our fundamentally 'historied' nature.
- The problem is, how do we know what bits of our stories are the important ones?
- Genesis knew this 4,000 years ago! It is not a compilation of childish Sunday School stories; Genesis attempts to give us a proper orientation as the one true story about what it means to be human.

Genesis

- In the beginning of our story we are shown that God is not the world and the world is not divine.
- The world is good but not perfect, it is subject to change. These two ideas together lay the foundation for modern science.
- Creation is God's temple; it is a sacred space. But it has its own integrity and will bite back.
- Humans are the 'idol' or image of God in the creation temple. Not an afterthought to placate the angry god.
- Regardless of race, gender, or level of brokenness, human beings have an inherent dignity. Human rights are birthed out of Genesis
- Creation is to be our delightful home, our *dwelling* place.
- Tree is not a symbol of God wanting us to be ignorant, He wants us to know. He must teach us.
- Naked and ashamed=going into exile. God's clothing demonstrates his commitment to fix what is broken.
- Need to read, memorize, and inwardly digest this to let it shape the way we interact with others and creation.

Slow decline into night

- Kings begin to think they are sons of gods, slide into tyranny and the abuse of women.
- The flood undoes the creative work of Gen. 1-2, but God starts new creation with Noah's family.

- Through Abraham we are given a new example of what it means to be human (see Deut. 4:1).
- The promised land is a new Eden.
- Commandments are image bearing 101 and Christians are way beyond these.
- Height of Solomon's reign demonstrates how Israel was to be an example people. Called to have wisdom and the presence of God.
- It doesn't last. Habakkuk declares Torah is not restraining evil, Ezekiel 36-37 speaks of the coming of a new heart and God's Spirit.
- Israel's hope for resurrection and the Spirit.

Jesus and Revelation

- Jesus brings resurrection and Spirit.
- Romans 8, creation groans for its redemption.
- Revelation 21 demonstrates that the final vision is of a redeemed creation.
- New Jerusalem comes down to earth. It descends as a cube, just like the holy of holies. Creation not just a temple, but the holy of holies. No division of courts.
- The End is the Beginning.

In the meantime

- In John's gospel first question to Jesus is "Where do you dwell?"
- Jesus is the doorway or ladder to heaven (John 1:51) and the new creational Word (John 1:1-18). Jesus' new commandment is to love one another (John 13:34).
- It is difficult to love other people; Peter professes love of Jesus in John 13 only to have Jesus foreshadow his betrayal.
- But, immediately after he says that we should be of good cheer. His Father's house has many mansions. The language of taking is marriage language, the thrust of Scripture is towards heaven coming down.
- Jesus is speaking of fulfilling the Ezekiel 36 passage, the Spirit will dwell in us. We are the many dwelling places; we are where Jesus will dwell.
- God's spirit is dwelling in us because of what Jesus has done on the cross. We are the dwelling of the Father and Son on earth.

What story shapes us?

- We must ask if we are defined by alienation, pride, confusion, or fear?
- Or if we are shaped by the story given to us by the one who made us?
- God's timing is not like ours, if one day is like a thousand years and a thousand years are like a day, the resurrection is only two days ago!
- It is due to this great story, this sure and certain hope, that we ought never to grow weary of doing good.
- But ultimately, the kingdom, the power, and the glory is His.

Discussion Questions

- What are you most passionate about? What drive orients your life?
- What story has shaped that passion? Is it the right one?
- What would change if you lived out the reality of God dwelling in you?
- How can you benefit from knowing where things started and where they are going?