

"Nothing in the world makes sense  
except in the light of Genesis."

—Dr. Del Tackett

# IS GENESIS HISTORY?

*Bible Study*

INCLUDES Leader & Student Material

# IS GENESIS HISTORY?

BIBLE STUDY  
Leader & Student Materials

Thomas Purifoy Jr.  
Director & Writer of *Is Genesis History?*

For use with the *Is Genesis History?* Bible Study Video Clips  
Buy the DVD or download the HD video clips at [IsGenesisHistory.com](http://IsGenesisHistory.com)

Copyright © J. Thomas Purifoy Jr. 2017

All rights reserved. No part of this book may be used or reproduced in any manner whatsoever without written permission of the publisher, except in the case of brief quotations in articles and reviews.

Unless otherwise indicated, Scripture quotations are from the ESV® Bible (The Holy Bible, English Standard Version®), copyright © 2001 by Crossway, a publishing ministry of Good News Publishers. Used by permission. All rights reserved.

Interior Layout by Five J's Design

Published by Compass Classroom,  
605 W Iris Dr., Nashville TN 37204  
[www.CompassClassroom.com](http://www.CompassClassroom.com)



# Table of Contents

Introduction .....	7
<i>Basic Study Principles</i> · 7	
How to Use This Study .....	9
<i>Materials Needed</i> · 10	
<i>Before You Begin</i> · 10	
<i>Additional Reading</i> · 10	
<b>LESSON 1</b> Genesis as a Book of History   <i>The Doctrine of Revelation</i> ..	11
<i>Differing Views: History, Science, and Authority</i> · 20	
<i>Daily Study</i> · 27	
<b>LESSON 2</b> The First Seven Days   <i>The Doctrine of Creation</i> .....	31
<i>Differing Views: Non-Literal Interpretations of Genesis</i> · 42	
<i>Daily Study</i> · 50	
<b>LESSON 3</b> Man, Life, & Science   <i>The Doctrine of the Image of God</i> ....	53
<i>Differing Views: Creation Accounts in Genesis 1 &amp; 2</i> · 64	
<i>Daily Study</i> · 70	
<b>LESSON 4</b> Adam, Eve, & the First Sin   <i>The Doctrine of the Fall</i> .....	75
<i>Differing Views: Theistic Evolution</i> · 84	
<i>Daily Study</i> · 88	
<b>LESSON 5</b> The Global Flood   <i>The Doctrine of Judgment</i> .....	93
<i>Differing Views: A Local Flood</i> · 101	
<i>Daily Study</i> · 105	
<b>LESSON 6</b> The Importance of History   <i>The Doctrine of Providence</i> ..	109
<i>Differing Views: The Age of the Earth</i> · 118	
<i>Daily Study</i> · 131	
About the Author .....	136
Beyond <i>Is Genesis History?</i> .....	137

*“For as were the days of Noah,  
so will be the coming of the Son of Man.”*

—JESUS CHRIST (MATTHEW 24:37)

*This page intentionally left blank.*

# Introduction

This study explores what the Bible teaches concerning Creation, Adam and Eve, and the Flood.

It is intended to complement the film *Is Genesis History?* by looking at six key doctrines introduced in the first chapters of Genesis. These doctrines are related to the gospel and are important to understanding the nature of our salvation.

After all, Genesis records the foundational events in the history of the world. Jesus Himself was there at the beginning, forming everything according to His purpose. As the Apostle John tells us, *“All things were made through him, and without him was not any thing made that was made.”* (John 1:3)

Genesis is therefore central to the work of Jesus Christ. Our hope is that by the end of this study you will better understand how the first chapters of Genesis are related to His plan of salvation.

## *Basic Study Principles*

Throughout this study, we apply a series of basic study principles for understanding the Bible. Some may be familiar to you and others may be new. Please review these individually or as a class before starting the study.

- 1. The Bible presents itself as an accurate, coherent book of history from beginning to end.** Although there may be different types of Biblical literature, they are all based on the bedrock of real events in actual time. For instance, both the book of Exodus and the Psalms refer to the actual crossing of the Red Sea by the Israelites, but they do so using different types of language in order to accomplish different things.
- 2. Scripture should be used to interpret Scripture.** We can use one part of the Bible to understand another part. For example, Jesus, Stephen, and Paul all talk about Abraham at various times and ways. Their comments help us understand

more about Abraham's history as recorded in Genesis. This principle of "Scripture interpreting Scripture" assists us in accurately interpreting the Bible.

3. **A doctrine is a statement summarizing the teaching of Biblical authors on a particular topic.** Since the Bible is the inspired word of God, even though there are many authors, it is possible to summarize what they jointly teach in a few statements. For example, all the different verses in the Bible about Jesus can be brought together to form a "doctrine of Christ," which includes statements such as "Jesus was fully God and fully man" and "Jesus atones for our sins." These exact doctrinal statements are not found in the Bible, but are useful summaries of what the Bible teaches.
4. **Doctrines are directly connected to specific events in history.** Just as branches grow out of the trunk of a tree, doctrines grow out of real events. Because Jesus was crucified and rose from the dead at a certain point in time, the "doctrine of salvation" teaches that "Jesus died for our sins on the cross and will one day raise us from the dead." If the first event did not happen, then the doctrine cannot be true.
5. **The Bible records events that are beyond our current experience.** Our finite understanding and knowledge should not be used to judge the historical accuracy of the Bible. For instance, had we been in Egypt to see the crossing of the Red Sea, we would have a better understanding of how the water acted under God's control. In the same way, if we were standing next to the tomb when Lazarus walked out, even if we could not understand *how* he was doing it, we could be sure he *was* doing it.



# How to Use This Study

The *Is Genesis History?* Bible Study includes six lessons that can be used for group or personal study. Each lesson contains five parts: Setup, Video, Discussion, Differing Views, and Personal Study.

This study has been designed to “telescope” in length. If you want to teach it in a shorter timeframe, limit the number of questions asked. If you want to make it a longer session or even two sessions per lesson, you can ask more questions or go deeper into Differing Views.

*Each lesson includes:*

1. **Setup** — Ask a few questions to set up the current lesson.
2. **Video** — Watch the video clip that goes with the Lesson, then ask questions to discuss it. These are video clips of material not included in the feature film. Video clips are between 7 and 11 minutes in length.
3. **Discussion** — The teacher explains the background of the particular doctrine being discussed. A teacher may either review the material and teach it in his own words, or he may read the overview word-for-word. **The class will then answer questions about three doctrinal statements supported by a passage of scripture.** Answers are included in this book, so if you are teaching it to a class, students can keep their books closed for this section.
4. **Differing Views** — Discuss different views on these topics. We recognize there are a diversity of views on Genesis, so we try to explore some of the more important questions and topics.
5. **Personal Study** — Read through three passages of scripture and answer questions related to the doctrines discussed that week. This can be done at home by individuals or families.

*TEACHERS: Make sure to watch the video and read through the lesson before class; there could be complex topics you will want to familiarize yourself with before the class.*

## *Materials Needed*

1. **Bible** — each participant should bring a Bible to class
2. **Bible Study Book** for each couple or person attending the class. (Leader and Student materials are both in this book.)
3. **Bible Study Video Clips** — If you do not yet have these videos, you can purchase them on DVD or digitally via download/streaming at [IsGenesisHistory.com](http://IsGenesisHistory.com)

## *Before You Begin*

Everyone taking the class needs to do three things before starting the study:

1. **Watch the full film *Is Genesis History?*** Many of the topics discussed in the study assume the participants have seen the film. (Available at [IsGenesisHistory.com](http://IsGenesisHistory.com))
2. **Read Genesis chapters 1–11.** It is important for everyone to have a refreshed familiarity with these chapters of Genesis.
3. **Pray** for the Holy Spirit's guidance and peace for everyone who is a part of the study.

## *Additional Reading*

If you would like to consult additional books on this topic, the following titles are a good place to begin:

*Creation and Change, Revised & Updated Edition*, Douglas F. Kelly  
(Christian Focus Publications 2017)

*Coming to Grips with Genesis: Biblical Authority and the Age of the Earth*,  
Terry Mortenson and Thane Ury (Master Books 2008)

*Creation in Six Days: A Defense of the Traditional Reading of Genesis One*, James B. Jordan (Canon Press 1999)

# 1

## Genesis as a Book of History *The Doctrine of Revelation*

*“One of the things that is very evident from the  
Genesis account is that it was intended to  
be understood as linear history.”*

— GEORGE GRANT

## SETUP

### Read Proverbs 3:19

*“The LORD by wisdom founded the earth; by understanding he established the heavens.”*

### Ask Questions

- Why are questions concerning origins so controversial?
- How important are the first chapters of Genesis to our lives today?

## VIDEO

### Watch Video 1 – “Genesis as History”

*George Grant, PhD, Pastor*

### Ask Questions

- Why has the Christian church always understood Genesis to be real history?
- When did the church start to question whether Genesis was actually history, and why?
- If Genesis is history, how does what it records impact one’s view of marriage? Of morality? Of one’s relationship to God? What other areas of culture and the church does it impact?
- What do other writers of the Bible think about Genesis?
- Why is there such a strong push today to say that Genesis is not history?

*NOTE: You can read this section to the class or review and summarize it.*

## The Doctrine of Revelation

The Bible is a book made up of different types of writing: history, laws, songs, prophecy, wisdom, and letters. One thing these writings have in common is their authors assumed they were writing about real people and events. As Peter explains:

*“For we did not follow cleverly devised myths when we made known to you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but we were eyewitnesses of his majesty. For when he received honor and glory from God the Father, and the voice was borne to him by the Majestic Glory, ‘This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased,’ we ourselves heard this very voice borne from heaven, for we were with him on the holy mountain.” (2 Peter 1:16-18)*

There are many internal indicators that Biblical writers were referring to actual events. The authors provide specific dates, identify locations, describe geographical features, or point out man-made monuments that were still existing when the original readers read the text.

Actual events such as the Exodus of the Israelites from Egypt, the giving of the Law to Moses, or the anointing of King David are the bedrock on which every type of Biblical writing is based.

In other words, the Bible is essentially a book of history.

*Note that the word ‘history’ can be used in two related ways:*

1. ‘History’ can refer to the written record of people and events in time (as in, ‘the book of Kings is a history of Israel’);
2. ‘History’ can be used in a more comprehensive sense to refer to the actual people and events themselves (as in, ‘David’s flight from Saul is history’).

In this study, we will primarily use ‘history’ in the latter sense.

The Apostle Paul points out the connection between historical events and what the authors of the Bible reveal about those events when he tells the Corinthians: *“If Christ has not been raised, then our preaching is in vain and your faith is in vain. We are even found to be misrepresenting God, because we testified about God that he raised Christ, whom he did not raise if it is true that the dead are not raised.”* (1 Corinthians 15:14-15)

Paul sees history as being directly connected to what he and the other apostles are revealing to people through their preaching. He explains that: *“The gospel that was preached by me is not man’s gospel. For I did not receive it from any man, nor was I taught it, but I received it through a revelation of Jesus Christ.”* (Galatians 1:11)

What is *revelation*?

**Revelation is God’s act of revealing Himself through His words and actions to people throughout the history of the world.**

He has revealed Himself *generally* through the physical attributes of the creation itself. We see this in Psalm 19 where David says: *“The heavens declare the glory of God, and the sky above proclaims his handiwork. Day to day pours out speech, and night to night reveals knowledge.”* This is known as **General Revelation**.

God has also revealed Himself through personal manifestations and spoken words. Psalm 19 continues: *“The law of the LORD is perfect, reviving the soul; the testimony of the LORD is sure, making wise the simple.”* This kind of revelation is known as **Special Revelation**.

Special Revelation is the revelation that is included in the books of the Bible. It is what Paul was referring to when he talked about the revelation that God provided to him and the other apostles. It is also what Peter is referring to when he explains that *“no prophecy was ever produced by the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit.”* (2 Peter 1:21)

Although General Revelation provides us enough knowledge to know that God exists, it does not provide a record of His words and deeds in time. This is why Special Revelation is so important: we cannot know what God has actually done in the past unless He specifically tells us.

There are three important points to the doctrine of revelation:

## **1 From the beginning of time, men and women were placed in the world so they could perceive God's power and divinity in the creation and worship Him.**

### **Read Romans 1:18-20**

*“For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who by their unrighteousness suppress the truth. For what can be known about God is plain to them, because God has shown it to them. For his invisible attributes, namely, his eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly perceived, ever since the creation of the world, in the things that have been made. So they are without excuse.”*

### **What is the truth being suppressed by certain men?**

The truth of General Revelation that God is powerful and divine, and should therefore be worshiped by everyone. Because this truth has been revealed through what God has made, those who reject it are without an excuse.

### **What is “plain to them,” and how is it perceived?**

God’s invisible attributes are made visible through the creation, specifically His eternal power and divine nature. These can be seen by looking at the world around us, whether it is looking at a sunrise, seeing a mountain peak, watching the way a bird flies, or studying the complexity of DNA. Every aspect of creation reveals something about God.

## **What is the purpose of God revealing Himself through His creation?**

He desires men and women everywhere to know Him and worship Him. In the verses immediately following this statement, Paul explains what happens to people who choose to worship the creation instead of the Creator: they eventually turn to sexual sin.

## **Why does Paul say God's attributes have been clearly perceived "ever since the creation of the world"?**

He wants to show there has never been a time when man was not present on the earth to worship God. Paul is referring back to Genesis 1 and the creation of Adam and Eve on the sixth day of creation as the starting point for the worship of God.

## **Is there a connection between those who reject God's General Revelation and the desire to use intellectual disciplines (such as philosophy and science) to argue that He does not exist?**

Yes, these are examples of different ways of suppressing the truth. People are turning to the creation to worship it instead of God. That worship can take many different manifestations, whether bowing down to an idol made of wood or an idol made of intellectual ideas. In the case of modern science, many people have taken the natural world and set it up as the maker of all things. Atheistic evolutionary theory is the idolatrous idea of the progressive self-creation of all things.

## **2 God spoke to select men who accurately recorded His words and actions, as well as the events surrounding them.**

### **Read Exodus 24:3-4**

*Moses came and told the people all the words of the LORD and all the rules. And all the people answered with one voice and said, "All the words that the LORD has spoken we will do." And Moses wrote down all the words of the LORD.*



## **Read Numbers 33:1-2**

*These are the stages of the people of Israel, when they went out of the land of Egypt by their companies under the leadership of Moses and Aaron. Moses wrote down their starting places, stage by stage, by command of the LORD.*

### **Why is it important to God that His words and actions, as well as the events surrounding them, be recorded?**

God reveals Himself through words and actions at specific places and times; they are a part of history. For instance, the Ten Commandments were spoken three months after the Israelites left Egypt. They are God's verbal commands intended to guide His people, so He instructed Moses to write them down for future generations to remember and follow. God also instructs Moses to write down the stages (or steps) of the people on their journey. He wants them to remember how He guided them, protected them, and provided for them at a certain time and place, so they can trust that He will do it again in the future.

### **How important is Special Revelation for knowing what God said and did in the past?**

God's Special Revelation is the only way for us to know exactly what God has said and done in the past. When it comes to questions about origins, therefore, it is very important that we start with Special Revelation. As God's interactions with Moses on Mt. Sinai reveal, He was intentional about what He wanted Moses to write down. We must therefore be careful to base our understanding of history on what God has revealed to us about it.

### **Can General Revelation be used to know what God said or did in the past?**

No, General Revelation is intended to reveal the invisible attributes of God such as His power and nature; it was not intended to reveal His words and deeds. In a sense, General Revelation is "ahistorical" since it occurs in the same way for all people at all times.

**There are some people who say the Bible is “true” but that the events it describes are not actual history. Is there a problem thinking this way?**

When talking about the death and resurrection of Jesus, Paul points out that if it did not actually happen, there is no hope for salvation. We all naturally understand that actions have consequences: if we don’t fill up our car with gas, it will stop running; if we lock a door and lose the key, we cannot open it. Truth is therefore connected to reality: if something is said to have happened, but did not, then it cannot also be true.

**3 God expects us to know the events recorded in the Bible and accept them as history so we can direct our lives according to what He has said and done.**

**Read Matthew 19:3-6**

*And Pharisees came up to [Jesus] and tested him by asking, “Is it lawful to divorce one’s wife for any cause?” He answered, “Have you not read that he who created them from the beginning made them male and female, and said, “Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh”? So they are no longer two but one flesh. What therefore God has joined together, let not man separate.”*

**Why does Jesus quote the account of the first marriage in Genesis 2 to address the Pharisees’ question about divorce?**

Jesus looks at the creation of the first man and woman—and their marriage in the garden—as the model for all other marriages. Adam and Eve were therefore the standard for all marriages coming after them.

**Why is it important for Jesus’ argument that the account in Genesis 2 be historically true?**

Jesus is making the claim that what God did in the garden has direct consequences for all marriages after it. If the original marriage of Adam to Eve was not real, then it does not have author-

ity over any other marriage. Jesus, however, points out there was an original structure to God's created order, and divorce was not part of it.

### **How important are a real Adam and Eve to the life and work of Jesus?**

They are absolutely essential. Luke 3 shows that Jesus connects His lineage directly back to Adam as the first "son of God." The consequences of Adam's sin were the reason mankind and the world became corrupted and in need of salvation. Jesus came to earth to save us from the results of Adam's sin.

### *Closing Thoughts*

The doctrine of revelation is the foundation of how we know who God is and what He has done in the world. Revelation, therefore, is where we must start when considering the question of origins. General Revelation reveals God's invisible attributes to the entire world, but it cannot tell us anything specific about history. It is therefore left to Special Revelation to reveal God's words and actions in time. Together, these two types of Revelation provide us an accurate, yet inexhaustible, fount of knowledge about creation and God Himself.

## DIFFERING VIEWS

# History, Science, and Authority

In the video clip, George Grant points out it was during the Enlightenment that a tension emerged between the authority of science and the authority of the Bible. The ground of struggle was whether the history recorded in the Bible or the history constructed by late 18th- and early 19th-century scientists was more authoritative.

That struggle for authority remains with us today. What is the proper relationship between history and science?

Dr. Grant explains that: “History is what helps shape and direct science itself, not the other way around. We need to understand *what* happened, and then science can help us understand *how* it happened.”

Let’s take a moment to look deeper at both history and science.

## What is history?

Earlier, we said ‘history’ can be used in two related ways:

1. ‘History’ can refer to the written record of people and events in time (as in, ‘the book of Kings is a history of Israel’);
2. ‘History’ can be used in a more comprehensive sense to refer to the actual people and events *themselves* (as in, ‘David’s flight from Saul is history’)

We regularly use both senses of history in our normal lives. In fact, our entire civilization is based on an understanding that the past contains real events that can be recorded and known today.

Just consider the importance of history to finance, health-care, education, business, construction, politics, and the arts. Although people sometimes disagree as to what happened in the past (this is one of the reasons for the judicial system), no one disagrees that something actually happened.

## What is science?

Just like history, ‘science’ can be used in two related ways:

1. ‘Science’ can refer to the process of studying the natural world in order to create a body of knowledge to help explain, predict, and control it.
2. ‘Science’ can refer to the body of knowledge *itself* that is used to describe the natural world.

Throughout the history of science, people have struggled with two basic problems: we are extremely limited in our human ability to study and understand the natural world; and the natural world is overwhelmingly complex.

In an attempt to overcome these problems, those pursuing science have always used “paradigms” or deductive frameworks to explain the data they discover. A paradigm could be compared to a pair of sunglasses used to see outside on a sunny day. Paradigms include sets of assumptions that help make sense of the immense amount of complex data—much of which cannot be identified, much less understood—throughout the world.

For instance, the paradigm of “plate tectonics” has helped geologists explain movements in the earth’s crust. There are still observations and data, however, that the current paradigm of plate tectonics cannot explain. Nevertheless, it was considered a better paradigm than the view held until the 1960s, and will continue until it is replaced.

Unfortunately, paradigms can only alleviate the two problems, not solve them. When one looks at the history of scientific thought, it is clear that paradigms change and adjust over time as a result of new discoveries, new ideas, and new understandings. In many instances, the same data are seen differently from one generation to the next. The crust of the earth is a good example; clearly everyone could see it. One generation, however, thought it was static; another thought it moved.

Curiously, each contemporary generation thinks it has arrived at the most accurate views of the world. One can go back in history to see this. Yet even the most brilliant paradigms have been changed or replaced by following generations.

This has happened so many times throughout the history of science, it leads one to question the absolute authority of scientific statements. After all, if conclusions about the same data keep changing, how is it possible that scientists have arrived at the truth?

## What are the different types of science?

There are at least three different types of science.

1. First, there is *operational* science, which performs experiments to explain and predict current and future events. Operational science is used in disciplines like chemistry, physics, or biology to try to describe the way the physical world or living organisms operate.
2. Next, there is *historical* science, which performs experiments and gathers evidence to make interpretations about what happened in the past. Historical science is used in disciplines like geology or paleontology to try to re-construct what happened in history.
3. There is another type of science called *applied* science. This is what we are most familiar with in terms of technology such as cell phones or medicine. Engineers and inventors often use observations about the natural world to create new things that rely on an understanding of how the world operates.

Most people are not aware of these distinctions, but usually lump everything together when talking about “science.” This inevitably leads to confusion.

For instance, applied science has practical applications we can see and use, often based on the experimental findings of operational science. Historical science, on the other hand, cannot

do experiments on what happened in the past; it can only do experiments in the present and examine pre-existing data to suggest explanations for rock formations and fossils.

Nevertheless, the authority of one type of science is often extended to other types of science. Just because we have cell phones does not mean every aspect of physics and chemistry believed today is accurate. In fact, although it may be surprising, the history of physics and chemistry is full of experimental ideas which “worked,” which were accepted by brilliant men, and which have now been discarded.

This criticism applies even more strongly to the historical sciences, in which no experiments can be done on the past. Rather, evidence is gathered and fit into a historical paradigm. We should therefore be very careful about the authority of statements of historical science, especially those that reject the Bible as an authority.

## **Can science “tell” us anything?**

Consider a phrase you may have heard: “Science tells us that...” with some observation or idea attached to the end.

‘Science,’ however, doesn’t tell us anything. Rather, scientists who have particular views tell us things about the world that may be more or less accurate. To say “science tells us...” is to indulge in the poetic trope of ‘personification.’ After all, no has ever met Science and had a conversation with her.

One of the intentions of personifying science in this way is to make ‘Science’ more authoritative. This approach often comes up in discussions about origins, with some people granting to science an absolute authority it does not actually have. Science instead represents a variety of competing views of the world which change over time.

This is the reason science textbooks are constantly being updated. Scientific knowledge is not fixed, but is slowly shifting in one direction or another as paradigms change. It is not easy for the

average person to see this since he is not privy to the latest scientific journals and debates. However, one need only pick up a science textbook that is 50, 100, or 150 years old, and it quickly becomes apparent how much things have changed in a relatively brief span of time.

This creates an additional problem for the authority of science. If science has changed as much as it has in the past century, how much more will it change in the next 50, 100, or 150 years? How many things that we are “absolutely sure we know” will be the laughingstock of future generations?

## **What is our ultimate authority in terms of natural history?**

The question facing everyone in the modern world is this: is the Special Revelation in the Bible more authoritative than the consensus view of conventional scientists in terms of the natural history of the world?

This is why it is important to remember that science operates within paradigms to interpret data, that scientists are limited in their view of the world, and that scientific knowledge is constantly changing.

Although science can provide us with limited authority about the world, it can never provide absolute authority. This applies equally to conventional and creationist scientific ideas.

In other words, even the best creationist scientific model can only be an approximation of what actually happened. This is because science in itself can never provide absolute authority: it is always changing its views.

History, however, can provide absolute knowledge that is unchanging.

As a simple example, no one can change their biological history. We can all be sure we had parents, and our parents had parents, and so on back to Adam and Eve. Even if someone doesn't hold to the history recorded in Genesis, they would have to admit that genealogical links are more certain than scientific theories.



This is perhaps one of the reasons genealogies are used throughout the Bible to track the passage of time and show relationships between people. There is something fixed about biological father-son relationships that every culture innately understands.

As Christians, we are in possession of a document that presents itself as a complete history of the world from beginning to end. It is therefore important that we begin with that history when trying to understand the world through scientific means. Any other approach will inevitably lead to the suppression of that history.

## **Is creation (or nature) a book like the Bible that can be read by scientists?**

Creation is not a book that can be read because it has no *words*. It is easy to know what a book is saying because it uses vocabulary and grammar. Creation, on the other hand, has trees, mountains, rabbits, and many more things that have no language associated with them.

Although there are scientists who like to think they are ‘reading’ some aspect of creation, they are mixing metaphors: a book with words is not the same as the non-verbal natural world. After all, how does one know what a tree or a mountain or a rabbit ‘says’ or ‘means’? Without specific words to know the intentions of an author, any ‘reading’ becomes highly subjective.

Instead, scientists do experiments and make interpretations about the natural world in an attempt to understand it. Over time, a few of these interpretations are kept, but most are thrown out. Even if this is what scientists are referring to about ‘reading’ creation, it means creation must be nearly impossible to ‘read’ accurately since so many people are consistently mistaken about it. Again, this is because the metaphor is faulty: creation is not a book.

Nevertheless, this line of thinking remains popular today.

There is a desire for some to equate General Revelation with the creation itself, giving scientists the job of achieving a better understanding of General Revelation through scientific study. Since the “two books” of the Bible and creation must agree, then some are led to re-interpret Special Revelation through the latest “reading” of General Revelation. This was the thinking used in the early 19th century to merge views of deep time with the Bible, and then again in the late 19th century to merge evolutionary theory with the Bible.

Of course, the basic problem with this approach is that it has misunderstood how General Revelation actually works.

One does not need scientific knowledge to receive General Revelation. As David tell us in Psalm 19: *“The heavens declare the glory of God, and the sky above proclaims his handiwork. Day to day pours out speech, and night to night reveals knowledge. There is no speech, nor are there words, whose voice is not heard. Their voice goes out through all the earth, and their words to the end of the world.”*

General Revelation can be seen and understood by everyone, regardless of their educational state or knowledge about the world. That is the point: it declares to everyone God’s power and wisdom. Unlike Special Revelation, one cannot know more or less of General Revelation; one either recognizes it for what it is and worships God, or one suppress the truth of it.

Curiously, in the modern world, many of those who have greater knowledge of the creation actually reject General Revelation with greater vehemence. If General Revelation increased with scientific knowledge, then surely scientists would be the first to recognize God for who He is.

Clearly, creation is not a book to be read. Instead, General Revelation reveals the glory of God, His power, and His divine nature to all alike. Special Revelation reveals the specific words and actions of God in time. General Revelation can therefore tell us nothing about the actual history of the world; that role is left to Special Revelation.

**From the beginning of time, men and women were placed in the world so they could perceive God's power and divinity in the creation and worship Him.**

**Read Acts 17:16-34**

This is Paul's speech to the Athenian philosophers. Although the Athenians had only been exposed to General Revelation from what they saw in creation, notice how Paul introduces Special Revelation in terms his audience will understand.

**Review the passage and answer the following questions:**

- Where is Paul referring to things recorded in Genesis?
- Where is Paul referring to things recorded in the Gospels?
- How many statements about historical events is Paul making? Why are these important to his argument?
- What is the overall point Paul is making to the "religious" Athenians about their duty toward God?
- Why does Paul refer to Jesus' death and resurrection as an event that recently happened in order to encourage them to repentance?

There are many people in our culture today who are like the Athenians: they have been exposed to General Revelation, but have little knowledge of Special Revelation. As you speak to people you know, consider how you can use the events recorded in Biblical history as reasons for people to turn to God and repent before the next judgment occurs. It is possible you will receive the same response Paul did: some will mock you, but others will want to know more.

**Pray that God would give you opportunities to speak the truth about His creation to others.**

## DAILY STUDY: **DAY TWO**

**God spoke to select men who accurately recorded His words and actions, as well as the history surrounding them.**

### **Read Jeremiah 1:1-19**

This is God's call of Jeremiah to be His prophet. Jeremiah served God during the final years of the kingdom of Judah until it was destroyed by the Babylonians in 586 BC.

### **Review the passage and answer the following questions:**

- Jeremiah places his ministry within a very specific historical setting, in this case, the reigns of certain kings lasting from 626 BC to 586 BC. Why is this important?
- God says that He consecrated Jeremiah before he was born. What does this tell us about God's plan to use people, their personalities, and their abilities in His service? What does that mean for you?
- Why are God's words so powerful?
- Why is it important to God that His words be taken seriously?
- What is the connection God makes between what He is telling Jeremiah to say and what actually is going to happen in history?
- What does this tell you about God's interest in the specific events of history, as well as His control over them?

We will look at God's control of history in the section on God's providence. For now, just remember that God chose certain men to accurately record what He was doing in history.

**Pray that God would give you better understanding of what He has told us in the Bible.**

**God expects us to know the events recorded in the Bible and accept them as history so we can direct our lives according to what He has said and done.**

**Read Hebrews 11:1-16**

This chapter is often known as the “Hall of Faith”: it reveals the importance of faith behind key events and people in history. If you consider that these men are just normal people, you realize it was their faith in God’s trustworthiness that gave them the ability to do what they did.

**Review the passage and answer the following questions:**

- Why are ‘assurance and conviction’ important aspects of faith? What does that mean in terms of being sure about something?
- What was Abel sure of?
- What was Enoch commended for?
- What did Noah have a conviction about?
- What was the object of Abraham’s faith?
- Why is it important that we understand the historical events surrounding these men and their decisions in terms of learning from them for our own lives?
- From God’s perspective, how important is knowing history to our daily faith?

Just because we cannot see something at this moment does not mean our conviction and assurance of it is not reasonable. History reminds us that God has acted in space and time in important ways, and that He is still doing so today.

**Pray that God would give you faith to trust Him in whatever circumstance you find yourself.**

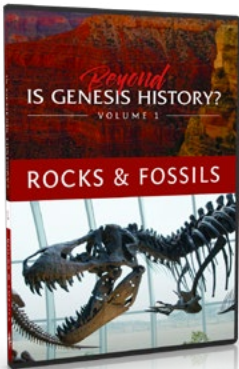
## About the Author

**Thomas Purifoy Jr.** is the producer, director, and writer of *Is Genesis History?* He decided to make a documentary on Genesis after a conversation with his then 10-year-old daughter about Creation and evolution. After graduating from Vanderbilt University in 1994, he served four years as an officer in the U.S. Navy. He has directed a classical school in France where he taught literature, philosophy, history, Bible, and filmmaking.

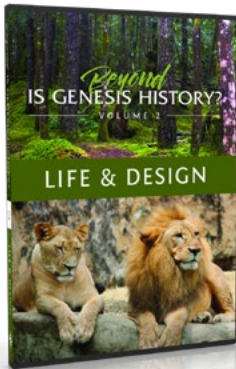
Thomas currently works as a producer with Compass Cinema ([CompassCinema.com](http://CompassCinema.com)). He also creates and sells homeschool curriculum through Compass Classroom ([CompassClassroom.com](http://CompassClassroom.com)). When he is not reading books, he is listening to classical music or watching old movies. He lives in Nashville, Tennessee with his wife and three daughters.

# *Beyond* IS GENESIS HISTORY?

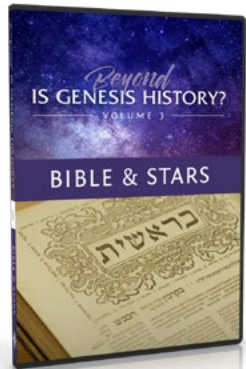
If you want to dig deeper into the science and scholarship behind the feature documentary, seek out these additional volumes.



VOLUME 1  
**Rocks & Fossils**  
*Now Available*



VOLUME 2  
**Life & Design**  
*Spring 2018*



VOLUME 3  
**Bible & Stars**  
*Spring 2018*

Available at  
**IsGenesisHistory.com**

*“You are the Lord, you alone. You have made heaven,  
the heaven of heavens, with all their host, the earth  
and all that is on it, the seas and all that is in them;  
and you preserve all of them; and the host of heaven  
worships you.”*

—NEHEMIAH 9:6