

GENESIS (Teacher's Edition)

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ABOUT THE BOOK-

Genesis is the first of the five books of Moses, known as the **PENTATEUCH**. Genesis is the book of beginnings. The word Genesis means "the origin, source, creation, or coming into being of something." The book describes such important beginnings as the Creation, the fall of man, and the early years of the nation of Israel.

The beginning of salvation history-the story of God and man, sin and grace, wrath and mercy, covenant and redemption-also begins in the Book of Genesis. These themes are repeated often throughout the rest of the Bible. As the Book of Revelation is the climax and conclusion of the Bible, so the Book of Genesis **provides the context and sets the stage** for the rest of the Bible. Thus, Genesis is an important book for understanding the meaning of the entire Bible.

The Book of Genesis may conveniently be divided into four major parts: (1) the Creation and the early days of mankind (Gen 1:1-11:26); (2) the story of Abraham and Isaac (Gen 12:1-25:18); (3) the story of Jacob and Esau (Gen 25:19-36:43); and (4) the story of Joseph and his brothers (Gen 37-50).

The first major part of the Book of Genesis (chaps. 1-11) contains five great events: (1) the history of creation and a description of life in the Garden of Eden before the Fall (Gen 1-2); (2) the story of Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden: the temptation and fall of man (Gen 3); (3) the story of Cain and Abel (Gen 4:1-16); (4) the story of Noah and the Flood: the wickedness and judgment of man (Gen 6:5-9:29); and (5) the story of the Tower of Babel: the proud presumption of man, the confusion of tongues, and the scattering of mankind upon the earth (Gen 11:1-9). Each of these great events relates to the **whole of humanity**, and each is filled with significance that continues throughout Scripture.

The rest of the Book of Genesis (chaps. 12-50) relates the narrative of the four great patriarchs of Israel: Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and Joseph. The theme of these chapters is God's sovereignty in calling out a chosen people who would serve and worship Him.

In many ways, Genesis anticipates the NT: the **very personal** God, the Trinity, the institution of **marriage**, the **seriousness** of sin, divine judgment and righteousness by faith. The **Tree of Life**, lost in Genesis, is **restored** in Revelation 22.

Genesis is also a book of firsts. Genesis records the first birth (Gen 4:1), the first death (Gen 4:8), the first musical instruments (Gen 4:21), and the first rainbow (Gen 9:12-17). Genesis is indeed the book of beginnings.

THE AUTHOR-

Even though this book does not mention its author, Jewish tradition, church history, and the Scriptures themselves ascribe the book to Moses. This is true of the first five books of the Bible.

Jesus Himself said in John 5:46, "If you believed Moses, you would believe me, for he wrote about me." In fact there are numerous OT & NT scriptures that testify to Moses' writing of the Pentateuch. See Joshua 1:7; Daniel 9:11-13; Luke 16:29; John 7:19; Acts 26:22, etc.

WHEN THE BOOK WAS WRITTEN-

The best guess of the time period in which Moses wrote this under the inspiration of God, is figured out by dating the time of the actual Exodus from Egypt. 1 Kings 6:1 states that Solomon began building the temple 480 years after the children of Israel had come up out of the land of Egypt. It is believed Solomon started about 960 B.C., hence dating the Exodus to about 1440 B.C. Therefore we can state that the book was written somewhere between 1440-1400 B.C., during the time of the wilderness wanderings.

BASIC THEMES IN GENESIS-

The book focuses on God primarily in two areas:

1. He is the Creator of the universe
2. He is the one who initiates covenant with His people.

Genesis ties creation and covenant together in a stunning manner: the God who initiates covenant is the same God who has created the entire universe. The eternal God and almighty Creator enters into covenant with His people! In fact, in the first chapter of Genesis, God not only lets us know He is the fountain of all life and power and that His kingdom embraces all that is, but He lets us know He created us to share dominion with Him within His kingdom.

A point that must be made: God's sovereignty and human significance are not opposing ideas! Unless we discern God's original design, our created dignity, and His intended destiny for humanity at the outset, we won't understand God's motives and methods of carrying out His Kingdom plans.

What we learn in Genesis is the fact that God created us as partners, not peons or robots. We are not pawns! While we are not God's equals, yet we have a created partnership with Him! Though The Fall frustrated these plans, God's purpose still stands. Thus, God's program for redeeming humanity is more than restoring broken relationship because of sin. God is taking us back to our place of destiny and dominion, as He first stated to Adam and Eve.

Genesis 1:26 establishes all of this:

- 1) Mankind is made in God's image, meaning we were granted qualities unique and elevated in the created order, and,
- 2) Given "dominion", meaning we were granted the status of a king whose decisions and actions will determine the course of the world that was placed under his rule.

It is important to consider here the reality of The Fall. We were made with one purpose, but sin affected us all. We can only understand human nature properly when we grasp the truth of "original sin". When Adam sinned, all of us not only sinned but inherited a resident sin nature. Only Jesus can deal effectively with this inherited natural corruption.

SOME ADDITIONAL THOUGHTS

The great subject of the history of Genesis is the establishment of the theocracy. Its central point is the giving of the law on Sinai, and the solemn covenant there

ratified, whereby the Jewish nation was constituted "a kingdom of priests and a holy nation to God."

Israel is the people of God. God rules in the midst of them, having chosen them to himself. But a nation **must have laws**, hence the giving of The Law; and, in virtue of their peculiar relationship to God, this body of laws is both **religious and political**, defining their duty **to God** as well as their duty to their **neighbor**. Further, a nation must have **a land**, and the promise of the land and the preparation for its possession are all along kept in view.

But in his writing, Moses begins with the creation of the world, because the God who created the world and the God who revealed Himself to the fathers is the same God. He, who commanded His people to keep holy the seventh day, was the same God who, in six days, created the heavens and the earth, and rested on the seventh day. The God who, when man had fallen, visited him in mercy, and gave him a promise of redemption and victory, is the God who sent Moses to deliver His people out of Egypt. He who made a covenant with Noah, and through Him with "all the families of the earth," is the God who also made Himself known as the God of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Jacob. In a word, **creation and redemption** are eternally linked together! This is the idea which, in fact, gives its shape to the history, although its distinct articulation is reserved for the N.T.

There we learn that all things were created by and for Christ, and that in him all things consist and that by the Church is made known unto principalities and powers the manifest wisdom of God. It would be impossible, therefore, for a book which tells us of the beginning of **the Church**, not to tell us also of the beginning of **the world**.

The book of Genesis has thus a character at once special and universal. It embraces **the world**; it speaks of God as the God of the whole human race. But, as the introduction to Jewish history, it makes the universal interest subordinate to the national. Its design is to show how God revealed Himself to the first fathers of the Jewish race, in order that He might make to Himself a nation who should be **His witness** in the midst of the earth. This is the inner principle of unity which pervades the book.

A POSSIBLE KEY WORD

I think the key word for the book is in the name of it. Genesis means "beginning" so I think "**Beginnings**" is the key word. The beginning of almost everything starts in this book: the universe, life, Sabbath, death, marriage, the family, cities, literature, sacrifice, etc.

KEY VERSE(S) AND CHAPTER(S)

How about the key verses being: **Genesis 3:15; 12:3**, with the key chapter **Genesis 15**? Why?

Because after Adam and Eve sinned, God tells Eve one of her offspring would come who would bruise the devil. That descendant was Jesus (see 1 John 3:8)! God then speaks to Abraham and speaks to him of covenant.

God's covenant with Abraham is the basic plot of the Scripture. God's work from that day forward was to accomplish His plan for the nations of the world through His people Israel, the descendants of Abraham. God's covenant with Abraham (Gen 12:1-3; 15) contains a number of personal blessings on the father of the faith. But the climax of the text is in the words of worldwide import: "And in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed" (Gen 12:3). This promise is realized in the person of the Lord Jesus Christ, the Seed of Abraham (Gal 3:16, 19), through whom peoples of all nations and families may enter into the joy of knowing the God of Abraham.

One last thought on this. Genesis 15:6 says Abraham's faith was credited to him as righteousness. This is the foundation of the glorious message of the gospel in Ephesians 2:8, 9- "For it is by grace..."

JESUS REVEALED IN THE BOOK

Here are a few places:

- He is the seed of the woman mentioned in Genesis 3: 15
- He is the seed of Abraham in Genesis 15 & 17
- The mysterious Melchizedek of Genesis 14 is identified in Hebrews 6:20 as a type of Jesus
- Who did Jacob wrestle with in Genesis 32?
- How about the prophecy of Genesis 49:10?

THE HOLY SPIRIT AT WORK IN THE BOOK

Here are a few places the Holy Spirit and His role are mentioned:

- Genesis 1:2-Now the earth was formless and empty, darkness was over the surface of the deep, and the Spirit of God was hovering over the waters.
- Pharaoh in Gen 41 mentions the Holy Spirit: verse 38- So Pharaoh asked them, "Can we find anyone like this man, one in whom is the spirit of God?"
- Though not elsewhere mentioned in specific, His moving can be seen in the drawing of the animals into the ark, and in His working in dreams and visions such as the one given to Abimelech in Genesis 20, Pharaoh's dreams and Joseph's interpretations, as well as in other ways in the various people's lives.

SOME TRUTHS AND APPLICATIONS

Genesis 3:1-5:

Don't challenge God's Word like Eve did and it caused her and others problems. Instead, ask how it applies to your life and by faith know you will be blessed.

Genesis 4:6-8:

Sin is crouching at the door and we must guard against it. Cain had intimacy with God and a direct Word, but his jealousy and hatred led him to disobedience, murder, and everlasting consequences.

Genesis 14:18-24:

Tithe as a basic expression of trust and allegiance to God. Abraham's raising his hand was a sign of allegiance to God and the patriarchs tithed as an expression of loyalty to and faith in Him. (Gen 28:18-22)

Genesis 37-50

Joseph's life teaches many things, but I want all to remember to believe God's dreams for their lives, no matter what. Maintain your integrity and allow "Manasseh" and "Ephraim" to be born in your life as you release all bitterness!

Spiritual Decline in the Patriarchal Age

First Generation	Second Generation	Third Generation	Fourth Generation
Abraham	Ishmael and Isaac	Esau and Jacob	Joseph and his eleven brothers
Abraham: man of faith believed God	Ishmael: not son of promise Isaac: called on God, believed God	Esau: unspiritual little faith Jacob: at first compromised, later to the Lord	Joseph: man of God showed faith Brothers: treachery, immorality, lack of separation from Canaanites
Abraham: built altars to God (Gen. 12:7, 8; 13:4, 18, 22:9)	Isaac: built an altar to God (Gen. 26:25)	Jacob: built altars to God (Gen. 33:20; 35:1, 3, 7)	No altars were built to God in the fourth generation

The Abrahamic Covenant:

The Abrahamic Covenant is unconditional, depending solely upon God who obligates Himself in grace to bring about what He has promised. The covenant was first given in broad outline and was later confirmed to Abraham in greater detail (13:14–17; 15:1–7, 18–21; 17:1–8).

Genesis 12:1-3	God initiated His covenant with Abram when he was living in Ur of the Chaldeans, promising a land, descendants, and blessing.
Genesis 12:4, 5	Abram went with his family to Haran, lived there for a time, and left at the age of 75.
Genesis 13:14-17	After Lot separated from Abram, God again promised the land to him and his descendants.
Genesis 15:1–21	The covenant was ratified when God passed between the sacrificial animals Abram laid before God.
Genesis 17:1-27	When Abram was 99 God renewed His covenant, changing Abram’s name to Abraham (“Father of a Multitude”). Sign of the covenant: circumcision.
Genesis 22:15–18	Confirmation of the covenant because of Abraham’s obedience.

The Abrahamic covenant was foundational to other covenants:

- The promise of land in the Palestinian Covenant (Deut. 30:1-10)
- The promise of kingly descendants in the Davidic Covenant (2 Sam. 7:12–16)
- The promise of blessing in the “Old” and “New” Covenants (Ex. 19:3-6; Jer. 31:31–40)