

A Perfect World

Genesis 1:1-2:3

Outline

I. Overview

A. Inspiration

1. Historical Reliability
2. Intentional Design

B. Background

1. Availability
2. Interaction
 - a. Negatively
 - b. Positively
 - ex. "Atrahasis Epic":
 - creation of humanity (Gen 1:1-2:3)
 - corruption of world (Gen 2:4-6:8)
 - flood and new order (Gen 6:9-11:9)

C. Purpose

1. Teach truth about history
2. Influence Israel to conform to God's will by justifying Moses' plan for Israel's exodus from Egypt and possession of Canaan
 - similarity to other religions
 - differences from other religions

II. Literary Structure

A. Dark Chaotic World (1:1-2)

1. Title

2. Dramatic Tension
 - a. formless and empty
 - b. Spirit of God hovering

B. Ideal World (2:1-3)

1. Summation
2. God at rest - tension resolved

C. Six Days of Ordering Creation

1. God's Plan (1:3-31)
 - a. Speech
 - b. Wisdom
2. Formless to Domains
 - a. Day 1: Day and Night
 - b. Day 2: Waters below and waters above.
 - c. Day 3: Dry land and seas
3. Void to Inhabitants
 - a. Day 4: Sun, Moon, Stars to fill Day and Night (Day 1)
 - b. Day 5: Birds and Fish to fill waters above and waters below (Day 2)
 - c. Day 6: Animals and Man to fill dry land (Day 3)

III. Original Meaning

A. Dark Chaotic World (Deut. 32:10-12)

1. Formless - Israel's slavery in Egypt
2. Hovering - God's special presence with Israel.

B. Ideal World (Ex. 20:8-11)

1. Sabbath observances (Ex 20:8-11)
 - weekly
 - seventh year
 - Jubilee
2. Canaan is the land of "rest" (Deut 12:11)

C. Six Days of Ordering

1. Deliverance from Egypt

a. judgment on Egypt:

- waters of blood
- frogs and insects
- total darkness
- crops destroyed
- sickness and death

b. blessings in Canaan:

- waters of life
- human dominion
- light in darkness
- vegetation
- multiplication

2. Possession of Canaan

a. natural harmony

- Gen 1:28 and Lev 26:9

b. honor for humanity

IV. Modern Application

A. Jesus Christ as the Prototype of Redemption

B. Kingdom Stages

1. Inauguration of kingdom: Recreation of the Cosmos

- John 1:1-3
- John 1:4-5 and 2 Cor. 4:6

2. Continuation of kingdom: New Creation and Renewal in image of Christ

- 2 Cor. 5:17
- Col 3:9-10

3. Consummation of kingdom - New Heavens and New Earth

- Heb. 4:4-11
- Rev 21:1

Teacher's Guide

Suggested Lesson Plan:

1. Display (on a board or overhead) and explain the main ideas of the lesson.
2. Play the video tape *A Perfect World* as participants take notes on outlines.
3. Discuss the main ideas of the video.
4. Discuss discussion questions.

Main Ideas:

1. Moses wrote Genesis for at least two purposes. He wanted to inform his readers of primeval events in order to influence their perspective on current religious and social programs.
2. The movement from chaos to Sabbath rest in creation parallels the deliverance from Egypt to Canaan, where the people's Sabbath rest occurs.
3. The movement from chaos to Sabbath rest in creation also parallels the greater deliverance in Christ which occurs through three phases of the kingdom of God: inauguration, continuation, and consummation.

Discussion Questions:

1. Do the similarities (in purpose and style) between Moses' creation account and other Ancient Near Eastern creation accounts mean that Moses "made up" his story?
2. Why would Moses have needed to defend the social and religious programs that he had set out for the nation? (Hint: Where was his audience, and what were they experiencing when he wrote his account?)
3. If the new creation in Christ comes through three phases of the kingdom of God (inauguration, continuation, consummation), in which phase(s) do we live? Which part(s) of the creation story does it parallel? What can we learn from that (those) part(s) of the creation story about how we should live as Christians today?
4. In light of all this, how should Genesis 1:1-2:4 inform our perspective on evolution?