

Sunday, March 13, 2022 pm

A JOURNEY THROUGH THE BIBLE (2) The Patriarchal Age – Introduced

Last month, we began an extended study through the Bible. It is based upon our need to be able to establish a timeline for various events as recorded in scripture. Taken from an outline by Bob & Sandra Waldron, we have established 17 time periods associated with the history of the Bible. In our last lesson, we briefly went through these 17 periods of time. It is my hope that we will write these down and memorize them. This will help us navigate through the Bible both for ourselves and those we are privileged to study with. In my lesson today, I want to introduce the 1st of 3 lessons taking us through the 3 dispensations of time according to God's word. These three dispensations are 1) The Patriarchal age; 2) The Mosaic age and 3) The Church or Kingdom age (the New Testament).

Let's get started by introducing the patriarchal age.

I. Facts about the Patriarchal age

- a. Hebrews 1:1-2 – God spoke in times past in various ways.
- b. The name patriarch means father.
 - i. The patriarchal age - This was a period of time when God spoke directly through the fathers of certain families. It was also a time when they acted as "priest" to God as they would be the one offering sacrifices to and communing with God directly.
 - ii. Typically, the patriarchs we read about were nomadic in that they dwelt in lands, mostly not their own. But this does not mean they did not settle at all – we know they built altars, dug wells, raised crops and livestock, buried their loved ones, etc.
 - iii. The word *patriarch* is only found in the New Testament (NKJV) – 4 times (Acts 2:29 – of David; 7:8-9 – the 12 sons of Israel & Hebrews 7:4 – of Abraham). The LXX uses the Greek word 5 times and refers to "fathers" or leaders of Israel during the time of the kings.
- c. Time of this period ~??? (~6000-4000 BC) to ~1000 BC with Moses. NOTE: While there is some room for determining the date of creation, the evolutionary model is incompatible with Genesis 1 & 2. This has to be a *young earth*. Thus, the only plausible description is a few thousand years (~6-10k).
- d. The Bible covers this period in Genesis 1-Exodus 18.
- e. Some key events during this period –
 - i. Creation itself Genesis 1-3
 - ii. The fall of man (#1 - Before the flood)
 - iii. The flood (#2 - The flood and renewal)
 - iv. The tower of Babel (#3 – Scattering of people)
 - v. Key figures – (#4 – The patriarchs) – Adam, Noah, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph and his brothers, Moses (early years)
 - vi. The promise to Abraham and his descendants
 - vii. Israel's bondage and the exodus from Egypt (#5 – The exodus)
- f. Firsts introduced in Genesis – consider some of the firsts found in this book (and in the patriarchal age)
 - i. Genesis means *beginnings*.
 - ii. Creation of the world – the obvious first. Genesis 1 records God creating the world in 6 literal days. Moses, who is credited with writing Genesis – Deuteronomy, tied the creation days to the 7 days of a week in Exodus 20:8-11 with the 4th command, "*Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy.*"
 - iii. First man – Adam (which means *man*). NOTE: Genesis 2:19 is the first time the NKJV uses the name *Adam* and it is when he is instructed to name the animals (NASB – Genesis 2:20 is

the first time, ASV – Genesis 3:17 is the first time). In the NKJV, the actual Hebrew word which is first introduced in Genesis 1:26 as “man” and is found 9 times BEFORE his name is mentioned.

- iv. First marriage – Genesis 2:24-25, when Eve was created from Adam’s side, Moses used this to establish marriage, the first of 3 institutions ordained by God (the other 2 – government and the church). This is why we consider the sacredness and permanency of marriage to predate even the Law of Moses (cf. Matthew 19:4-6).
- v. First lie – Satan lied to Eve saying she would not die, and slandered God (Genesis 3:1-5)
- vi. First sin – Eve partook of fruit of the tree of knowledge of good and evil (Genesis 3:6-7)
- vii. First excuse – when God appeared to them asking what they had done, Adam blamed Eve (and possibly God), and Eve blamed the serpent (Genesis 3:8-13). NOTE: God did not accept their excuses then and has not accepted excuses since then!
- viii. First consequences of sin – Genesis 3:14-19 – God cursed/punished all 3 – the serpent (Satan) would be despised; Eve would be in submission to her husband; and Adam would have to toil to provide – all would die. At that time they began to die.
- ix. First promise of redemption – Genesis 3:15 – a KEY passage – we have the seed promise introduced (Galatians 4:4).
- x. First recorded act of worship – Genesis 4 – we read of the offerings of Cain and Abel. God accepted Abel’s offering and rejected Cain’s offering. More in a moment.
- xi. First murder – Genesis 4:8ff. Cain murders Abel and tries to cover it up before God. He is cursed because of this.
- xii. Renewing of the world via the flood – the world grows increasingly wicked for a period of a few thousand years till God decides to start over. The world is destroyed, but Noah and his family are spared via the ark (Genesis 6-9).
- xiii. First recorded covenant – after the flood – Genesis 6:18, 9:9ff.
- xiv. Where languages and nationalities came from – Genesis 11, at the tower of Babel
- xv. First idols introduced – the first mention of idols is found in Genesis 31:19 with Laban and his household (Rachel steals his idols). But it is clear that idols were likely a problem prior to this – the tower of Babel shows man intending to make a name for himself, leaving God out of the picture, Abraham living in Canaan and at times referring to YHWH as his God indicating there were other gods, Abraham sending his servant to Haran to find a wife for Isaac (Genesis 24) because he did not want him to marry a Canaanite, etc.

II. **Some lessons from this age**

- a. Acts 7:1-36 – Stephen tells the story of the patriarchs beginning with Abraham. In this we learn the importance of this period of Bible history in understanding the NT. Consider Romans 15:4.
- b. The beginning of God’s plan of redemption
 - i. Romans 6:23 tells us that the wages of sin is death. Romans 3:23 tells us that we are all sinners. Therefore, we need redemption. A price needs to be paid for our sins. We know that Jesus paid that price – Romans 5:6-8
 - ii. Shortly after man sinned, the plan of redemption began to unfold. During the period of the patriarchs we find:
 1. Genesis 3:15 – where as the serpent is cursed, the seed of woman would crush his head.
 2. Genesis 12:3 – to Abraham, in his seed, all nations would be blessed. This will be emphasized continually throughout the life of Abraham, and repeated to Isaac and Jacob.
 3. Genesis 50:8-10 – as Jacob (Israel) blesses each of his sons, to Judah he says, “You are he whom your brothers shall praise;... Judah is a lion’s whelp... The scepter shall not depart from Judah.

- iii. in this we find that God has always been interested in the wellbeing of mankind – during the age of fathers, we learn that God genuinely cares about us. He could have utterly destroyed all mankind and not left even one – Noah. But He loves us. This is seen in His grieving when man sins, His longsuffering when his people stumble, and His care and provisions for all mankind.
- c. The introduction of the law of God –
 - i. As previously noted, Moses wrote Genesis. This is the first recorded, inspired writings from God. Clearly, he wrote looking back to the beginning. I have every reason to believe what is recorded in Genesis is inspired and just as accurate as the rest of scripture.
 - ii. While we do not have the writings from the patriarchal age (likely, they were passed down from generation to generation, WITH the help of God), we know that God had specific laws in place –
 - 1. Consider Genesis 2:15-17 – Adam & Eve were forbidden to eat of the tree of knowledge of good and evil
 - 2. Genesis 4:1-5 as Cain and Abel offered sacrifices, the response of God necessarily implies that He had given some sort of instructions.
 - 3. Noahic laws of Genesis 9 after the flood ought to be considered
 - 4. The fact that Abraham and others knew how to worship and please God, with altars, etc. shows that they had laws God intended for them to follow.
 - iii. In this, we can take confidence that God has ALWAYS given us what we need to follow and please Him – 2 Peter 1:3 notes that He has given us all things that pertain to life and godliness. 2 Timothy 3:16-17 notes that with scripture from God we can be complete. He did not just start giving man a law after Moses came along!
- d. The introduction of the grace of God –
 - i. Genesis 6:8 notes that Noah found grace in the eyes of the Lord.
 - ii. Abraham was another recipient of God’s grace – as God chose Him to bring salvation into this world. And He blessed him throughout his life.
 - iii. God’s grace is manifested from the very beginning as He immediately made provisions after man sinned and put into motion His plan of redemption. He even made tunics to cover Adam and Eve – Genesis 3:21.
 - iv. We can appreciate the grace of God beginning with the patriarchs.
- e. The introduction of faith –
 - i. Abraham is described as “the father of faith” for numerous reasons. In time, we will examine his faith as it is integral to our study of God’s unfolding plan. He is mentioned some 75 times in the New Testament, much of it tied to his obedient faith.
 - ii. But we also find faith in numerous other examples during this time:
 - 1. Abel – as he sacrificed to God
 - 2. Enoch as he walked with God
 - 3. Noah, as he moved with godly fear and built an ark
 - 4. Sarah as she received strength to give birth at 90 years of age
 - 5. Isaac and Jacob who both submitted to God when needed.
 - 6. Joseph, throughout his life in Egypt as well as when he was dying
 - 7. Moses, who believed God and led Israel out of Egypt and to Mt. Sinai.
 - iii. All of these examples are recorded in Hebrews 11:1-20.
 - iv. In the patriarchs, we learn what it means to walk by faith, and not by sight – 2 Corinthians 5:7. We learn that faith is not a mere mental exercise (though it certainly involves the mind), but a responsive belief (James 2:14-24).
- f. The introduction of separation –

- i. NOTE: The book of Genesis is not a scientific book, nor is it a comprehensive history of man. Understand that while early generations are recorded, the focus is upon a lineage of redemption. It is really about the history of ONE line of people. Others are mentioned as they interact with this family line.
- ii. Throughout Genesis you find God's people separated from the rest of the world (though they lived in the world). Consider the following:
- iii. Because of sin Adam & Even were separated from God – driven out of the garden – Genesis 3:22-24
- iv. Cain was separated because of murdering Abel – Genesis 4:11-15 – Cain became a fugitive and vagabond because of his sin
- v. The flood – the world was destroyed because of its wickedness – Genesis 6:1-8. Noah found grace and was separated in the ark
- vi. Abraham was told to leave Ur of the Chaldeans and Haran and go to Canaan – Genesis 11:27-12:3
- vii. Even in Canaan, we know Abraham was a foreigner. He kept himself separate though he was highly respected.
- viii. He sends his servant to his relatives in Haran rather than finding a wife for Isaac among the Canaanites.
- ix. Jacob (Israel) goes to Haran to find his wife (wives), while Esau married Canaanite women who were a grief to his parents (cf. Genesis 26:34, 28:9, 36:2)
- x. Joseph, in Egypt, provides separation for the people of Israel to develop so that they could be God's chosen nation. NOTE how they were separated from the Egyptians with all their gods (Genesis 46-47). AND Israel needed to understand this separation BEFORE they inherited the promised land (they did not do a good job of getting that point).
- xi. The POINT: We need to understand separation if we are to faithfully follow God – 2 Corinthians 6:14-18. AND in this realize that we are not saying that we are no longer IN the world, but just not OF the world (cf. John 17:14-17 – concerning the apostles of Jesus).

And thus, we introduce this period prior to the Law of Moses. It is where we will start our journey through the Bible. Let me encourage you to totally familiarize yourself with key characters from this period of time: Study their lives, remember where and when they appeared on the scene of God's word, and learn from their examples – both the good and bad.