

Today we are going to cover two Torah portions and my meditation shall be used as my sermon. The portions are Bereshit (Gen. 1:1-6) and Noach (Gen. 6:9-11:32). Lets start!

Despite the silly claims of some secular archaeologists and historians, the oldest piece of writing in the world is Genesis 1-11. We are not told if it was written over a long period of time, but the eleven chapters give the true history of the human race, even if not in great detail.

The chapters are really a series of poems or songs which use rich symbolism to describe actual events. The chapters are more like poetic summaries and their selective descriptions come alive by their use of vivid language and symbolism. I would like to briefly take you through all eleven chapters and highlight some of the descriptions contained in each chapter. A familiarity with the contents of these eleven chapters helps us to understand what is taught in the rest of the Bible.

Lets start with Chapter One and the first Creation account. Here we are told that out of nothing G-d brings forth the entire creation, even though He has always existed, even before creation. He is the Creator and is not part of the creation. The creation is described as being in a perfect, orderly harmony which functions according to the natural laws which our modern scientists are just beginning to discover. These laws were always there and functioned well, even before they were discovered and began to be understood.

There are two creation accounts, Chapter One and Chapter Two. Chapter One is a mighty hymn to the wonder of the finished, created universe and it leads up to the creation of mankind and the institution of the Sacred Sabbath. The first three verses of Chapter Two actually belong to Chapter One. No other day but the Sabbath is called sacred and no other day was instituted as a day of rest and worship. The Sabbath alone is the L-rd's Day

The Creation is described as an orderly sequence of six days which culminate with a special day, the seventh day Sabbath. It is not a literal account of how creation came into being. It is literary and describes the order and the wonder of the universe. Human history is not, first a sequence six thousand years, followed by a literal thousand year millennium. The days are just an affirmation that G-d built time into the fabric of the universe.

There is strong scientific evidence to suggest that the planet earth as we know it is no older than 10,000 years, but the age of the rest of Creation could be infinitely older and stretch into even billions of years. But the earth is much younger and the supposedly great age of fossils is an evolutionary myth on par with the stories of the Easter Bunny and Santa Claus.

You see it a form of double speak. Since fossil remains no longer contain any organic material which could be dated, they are generally dated according to the supposed age of the rocks. Rocks, on the other hand, are dated according to the fossils they contain. Not very logical or scientific. Many who are duped by the false claims of evolutionary science, date the earth into billions of years using a form of circular reasoning that is in no way scientific.

The first creation account is more like a poetic hymn to the majesty and beauty of our universe and sets the stage for believers to rest in the finished work of creation.

There is no “gap” between verse one and verse two, where the devil is supposed to have messed up creation, requiring G-d to start over again. The devil is not a being with cosmic powers, he is a liar and a murderer, nothing more. Verse one introduces the account and the six days which follow artfully describe the wonderful order of G-d’s amazing creation. Man and woman are both created in the first creation account and the account says that everything which was created is good, orderly and complete.

Why is there a second creation account which apparently reverses the order of the first account? Neither account should be seen as strictly sequential or chronological and each account is set up to highlight some aspect of creation. Chapter two is a hymn to gender, where man is created first of all life forms and yet is unable to find a suitable helpmate to relieve his loneliness and bring forth the generations of mankind.

The account shows that both genders are of equal value and that when a man and a woman are united in matrimony, the two become one (“echad”, a composite unity and a plural singularity), in much the same way that the trinity of G-d is “echad”. In this chapter, we are introduced to the mystery of gender, where both genders share the same human nature, that is the full image of G-d. However it also means that while we are complimentary, we are radically different in how we think and view the world – two sides of the same coin, but in many ways, each gender shall always remain a mystery to the other.

Chapter three is a lament and a dirge where our first ancestors are defeated by the evil influence of the enemy and sin against G-d. In many ways, this is the saddest chapter in the Bible. It speaks of our ancestor’s fall and their expulsion from the garden for their own protection. We are not told what specific kind of fruit was forbidden to them, but their act of disobedience gave them a first hand knowledge of good and evil. They knew that they had disobeyed G-d and hid from Him in their shame.

There was also the tree of life growing in this garden and it was the enemy’s intention that our fallen ancestors would also eat of the tree of life and live forever in a sinful state. Having them eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil was only stage one in his evil plans for mankind. He used his favourite lie: “has G-d really said?” to cause the fall. Once this was accomplished he would concoct a further lie to get our confused and dazed ancestors to eat of the tree of life and thus have no possibility of redemption. He may have been prepared to say something like: “Don’t you want to live forever, even if you are in a fallen state?”.

To save us, YHVH excluded us from the garden and placed an angel with a flaming sword to deny us any potential access to this special tree. In between the fall and the exclusion, the promise of future redemption is given to the women, prior to her being told about her punishment. Male domination over woman is part of the consequences of the fall and is not how our intended harmony was to work.

This harmony is restored in our blessed Messiah, as we await His coming Kingdom where race, gender and social status will forever disappear. We should treat each other with Kingdom respect and not let the consequences of the fall dictate how we relate to one another. We want to see the serpent’s head crushed under of Messiah’s feet and not waste our time crushing each other. The fruit of the Spirit is our inheritance, not the works of the flesh. Harmony, equality, cooperation and love is what we are called to, nothing less.

Chapter four is another lament (dirge) where we discover that even in our fallen mortal state, we are sinners by choice and not by design (nature). From our very first breath, the enemy is gunning for us in every generation and it is our calling to confront him and learn how to defeat him.

After describing the first murder, chapter four gives us a limited genealogy of the descendants of Cain. Not all of them were bad, but in very short order, they will form the wicked core of humanity and stand against the truth and righteousness of the righteous core. The chapter ends with the birth of Seth, the second antediluvian (pre-flood) patriarch. With him, men once again begin to call upon the name of YHVH.

After their expulsion from the garden, and the murder of their first born, Adam and Eve may have gone through a dark patch, but they lived for many years after their descendants began to call on the name of the L-RD. They had many more children, some of whom would have remained part of the righteous core, while others slipped into the darkness of the wicked core.

Chapter Five outlines the ten antediluvian (pre-flood) patriarchs and really points to a kind of scarlet thread where the truth of G-d and His purposes persist. And this, even when darkness is rapidly expanding, eventually almost extinguishing any spiritual light on earth.

The patriarchs mostly lived to a great age, but the last three patriarchs are of special interest. Two of them Methuselah and Lamech died in the same year, just before the flood began. Lamech shares a name with one of the descendants of Cain, but they are not the same person. All the patriarchs but one (Noah), fathered many children whose names and number is not given. He is the only patriarch who did not have a large family.

It is likely that the children and the offspring of the patriarchs eventually succumbed to the global darkness, which left Noah's family as the only survivors of the righteous core. Noah did not father any children after his three sons were born. We learn that he was a preacher of righteousness, who fought a long, losing battle with the growing wicked core.

It was not that he was a bad preacher, it was just that the forces of evil eventually overcame all resistance to evil. While this was going on, it is likely that many righteous people lived and died without their names being recorded. The eventual takeover by the wicked core must have been a well planned, systematic assault on mankind, master minded by the same adversary who failed to destroy our first ancestors while they dwelt in the garden.

It is sad to see the growth of worldwide darkness in our days and our only solution to it is threefold. First we need to study and stand on the Word of our Messiah. Next we need to live lives of obedience to this same Word. And finally, we need to have faith in the promises of the Word, no matter how dark and painful this old world becomes.

Chapter six begins with a description of the blending of two distinct groups of mankind – the sons of G-d and the daughters of men. There is no indication that the sons of G-d were really angels and that the daughters of men were their human spouses. Angels neither possess gender, nor reproductive organs (and they do not have wings). A discussion of the origin and the nature of angels will be dealt with at a later date. The sons of G-d were the descendants of the patriarchs who gradually assimilated into the wicked core when they married women who were descendants of Cain.

The time it took to build the ark, was part of his prophetic warning about impending judgment which would come in 120 years. This number is never used to describe a human lifespan. In fact, it took several generations after the flood for the human life span to dwindle below this period of time. As well, too many people misunderstand the meaning of the Hebrew word for giants (Nephilim). Not much material helps us to identify this group of people. In some places the word does refer to people of great stature, but in Chapter Six, they were not great in stature. They were famous people who lived before the flood.

Chapter six gives the rationale behind the catastrophic judgment of G-d. Mankind had filled the earth with violence and corruption. The passage also mentions both the completion of the Ark and the gathering of animals from every species. Two of every species were gathered, along with seven pairs of clean animals. While the exact number of species is not given, nor the exact number of animals, according to the Bible, a species is a closed gene pool whose members can only reproduce among themselves.

Most of the myriad, so-called species identified by modern zoology, are really just any number of subspecies which developed in response to altered climatic conditions. We are told Noah took food on board for the animals, but we are not told what kind of food it was or how much of it was taken on board.

Chapters seven and eight deal with the actual chronology for the flood, including both the start date and the end date. The flood began on the 17<sup>th</sup> day of the second month of the 600<sup>th</sup> year of Noah's life. The waters finally receded and the earth dried up on the 27<sup>th</sup> day of the second month of the 601<sup>st</sup> year of Noah's life. It lasted for a little over one year.

The rising up of the water is described with vivid symbolic round numbers which are also used to describe the receding levels of water, until the ground was finally dry. Most of the water came from the fountains of the deep and while the ark floated, the single continent, Pangea (Greek for all the earth), began to drift apart into the six continents we have today. Europe is usually considered part of the massive continent of Eurasia.

This process of drifting has been called continental drift, and while it has slowed down, it is still happening in our modern world. As the waters rose, the parts of the earth which were emptied of their water, collapsed beneath the weight of the flood waters and great mountains were formed on most of the continents. The ocean filled the basins which this process created. The earth was cleansed and the stains of the great darkness were washed away.

Chapter nine begins with the stipulation that no animal is to be eaten alive. The life is in the blood, so kill the animal (release the life) before you begin to fill your belly. This practice may have been one of the gross sins practised in the world before the flood. Murder is also forbidden because life is sacred to G-d.

The rainbow becomes a covenant symbol that no subsequent universal floods would ever cover the whole earth again. This was not the first rainbow, but it may have been the first one which Noah and his family saw once the flood dried up.

What follows is a time gap between when the family comes off the ark and two things occur. First Ham has a child, Canaan, who reaches the age of puberty before something horrible occurs. Noah also plants a vineyard, drinks the wine and falls down drunk in his tent.

The euphemism, “uncovering his nakedness” is used to refer to some kind of sexual activity which was performed by Canaan with Noah’s wife, his grandmother. This may have been the worst example of sinfulness the community experienced so soon after the redeemed community came out of the ark.

Canaan himself was cursed because of his sin. Future inhabitants of Canaan would also have only be cursed because of their sin, and not because of sin of Noah’s grandson. Afterwards, the three main linguistic divisions of mankind are mentioned and they are described as descendants of Noah’s three sons: Ham Shem and Japheth.

Chapter ten is dedicated to describing the seventy family groups, which, after the flood, developed into the races, nations and linguistic groups which inhabit the earth today. Skin colour is not mentioned, nor any other genetic anomaly which exists among the various segments of humanity in our modern world. All members of all the races of mankind can reproduce with one another, so together we form a single, closed gene pool species.

In His mercy, G-d scattered the peoples of the earth in intact family groups and all the major languages of the world can be classified into various linguistic families, so the various languages of earth are like the various subspecies of animals which developed after the animals came out of the ark.

The final chapter deals with two things. First, it outlines the causes of the dispersal at Babel, then it moves on to outline the genealogy of Abraham. Until his entry into the Promised Land he was called Abram. All the other genealogies of all the other families of the earth are not given because this is a selective account of the family of one man which was called to reunite the scattered children of Noah, back into one redeemed people.

There is quite some confusion about the nature of the tower of Babel which the people built. It was not a skyscraper which tried to reach up into the heavens. It was a horoscope (Ziggurat or temple) which functioned as a horoscope which they hoped to use to predict the future and tell people the best time to succeed in all and any of their plans.

It would have been aligned to the positions of the stars and readings would have been taken according to the various positions of the stars. All major religions in our world have various forms of temple horoscopes and it may have been both an attempt to circumvent G-d or to actually control Him.

Also, the people did not want to scatter across the strange new world they encountered and the pace of their emerging sinfulness was accelerated by their disobedience. G-d came down, probably through an angel, to investigate and He saw how quickly wickedness was once again taking hold of the human race. We are not told that everybody participated in the building of the ziggurat, or in any of the other sins which were once again taking hold among the families of humanity.

In order to prevent another global darkness from covering the world so soon after the flood, YHVH confused the languages of each family group. They could no longer understand one another and quit building the tower of Babel and began to scatter over the face of the planet, because they were afraid of one another and did not trust one another. It is only in our generation that all the various peoples of our planet once again form a single global village.

They travelled to various parts of the earth and likely continental drift eventually separated the peoples of the earth among the various geographic regions of our planet. The massive biodiversity we see in the animal kingdom and the amazing racial diversity we see among the nations of mankind is not recorded in the Bible. What is given is the origin of all species of animals and the various families of the races of mankind which are scattered around the globe.

This scattering was a redemptive intervention to slow down the speed of the sinful darkness which was once again taking root among the families of mankind. We all descent from one or more of the seventy original families of mankind and we all speak one or more of the seventy language groups which were formed when the scattering at Babel occurred.

The chapter ends with a general genealogy of Abraham in which we see one of the three times when our life span was diminished. Before the flood, people lived between 800 and 900 years. From the flood until Babel, this life span dropped to between 400 and 500 hundred years. In the days of Peleg, when the scattering of the peoples occurred, our life span began to diminish until it eventually hovered around 70 years. It may still be dropping, but with the help of better nutrition and modern medications, most of us will live until we are at least in our 80's or 90's.

In this chapter, a careful reading of the genealogy of Abraham, reveals that Nachor married his niece and that Abraham married his half sister. We also learn that the call to go to Canaan was first given to Nachor, Abraham's father. This man did not complete the journey and finished his days in Harran, a region of Mesopotamia to the north of Canaan.

All the details which are given in these eleven chapters have a double purpose. First to tell us who G-d is and what He is capable of and then tell us how to make sure we reach the place where G-d is calling us to.

Any of the details which are not given in this short account, are of no spiritual importance. However, so much which has been unearthed by archaeologists confirms the details which are contained in the account. We learn that we are sinners by choice living through a generational struggle between the righteous core and its satanic opponent, the wicked core. Despite our racial and our linguistic differences, we are still essentially one species. And in our lifetime we are seeing that our scattering is drawing to a close globally.

Effectively we are all becoming citizens of a single international, global village. At the same time, the enemy of our souls is doing everything he can to smother the modern righteous core and bring on another global darkness. He is even invading communities of believers to fill all of us with his darkness as he asks the same old dreary questions: "has G-d really said" and "don't you want to live forever" as every attempt is made to extend our life span indefinitely.

He is trying to overthrow our faith with both the darkness of sin and the sophisticated lies of evolutionism and moral relativism (if it feels good, then there is nothing wrong with doing anything you want to do).

Is how you are living and your studying His Word helping your life to reflect the purposes of G-d? Faith and obedience will sustain us on our pilgrimage through this darkening age. What is sustaining your pilgrimage?