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Mark J. Hatcher

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Recommended Citation

Hatcher, Mark J., "BS 400 Interaction Form" (2001). *Syllabi*. Book 595.
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BS 400 Interaction Form

Name: Mark J. Hatcher

Date:

Books: Genesis

Synopsis: Genesis recounts the beginnings of significant features of the Israelite world. God creates the arrangements of heaven and earth in six days and rests on the seventh. Human sin originates with Adam and Eve eating forbidden fruit. Cain introduces murder and its consequences by killing his brother Abel. In response to great and prevailing human wickedness, God decides to destroy all living creatures by a flood, but preserves one family and animal species by telling Noah to build an ark to give them passage through the flood. In response to people uniting to build the city and tower of Babel, God confuses languages and scatters people.

God calls Abraham to leave his home and relatives to go to Canaan, a land that God promises to give to Abraham's descendants. God also promises that all peoples will be blessed through Abraham's descendants. Sarah births Abraham's heir, Isaac, in Abraham's old age and God later tests Abraham by asking him to offer Isaac as a sacrifice, but God provides a different sacrifice when it is clear that Abraham will obey God. God passes his promise to Abraham on to Isaac, Jacob, and Jacob's descendants.

Jacob favors his son Joseph, who dreams of his brothers and parents bowing down to him. Out of jealousy his brothers sell Joseph into slavery and he is taken to Egypt. In Egypt Joseph interprets Pharaoh's dreams regarding seven years of plenty and seven years of famine. Pharaoh places Joseph in charge of Egypt and during the famine Joseph brothers come to Egypt. Joseph brings his brothers to repentance, assures them that God has changed their evil actions into provision for their welfare and arranges for their families and his father to live in Egypt during the famine years. When Joseph is about to die, he makes the sons of Israel swear an oath that they will take his bones with them when God takes them out of Egypt back to Canaan.

Data:

Time period – Beginning of creation to Joseph's administration in Egypt

People – Adam, Eve, Cain, Abel, Noah, Abraham, Sarah, Lot, Hagar, Ishmael, Isaac, Rebekah, Esau, Jacob, Laban, Rachel, Leah, Joseph, Pharaoh

Places – Garden of Eden, Euphrates River, Nile River, Egypt, Canaan, Haran, Bethel, Hebron, Beersheba, Sodom and Gomorrah, Goshen, Paddan Aram

Events – creation, sin, first murder, flood, scattering of peoples, God's promise to Abraham, offering Isaac, reiteration of promise to Isaac, reiteration of promise to Jacob, Joseph to Egypt, descendants of Israel settling in Egypt

Scriptures – Genesis 1:1; Genesis 1:27; Genesis 12:2-3

Questions and Reflections:

1. Regardless of obstacles (including such things as Abraham's wife being taken into the harem of Pharaoh and then Abimelech, Abraham and Sarah's old age, Jacob leaving Canaan to dwell with Laban for 20 years, Joseph being sold as a slave and taken into Egypt), God keeps working to fulfill the promise God gave to Abraham. He overcomes the obstacles through granting the blessing of material prosperity to Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and Joseph. He warns Pharaoh, Abimelech, and Laban in dreams about what they need to do in relation to these people. He grants birth in Abraham and Sarah's old age. He keeps reiterating the promise to Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and Joseph, calling them to faith. What does this say about the nature of God and God's relation to us?

2. What do these stories tell us about what it means to be righteous?

Reflection on Placement in the Canon:

By recounting beginnings, Genesis presents basic dynamics and structures in the relationships between God, people, and the world that will be assumed, interacted with, or overcome in the rest of the canon. (To students: Expand on this and name some of these dynamics and structures).