

GENESIS–RUTH

Morning Conversations

on the Creation of a People and Place

Days 1–236 of your
devotional journey through
the Old Testament with

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Dedication

This book is dedicated to my parents, Floyd and Ann Roebuck, whose prayerful support, gentle encouragement, and unwavering love have offered me a lifetime of strength, wisdom, and boundless joy.

Contents

Preface	1
Genesis	3
Days 1 through 50	
Exodus	53
Days 51 through 90	
Leviticus	93
Days 91 through 117	
Numbers	120
Days 118 through 153	
Joshua	190
Days 188 through 211	
Judges	214
Days 212 through 232	
Ruth	235
Days 233 through 236	

Preface

In 2013, I published a devotional book titled, *Morning Conversations*. The book contains a brief devotional thought drawn from every chapter of the New Testament... 260 in all. It was written in response to a congregant who once called to ask for a recommendation on some devotional reading material. I informed him that I was practicing a discipline of writing a devotional thought from a New Testament chapter each morning. When asked if he was interested in reading it, he replied, "That sounds great, I'd love to read what you have written." So, I began to e-mail my thoughts to him each morning. With my permission, he started passing it along to others... first to his father and then to several other friends. The feedback was very positive. The thought occurred to me that members of my own family, friends, and a few church members might enjoy reading these devotionals as well. Word spread and soon, I found myself sending my morning devotional thoughts to more than 200 people each day. After I wrote my way through the Gospels, I kept right on writing. I finally decided to keep going until I covered the entire New Testament. Eventually, the collected thoughts made their way into book form.

A few years later the thought occurred to me, "What if I could write a devotional thought from every chapter of the Old Testament?" The thought was daunting, overwhelming, and exhausting. It was also exciting to imagine. There are 929 chapters in the Old Testament. To write a thought from each chapter would literally take years... and it did. What you now hold in your hand is the result of more than 3½ years of work. I decided to write a chapter every weekday, starting sometime in the summer of 2016. Just before Christmas of 2019, I typed my final thoughts from the book of Malachi. It was quite a journey to take... all the way from the days of creation to the post-exilic period. I walked with characters like Jacob, Moses, David, Jeremiah, and Ezekiel. I learned from prophets, politicians, and poets. I wandered in the wilderness and crossed the Jordan too many times to count. I read, reflected, and wrote. The journey was well worth the effort, and I hope that some of my thoughts will help you along your journey as well.

In any such undertaking, those of us who write, do so armed with wisdom, commentary, and insights gleaned from a lifetime of study and influence. On occasion as I wrote these devotions, to remind myself of past events and stories, I referenced articles drawn from Google searches and other internet inquiries. Such references, if quoted directly, are cited within the text. Other background material on various books, passages, and characters has been drawn from multiple sources, even including old Seminary notes! I am indebted to several sources that prompted my memory, aided in my research, and inspired my thinking. In particular, I want to commend the work contained in three important works, *The Broadman Bible Commentary* (Allen, Clifton J. 1969. Nashville, Tennessee: Broadman Press Vol. 1-8), *The Nelson Study Bible* (1997 Nashville, Tennessee: Thomas Nelson Publishers), and *Moody Bible Commentary* (Rydelnik, Michael & Vanlaningham, Michael 2014. Chicago, Illinois: Moody Publishers). I referred to these sources often for both clarity and historical

insight. But as you will discover, most of what is presented in each day's devotion is simply my personal reflection on the text, hopefully inspired through the work of the Spirit, and my musings on how to best apply the wisdom of God's word to daily life.

Morning Conversations on the Creation of a People and Place is the first volume of a set that follows the natural order of the Old Testament canon, and spans the Biblical narrative from the opening chapter of Genesis to the end of the book of Ruth.

Morning Conversations on the Rise and Fall of Kings and Kingdoms continues the orderly progression, spanning the books of 1 Samuel through Esther.

Morning Conversations on the Wisdom of the Ages covers all five books of wisdom literature from Job to the Song of Solomon.

Morning Conversations on the Prophetic Word wraps up the Old Testament with a look at the books of prophecy, covering both the Major and Minor prophets, Isaiah through Malachi.

Additionally, the previously published collection of devotional thoughts from the New Testament, *Morning Conversations*, will be reformatted and renamed *Morning Conversations on the New Testament*, the final volume of this collection.

As you read through these volumes, my hope is that you will take the time, not to simply read what I have written, but to reflect with me on what the ancients have written. Let me challenge you each morning to take a moment to read the suggested focus chapter from a trusted translation before you dive into my words. Read and reflect. As you make your way through this book, and those that will follow, you will discover a lot of my life story written into these pages. But more importantly, I hope you will discover a lot about God's story... the one carefully crafted and persevered for you. For in hearing God's story, you will hear the echoing refrain of God's desire to know you, to love you, and to redeem you. Welcome to the conversation.

“God created man in His own image, in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them.” Genesis 1:27 (NASB)

Observation

There is a lot going on in this single verse. First, you have Creator God bringing order to what was once a “formless void.” At the height of this creative work, God brings humankind into existence, made in God’s own likeness. The power of God is demonstrated throughout the chapter as God simply “speaks” all things into being. Second, God chooses to make humankind in God’s image. Something about who we are, how we think, and perhaps even how we look, somehow reflects the image of our Father. Third, notice the instantaneous creation of both male and female. From the beginning, the image of God is placed in both sexes. There is no second-class citizenship given, but rather an equality of creation.

Application

What does it mean to be made in the image of God? First, there is a sense that we possess certain qualities that God possesses. We can think, reason, exercise limited dominion, experience relationship, communicate, love, and re-create. God has given us the ability to be like God in many ways, though certainly never equal. God is Creator, we are still the creations. But here’s a second thought. In the ancient Hebrew texts, the verse could be translated as... “God created man as His image” rather than using the word, “in His image.” That’s different. Of all things created, humankind alone is called upon to bear the image of God before the nations. Think about it. What the world must know of God, it should begin to learn from each of us. What a challenge... Are we like our Father? Do we love unselfishly, share abundantly, forgive extravagantly, treat others patiently? When people see us, do they see God? Is God’s image clearly stamped on each of us? Like a coin minted with the image of one of our founding fathers, the image of God should be deeply imprinted on us. Everything about us should display a little of what God is like. I may not like the pressure of thinking that someone’s only impression of God is tied to their impression of me, but it is a responsibility that I must shoulder. How well will you bear God’s image today? It’s something to think about.

Prayer

God, may I begin to reflect your image more clearly to all those that you bring into my world. Amen.