

## Reality in Genesis

Being a pastor and also working for BCT means some have wondered if there are sermons on creation every week at Hope Church, Gravesend! In fact, it was only after being at the church for nine years that I started to preach through the early chapters of Genesis. I have recently completed the series of 21 sermons, finishing with the gospel promise to Abram in Genesis 12.

My overall aim was to show how the beginning of Genesis is foundational and integral to the rest of the Bible, to the gospel. A much repeated phrase has been, 'The God of creation is the God of redemption.' Another major emphasis has been the historical reality of these chapters. Our faith is based on the real events in Genesis as much as those in the Gospels. Adam and Noah are as historical as Abraham, and yes, Jesus. Genesis 1-11 is not a dim and distant, shadowy, 'pre-history' but full of detail and incredible precision. Events of the Flood are dated to the day. We know Noah's age at death more precisely than that of Jesus!

This history matters because it is in the events of history that God is revealed. History is God's 'CV'. God's character is revealed not in abstract attributes but in what he does. For

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example, God's goodness is seen in the 'very good' world he makes (Gen. 1:31; Psalm 119:68); God's anger at sin (and his grace) is seen in the real, physical judgement of Noah's

Flood. Similarly our human identity as the image of God (and male and female) is not an arbitrary decree, but grounded in how we have been made. God's commands for how we are to live are not arbitrary rules but operating instructions of the Creator that are a path of life and true freedom.

At the heart of the gospel we find 'the Word became flesh' (John 1:14). Christianity is unique in the way it brings the spiritual and physical together in harmony. We see this reflected in Genesis, in which God makes a material world as a home for himself as much as for man. Even after sin has entered creation God doesn't give up on creation, but takes the world through a process of re-creation in the Flood. And God's promises to Abram (Gen. 12:1-3) are very physical,

ultimately fulfilled in a physical descendant (Jesus) and the new creation we look forward to when Jesus returns. Salvation includes the physical!

Of course the history presented in Genesis is very different to the evolutionary account. In the sermons I didn't address the scientific issues in any detail, but rather highlighted the coherence (and the attractiveness) of the biblical account. For example, it makes sense that it took great faith (Heb.

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11:4) on the part of Abel to believe that God would be pleased with a blood sacrifice in a context where animal death was a recent horrific change to creation as a result of human sin. The great ages of early humans (and their exponential decline after the Flood) is often seen as problematic, but the slower aging it implies helps to explain Abraham's long life (Gen. 25:7) and details such as Sarah's seductive beauty as an 'old' woman (Gen. 12:11), and Ishmael's vulnerability as a teenager (Gen. 21:15-16).

As I preached through Genesis 9-12 it became clear that the era of history where a creationist model is least developed is that from Noah to Abraham. It is a brief time in which humanity multiplies, nations and cultures develop, all within the context of rapid changes in earth's geography, climate and biology. We need experts in ancient history and languages to work alongside geologists and biologists to understand this period of history more fully.

The series is available to listen to on the BCT website and there are worksheets accompanying each sermon to download, with sermon headings, Scripture references and questions for reflection and discussion. See [tinyurl.com/y38mb2mt](http://tinyurl.com/y38mb2mt). We are considering turning these sermons into a book, and this could also include the children's talks accompanying each sermon that were designed to provide arguments we can all use to answer common objections to the biblical account.

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Stephen Lloyd

## Creationist geologists meet in Germany

Paul Garner was one of the participants in the 2018 geology workshop hosted by the German creationist organisation Wort und Wissen ('Word and Knowledge'). The workshop was based near Lake Constance at the northern edge of the Alps, and included two days of field trips, followed by two days of lectures and reports.

The excursions included visits to look at Jurassic limestones, Tertiary volcanoes and glacial landforms. Lecture topics included tree rings, radiometric dating methods and the origin of the Alps. Paul gave the group a report on recent BCT activities.



Dr Martin Ernst leading one of the field excursions.



Studying Jurassic limestones in Germany.