

Introduction to Genesis

What does Genesis mean?

Genesis gets its name from the Septuagint, the Greek translation of the Jewish Scriptures. *Genesis* is a Greek word that means "beginning" or "origin."

Who wrote the book of Genesis?

Jewish tradition and other Biblical authors name Moses as the author of the entire Pentateuch. This is supported by his education in the courts of Egypt (Acts 7:22) and his close contact with Yahweh (the Hebrew name for God). Jesus Himself confirmed Moses' authorship (John 5:45-47) as did the scribes and Pharisees (Matthew 19:7; 22:24).

What is the Pentateuch?

The Pentateuch is the first five books of the Bible. The word *Pentateuch* comes from a combination of the Greek word *penta*, meaning "five" and *teuchos*, which can be translated "scroll." Therefore, it simply refers to the five scrolls that make up the first of three divisions of the Jewish canon. The name Pentateuch can be traced at least as far back as AD 200, when Tertullian referred to the first five books of the Bible by that name. Also known as the Torah, which is the Hebrew word meaning "Law," these five books of the Bible are Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy. Two key thoughts for each of the five foundational books are:

Genesis:	beginnings and generations
Exodus:	slavery and redemptions
Leviticus:	ritual and relationship (teaching the people)
Numbers:	failure and fulfillment (God never leaves them)
Deuteronomy:	law and land

The five books that make up the Pentateuch are generally considered to be historical books because they record historical events. While they are often called the Torah or the Law, in reality they contain much more than laws. They provide an overview to God's plan of redemption and provide a backdrop to everything in Scripture that would follow. Like all of the Old Testament, the promises, types, and prophecies contained in the first five books of Scripture have their ultimate fulfillment in the person and work of Jesus Christ. They provide the important historical background needed to set the stage for the coming Kinsmen Redeemer.

Why was Genesis written?

Moses wrote Genesis for the people of Israel. This book gives a history of their forefathers and includes their origins, their journeys, and their covenants with God. This history shows God's interaction with their ancestors and certainly encouraged the Israelites who were seeking freedom and a future in the Promised Land.

What is the time span in Genesis?

Genesis covers a longer period of time than all of the other books in the Bible combined. The first eleven chapters give no indication of time span. Abram's story begins in Genesis 12 at around 2090 BC, and the book ends with Joseph's death in Egypt (Genesis 50:26) around 1805 BC.

What are the themes of Genesis?

1. Creation. When God created the world He said it was "very good" (1:31). There was harmony between God and humanity, and among humans and between people and the rest of creation.
2. Sin. Sin came into the world through the first humans, Adam and Eve (3:1-19). The results of sin were unbelief, sickness, and death (Romans 5:12; 8:19-23).
3. The image of God. All humans are created in the image of God. Each of us is God's likeness as a personal, rational, creative, moral being. Men and women were created equal (1:27).
4. God's plan of redemption. Although God chose to work through one group in the Old Testament, His divine intervention was that all nations would come to know Him through Abraham's descendants (12:1-3). Abraham was chosen because of his faith, making him the father of all who come to God in faith (Romans 4:1-25).

These themes can be summarized as creation, sin, and re-creation. First, it tells how God created the world and it was very good but then it was destroyed by man's disobedience. This led to a new world after the flood which was also spoiled due to the sins of humans (chapter 11). Finally, the call of Abraham, through whom all nations will be blessed, gives hope that God's purpose will someday be realized through Abraham's descendants (chapter 49).

What does Genesis mean to me today?

At first glance, it is easy to get lost in the stories and genealogies in Genesis. There is a big picture and it is to keep God in mind while you read through the book, not the people. Observe and note His character qualities. Look at God's infinite power, as exhibited over creation. See how God is angry over sin or the way He fulfilled His promises to everyone (no exceptions). This should result in worship and hope because the Lord is faithful, just, and strong. And His plan to bless His creation will one day be 100% fulfilled.

“Creation”

Genesis 1:1-25
For the week of October 4, 2020



Overview: God's Creation (1:1 – 2:3)

From the ESV Study Bible (2008): “The book of Genesis opens with a majestic description of how God first created the heavens and the earth and then how he ordered the earth so that it may become his dwelling place. Structured into seven sections, each marked by the use of set phrases, the entire episode conveys the picture of the all-powerful, transcendent God who sets everything in place with consummate skill in conformity to his grand design. The emphasis is mainly on how God orders or structures everything. The structure of the account is as follows: after giving the setting (1:1-2), the author describes the six workdays (1:3-31) and the seventh day, God's Sabbath (2:1-3). Each of the six workdays follows the same pattern: it begins with “and God said,” and closes with “and there was evening and there was morning, the nth day.” After declaring that God is the Creator of all things (1:1), the focus of the rest of Genesis 1 (beginning at 1:3) is mainly on God bringing things into existence by his word and ordering the created things (“let the waters...be gathered together,” 1:9), rather than on how the earth was initially created (1:1)...Genesis 1 establishes a hierarchy of authority. Humanity is divinely commissioned to govern other creatures on God's behalf, the ultimate purpose being that the whole earth should become the temple of God, the place of his presence, and should display his glory.”

God and the Forces of Chaos

Read Genesis 1:1-2

What does John 1:1-3 add to your perception of Genesis 1:1-2? Now read Colossians 1:15-20. What is Christ's role in creation?

What was the purpose of the Holy Spirit in verse 2? Can the Holy Spirit bring order from chaos today in a person's life? How does a person yield to the Holy Spirit so that He may accomplish His will in their life?

Day One

Read Genesis 1:3-5

Light is a common metaphor in the Bible. Look up the following passages and comment on each:

- Jesus Christ (John 8:12)
- The Word of God (Psalm 119:05, 130)
- God's people (Matthew 5:14-16; Ephesians 5:8)
- God's blessing (Proverbs 4:18)

God is the Creator of physical light as well as the Giver of spiritual light by which we can see the truth. What does it mean "to walk in the light?"

On the flip side, darkness is associated with the following:

- Satan (Luke 23:53)
- Sin (Matthew 6:22-23)
- Death (Job 3:4-6)
- Spiritual ignorance (John 1:5)
- Divine judgment (Matthew 8:12)

How have you reflected God's light in a world darkened by sin? Or put another way, why is it critical for a follower of Christ to be a light in this world?

Day Two

Read Genesis 1:6-8

This passage begins to show how God dealt with disorder. It is utterly amazing! The amount of vapor continually suspended in the air above us is estimated at 54 trillion, 460 billion tons. Water is 773 times the weight of air, so this should give us some idea of the power required to separate the waters from the waters. The annual precipitation (rain and snow) that falls on the earth is the equivalent of 186,000 cubic miles, which is enough to cover the entire earth to a depth of three feet. The supply of water above the earth is maintained by evaporation, which is the constant lifting of water from the earth into the atmosphere by the power of the sun. What an amazing God!

Now read Isaiah 40:12, 22 and write down your thoughts on the greatness and power of God.

Day Three

Read Genesis 1:9-13

How did God address the deadness of the planet? How did Moses catalogue the earth's vegetation?

The basic command for all living things was that each reproduces "according to its kind." How does this expression (which occurs ten times in Genesis 1) rebut the theory of evolution?

Day Four

Read Genesis 1:14-19

Verse 16 ends with almost an afterthought that God made the stars. There are about 1,000,000,000,000,000,000 stars in space. This amount equals to the number of grains of sand on all of the beaches in the earth.



According to Romans 1:20-25 and Hebrews 11:1-3, what should be our response to God's self-revelation in the created order? What are the consequences for refusing to praise the Creator?

Day Five

Read Genesis 1:20-23

Scientists have classified millions of different species of animals, including more than 800,000 different kinds of insects, 30,000 kinds of fish, 9,000 kinds of birds, 6,000 kinds of reptiles, 3,000 kinds of amphibians, and 5,000 kinds of mammals.

Why would God need to create so many different types of living creatures here on earth?

How aware are you of the created world in your everyday life? What aspect of the created world is most inspiring to you? Why?

Day Six (Part 1)

Read Genesis 1:24-25

How does Genesis 1:1-25 highlight the following?

- God is eternal
- The Trinity
- God is love

Pray the Psalms

End your time by praying Psalm 148

“Praise the LORD!
Praise the LORD from the heavens;
praise him in the heights!
2 Praise him, all his angels;
praise him, all his hosts!
3 Praise him, sun and moon,
praise him, all you shining stars!
4 Praise him, you highest heavens,
and you waters above the heavens!
5 Let them praise the name of the LORD!
For he commanded and they were created.
6 And he established them forever and ever;
he gave a decree, and it shall not pass away.^[a]
7 Praise the LORD from the earth,
you great sea creatures and all deeps,
8 fire and hail, snow and mist,
stormy wind fulfilling his word!
9 Mountains and all hills,
fruit trees and all cedars!
10 Beasts and all livestock,
creeping things and flying birds!
11 Kings of the earth and all peoples,
princes and all rulers of the earth!
12 Young men and maidens together,
old men and children!
13 Let them praise the name of the LORD,
for his name alone is exalted;
his majesty is above earth and heaven.
14 He has raised up a horn for his people,
praise for all his saints,
for the people of Israel who are near to him.
Praise the LORD!”