



Genesis in Space and Time: The Flow of Biblical History (Bible Commentary for Layman)

Francis A. Schaeffer

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Genesis is a book of origins--the origin of the universe, the origin of life and the origin of man. It places man in his cosmic setting, shows his particular uniqueness, explains his wonder and his flaw, and begins to trace the flow of human history through space and time. Many today, however, view this book as a collection of myths, useful for understanding the Hebrew mind, perhaps, but certainly not a record of what really happened. Dr. Francis A. Schaeffer challenges that view and shows how the first eleven chapters of Genesis stand as a solid, space-time basis for answering the tough questions posed by modern man.

Genesis in Space and Time: The Flow of Biblical History (Bible Commentary for Layman) Details

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From Reader Review Genesis in Space and Time: The Flow of Biblical History (Bible Commentary for Layman) for online ebook

Peter B. says

A pretty good book on the first 12 chapters of Genesis. Schaeffer brings out some good points, especially in relation to a Trinitarian view of creation and in relation to the effect of the fall into sin and redemption on relationships (between man and God, man and man, man and nature, etc...). Regrettably, at least from my perspective, his book is marred by his premillennialism and his weak treatments of the days of creation and the biblical chronologies.

Dmreichle says

I really enjoyed this book and it left me wondering how I had never read anything by Francis Schaeffer before. His writing style appeals to a layman like myself, and his logical arguments lead to conclusions that make sense and strengthen my faith. His simple premise; that Genesis is true, real history, the history of mankind as well as God's story of redemption, is presented in a logical, step-wise format. Although there are a few non-critical points that I disagree with, overall, it is a great presentation of the history of the dawn of man and God's working through it from the beginning. There are a few places that I, like my friend Charlene, read and think, "So what?"; meaning it is something I have already known foundationally and haven't questioned, but in that case, we have to realize Schaeffer's audience, which was intellectuals and "intellectual" Christians of the late 20th century who were questioning some of these foundational truths and trying to reconcile them with secular and scientific thought. All in all, a great read and I will look forward to reading more of his works.

Anderson Paz says

Ótimo livro.

Leandro Guimarães says

Não necessariamente concordo com todas as conclusões de Schaeffer, e creio que a linguagem deixa um pouco a desejar (no original; a tradução e sua revisão chegam a aperfeiçoar o estilo), mas ele demonstra porque é o grande mestre dos Reformados engajados com a cultura do século XX. Necessário.

David Steele says

Great thinkers throughout the course of history have queried, "Where did it all come from? Who made the cosmos? What made the cosmos? What or who holds it all together? What is the meaning of life? What is the basis of knowledge? Where are we heading? And where do we go when we die? For those who reject a

personal Creator – the questions posed above become totally unanswerable. For all those who reject a personal Creator, there is a hopelessness that lies under their dogmatic certainty.

Genesis in Space and Time by Francis Schaeffer examines the flow of Biblical history. The book of Genesis sets the parameters and helps articulate a Christian worldview that includes a personal God. “He is there and he is not silent” as Schaeffer remarks in another book. At the core of the book stands the belief in a personal Creator. Affirming macroevolution or denying a personal Creator stands behind the hopelessness among the unbelieving world. Schaeffer adds, “It is either not knowing or denying the createdness of things that is at the root of the blackness of modern man’s difficulties. Give up creation as space-time, historic reality, and all that is left what Simone Weil called ‘uncreatedness.’ It is not that something does not exist, but that it just stands there, autonomous to itself, without solutions and without answers.” The proliferation of the so-called new atheism is vivid proof that Schaeffer articulated almost forty years ago.

Schaeffer maintains that one must understand the book of Genesis in order to develop a workable approach to metaphysics, morality, and epistemology. *Genesis in Space and Time* continues to be relevant as many evangelicals back away from a literal interpretation of Scripture and a six-day creation week. *Genesis in Space and Time* is prophetic, bold and relevant. It is a powerful antidote for postmodern skeptics.

Kevin Haney says

Excellent work

There are many commentaries on scripture that concern themselves with explaining passages verse by verse. While these are good, Francis Schaeffer takes it farther and relates the passages to the whole of life. I had been looking for this for a longtime and am happy that I found it.

Christopher Ray says

What is the solution to the dilemmas man finds himself faced with? Everywhere one looks, one can observe man at odds with God, with himself, with other men, and with nature. Francis Schaeffer, in his book *Genesis in Space and Time*, contends that the answer is to be found in the origins of man, and of the universe itself.[1] “If a man attributes the wrong cause to the dilemma and divisions of men,” Schaeffer wrote, “he will never come up with the right answer no matter how good a will he has.”[2] *Genesis in Space and Time* seeks to shed light on the cause of man’s dilemma through an analysis of the first eleven chapters of the book of Genesis. Tracing the story through these narratives, Schaeffer’s book recounts the creation of man and the universe (chapters 1-3), the fall (chapters 4 and 5), and the results, (divisions between God and man, between man and himself, between man and man, and between man and nature), and the first steps in God’s plan of redemption (chapters 6-8).

Four main themes run throughout the book. The first is the historicity of the Genesis narrative. From the very first verse of Genesis, Schaeffer insisted, both the book’s language and structure insist that “we are dealing here with history just as much as if we talked about ourselves at this moment at a particular point of time in a particular geographic place.”[3]

The second theme may be found in Schaeffer’s constant reminders throughout the book that the Genesis

narrative, particularly its genealogical elements, while historical, ought not to be treated as strict chronologies. His comment on Genesis 4:11-24 typifies his position on this, reiterated convincingly and often through the book's latter chapters:

We need to note here, in passing, that verses 11-24 do not constitute a chronology any more than do the genealogies of [Seth's] godly line which begin at verse 25. Rather, these passages exactly fit the literary form found in all parts of Genesis: The unimportant aspects (in this case the ungodly line) are quickly gotten out of the way so that the more central aspects (the godly line) might be dealt with in detail. We do not, therefore, know how much time elapses before we come to verse 24. It is not necessary that verse 24 contain history that precedes that in verse 25 . . .[4]

This line of reasoning is taken up again in more detail in the final chapter of the book, but it pervades throughout.[5]

The third theme is that man's difficulties with himself, with each other, and with nature, stem from a singular event in history when man fell. Succinctly put, "Eve was faced with a choice, she pondered the situation and then she put her hand into the history of man and changed the course of human events." [6] Thus, the harmony of God's creation was disrupted as sin and death entered the equation. The results were not simply between man and God, the author contended, "almost all of the results of God's judgment because of man's rebellion relate in some way to the external world. . . Profound changes make the external, objective world abnormal." [7]

The final theme is that of redemption. In spite of the fall, "man still has tremendous value," wrote Schaeffer.[8] Immediately following the fall was a promise of redemption. The final chapters of the book do more than trace the separations caused by the entry of sin into the world. They recount the revealing of God's plan, put into place before the beginning of the universe, as the general promise is narrowed to the line of Seth, then through, Noah, and finally, through Abraham.

The book closes with an appeal to the importance of history. Having already made several arguments for the history of Genesis, Schaeffer tied it together with the need for all men to know their history (and, of course, Genesis is all of our history) in order to make sense of their present, and of their future.[9]

Genesis in Space and Time is an excellent book, both for its content and its style. It is very easy to read, yet conveys profound truths in its 163 pages. Whether one is a layman or scholar, Schaeffer's presentation of the origins of the universe, of man, and of man's great dilemma of separation is clear and concise and, often, profound. I highly recommend this book for anyone considering the origins and nature of man.

[1] Francis A. Schaeffer, *Genesis in Space and Time*, (Downers Grove, InterVarsity Press, 1972).

[2] Ibid., 160.

[3] Ibid., 15.

[4] Ibid., 114.

[5] Ibid., 150-156.

[6] Ibid., 85.

[7] Ibid., 95.

[8] Ibid., 100-101.

[9] Ibid., 158-160.

L.S. says

This book is very easy to read and to understand. The language is quite simple and accessible and the message is so strong. It pleads (and proves, as far as I'm concerned) that Genesis 1 to 11 is history. These first chapters were intended to present a real historic flow, with impact on a man's fundamental question: "Who am I?"

Michelle says

Rich. Meaty. Inspiring. As always, Schaeffer points up the great ironies.

Some quotes:

"It is either not knowing or denying the createdness of things that is at the root of the blackness of modern man's difficulties."

"The simple fact is that in wanting to be what man as a creature could not be, man lost what he could be."

And the plan God had, and still has, for us is better than anything mankind has even imagined! If only the world could know the greatness of God's desires for us, to love us, to share His authority with us, to give us endless opportunities to, like Him, generate beauty, order, and to be restored (through Christ) to the original perfection, etc.

It all stands on one foundation, being created especially by Him and in His image. This is the ultimate dignity and source of human worth. When mankind trades that away, thinking he gains freedom in the exchange, he has only cut himself off from the fount of his significance and the fulfillment of his personhood through satisfying communion with God's Infinite Personhood and through his esteemed rank as the King's highest steward of this lovely planet. Then there is all eternity to consider too!

We cannot trust God until we see that He is good, and when probing the original beginnings He made for us, that goodness gleams. We can also see where mankind's actions have marred human history, but His Original Intentions will yet be fulfilled. There is hope!

Jeff Noble says

Genesis in Space and Time; The Flow of Biblical History (Bible Commentary for Layman) by Francis A. Schaeffer (?)

Brian Thomas says

I have read many of Schaeffer's books, and this might be one of my favorites along with *How Shall We Then Live*, and *Escape from Reason*. What impacted me the most was, in perfect Francis Schaeffer style, an uncovering of the big-picture, overall themes and structure of Genesis with an emphasis on the unity that consistently is woven throughout. He sees past the particulars of the Genesis narrative and manages to get his arms around the book as a whole; just like he does with culture or philosophy in his other books.

Schaeffer points out that separation is a key theme of Genesis. It is seen over and over; the light is separated from the darkness, the waters above from the waters below, man from the rest of creation, separations that occur because of the fall (man from man, man from nature, man from himself, nature from nature) and the chosen seed of Israel from the unchosen. These separations always begin with the broad, overall picture but then zoom in on the main point. Schaeffer notes, for instance; that the creation of the universe is given first in broad strokes, then the creation of Earth, the creation of life on Earth is gone over quickly, but then we have much detail regarding the creation of man, the descendants of Cain and Seth are given with Cain first, then Seth, because it is Seth's descendants that become Israel the chosen seed, and so on. Microcosm within microcosm. Always the less important is given first, dealt with and gotten out of the way. It is a beautiful pattern that I never saw until reading this book.

Also, Schaeffer has a great description of the first two chapters and how they communicate two primary attributes about God: His infinity and His personality. The infinite-personal God seems to be one of his favorite topics throughout his writings. Another major thrust of the book is authorship and arguments against multiple-authorship.

All in all it was very well done and I highly recommend it to anyone who has enjoyed anything else Francis Schaeffer has written, or anyone who wants to seriously consider the ancient book of Genesis and what effect it has on us today.

Sally Ewan says

Excellent commentary on the Genesis narrative as a historical account. Schaeffer's thoughtful consideration of the plight of man is always convicting.

Jill says

Very worthwhile book for the Christian world view. Helped solidify my own world view and opened my eyes to very fundamental but incredibly awesome aspects of the Christian faith.

Tiffany says

I enjoyed delving more deeply into the first 11 chapters of Genesis from a worldview perspective. Instead of

using a verse-by-verse commentary style, the author analyzes the first 11 chapters as a unit. This approach helps to keep all verses within context and helps the reader easily see the interconnection between different sections of scripture.

Rod Innis says

A great book. He does a great job showing the importance of the first 11 chapters of Genesis to the history of the Bible.

He shows that they are real history of real events.

I don't agree with all he says. He argues that the genealogies are incomplete so that we really don't know how long ago the creation took place or how long ago the flood took place. Beginning at Abraham, he does accept subsequent genealogies. However, I did not let that affect my appreciation of a truly great book. I do recommend it highly!
