

INTRODUCTION TO **GENESIS**

AUTHOR, DATE, AND RECIPIENTS

Moses was probably the author of Genesis and the rest of the Pentateuch (see Num. 33:2; Deut. 31:24; John 5:46). (“Pentateuch” refers to the first five books of the Bible.) Of course, Moses lived much later than the events of Genesis. Presumably, stories were passed down about those earlier events, and Moses brought them all together. The first readers of Genesis would have been the Israelites Moses led through the wilderness. For readers today, Genesis is an essential introduction to the rest of the Bible. It is rightly called the book of beginnings.

THEME

The theme of Genesis is creation, sin, and re-creation. God made the world very good, but later cursed it and then destroyed it in the flood because of man’s disobedience. The new world after the flood was also spoiled by human sin (Genesis 11). God then chose Abraham for a special purpose. Through his family, all nations of the earth would be blessed (12:1-3). God’s purpose will eventually be fulfilled through Abraham’s descendants (ch. 49).

DEVELOPING THE STORY

Genesis is where the **Story** begins. It describes God’s marvelous **Creation** (chs. 1-2), the **Fall** of man into sin (ch. 3), God’s gracious promise of **Rescue** (3:15), and the hope of **Restoration** (12:1-3).

Genesis describes how a perfect beginning is tragically spoiled by the influence of evil—yet not without hope. God’s sovereign power over all **Creation** was revealed as he created everything good. The first human, Adam, was God’s representative for all mankind (Romans 5). He was created with the ultimate purpose of worshiping God by ruling as his representative over all of **Creation**. But Adam willingly disobeyed God, bringing guilt, ruin, and death into the entire created order, making humanity an enemy of God. The result of the **Fall** was humanity’s slavery to sin and deep rebellion against God.

Yet we see the heart of the **Story** as God’s sovereign grace toward sinners is put in motion through his amazing plan of salvation. Soon after Adam and Eve’s terrible disobedience, God promised that a **Rescue** would come through one of their descendants—the “seed” of the woman (Genesis 3:15). This promise traveled down the families of Adam (chs. 3-5), Noah (chs. 6-9), Abraham (chs. 12-25), and Jacob (chs. 25-50). Although each of these families would themselves be under the curse of sin, God sustained his people as a demonstration of his love and provision to keep his promises.

While Adam brought about the **Fall** through his disobedience, the **Story** ultimately points to God’s promise of the “second Adam,” Jesus Christ, who would perfectly accomplish the **Rescue** and **Restoration** through his life, death, and resurrection (Rom. 5:12-21; 1 Cor. 15:20-22).



Creation
God
Creation
Harmony



Fall
Disobedience
Consequence
Need



Rescue
Promise Made
Promise Kept



Restoration
All Things New
Forever with God

GENESIS

The Creation of the World

1 In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth. ² The earth was without form and void, and darkness was over the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters.

³ And God said, "Let there be light," and there was light. ⁴ And God saw that the light was good. And God separated the light from the darkness. ⁵ God called the light Day, and the darkness he called Night. And there was evening and there was morning, the first day.

⁶ And God said, "Let there be an expanse¹ in the midst of the waters, and let it separate the waters from the waters."⁷ And God made² the expanse and separated the waters that were under the expanse from the waters that were above the expanse. And it was so. ⁸ And God called the expanse Heaven.³ And there was evening and there was morning, the second day.

⁹ And God said, "Let the waters under the heavens be gathered together into one place, and let the dry land appear." And it was so. ¹⁰ God called the dry land Earth,⁴ and the waters that were gathered together he called Seas. And God saw that it was good.

¹¹ And God said, "Let the earth sprout vegetation, plants⁵ yielding seed, and fruit trees bearing fruit in which is their seed, each according to its kind, on the earth." And it was so. ¹² The earth brought forth vegetation, plants yielding seed according to their own kinds, and trees bearing fruit in which is their seed, each according to its kind. And God saw that it was good. ¹³ And there was evening and there was morning, the third day.

¹⁴ And God said, "Let there be lights in the expanse of the heavens to separate the day from the night. And let them be for signs and for seasons,⁶ and for days and years,¹⁵ and let them be lights in the expanse of the heavens to give light upon the earth." And it was so. ¹⁶ And God made the two great lights—the greater light to rule the day and the lesser light to rule the night—and the stars. ¹⁷ And God set them in the expanse of the heavens to give light on the earth, ¹⁸ to rule over the day and over the night, and to separate the light from the darkness. And God saw that it was good. ¹⁹ And there was evening and there was morning, the fourth day.

²⁰ And God said, "Let the waters swarm with swarms of living creatures, and let birds⁷ fly above the earth across the expanse of the heavens."²¹ So God created the great sea creatures and every living creature that moves, with which the waters swarm, according to their kinds, and every winged bird according to its kind. And God saw that it was good.

²² And God blessed them, saying, "Be fruitful and

multiply and fill the waters in the seas, and let birds multiply on the earth."²³ And there was evening and there was morning, the fifth day.

²⁴ And God said, "Let the earth bring forth living creatures according to their kinds—livestock and creeping things and beasts of the earth according to their kinds." And it was so. ²⁵ And God made the beasts of the earth according to their kinds and the livestock according to their kinds, and everything that creeps on the ground according to its kind. And God saw that it was good.

²⁶ Then God said, "Let us make man⁸ in our image, after our likeness. And let them have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over the livestock and over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth."

²⁷ So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them.

²⁸ And God blessed them. And God said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and subdue it, and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over every living thing that moves on the earth."²⁹ And God said, "Behold, I have given you every plant yielding seed that is on the face of all the earth, and every tree with seed in its fruit. You shall have them for food. ³⁰ And to every beast of the earth and to every bird of the heavens and to everything that creeps on the earth, everything that has the breath of life, I have given every green plant for food." And it was so. ³¹ And God saw everything that he had made, and behold, it was very good. And there was evening and there was morning, the sixth day.

The Seventh Day, God Rests

2 Thus the heavens and the earth were finished, and all the host of them. ² And on the seventh day God finished his work that he had done, and he rested on the seventh day from all his work that he had done. ³ So God blessed the seventh day and made it holy, because on it God rested from all his work that he had done in creation.

The Creation of Man and Woman

⁴ These are the generations of the heavens and the earth when they were created, in the day that the LORD God made the earth and the heavens.

⁵ When no bush of the field⁹ was yet in the land¹⁰ and no small plant of the field had yet sprung up—

for the LORD God had not caused it to rain on the land, and there was no man to work the ground, ⁶ and a mist¹ was going up from the land and was watering the whole face of the ground—⁷ then the LORD God formed the man of dust from the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man became a living creature. ⁸ And the LORD God planted a garden in Eden, in the east, and there he put the man whom he had formed. ⁹ And out of the ground the LORD God made to spring up every tree that is pleasant to the sight and good for food. The tree of life was in the midst of the garden, and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.

¹⁰ A river flowed out of Eden to water the garden, and there it divided and became four rivers. ¹¹ The name of the first is the Pishon. It is the one that flowed around the whole land of Havilah, where there is gold. ¹² And the gold of that land is good; bdellium and onyx stone are there. ¹³ The name of the second river is the Gihon. It is the one that flowed around the whole land of Cush. ¹⁴ And the name of the third river is the Tigris, which flows east of Assyria. And the fourth river is the Euphrates.

¹⁵ The LORD God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to work it and keep it. ¹⁶ And the LORD God commanded the man, saying, "You may surely eat of every tree of the garden, ¹⁷ but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat² of it you shall surely die."

¹⁸ Then the LORD God said, "It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him a helper fit for³ him." ¹⁹ Now out of the ground the LORD God had formed⁴ every beast of the field and every bird of the heavens and brought them to the man to see what he would call them. And whatever the man called every living creature, that was its name. ²⁰ The man gave names to all livestock and to the birds of the heavens and to every beast of the field. But for Adam⁵ there was not found a helper fit for him. ²¹ So the LORD God caused a deep sleep to fall upon the man, and while he slept took one of his ribs and closed up its place with flesh. ²² And the rib that the LORD God had taken from the man he made⁶ into a woman and brought her to the man.

²³ Then the man said,

"This at last is bone of my bones
and flesh of my flesh;
she shall be called Woman,
because she was taken out of Man."⁷

²⁴ Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife, and they shall become one flesh. ²⁵ And the man and his wife were both naked and were not ashamed.

The Fall

3 Now the serpent was more crafty than any other beast of the field that the LORD God had made. He said to the woman, "Did God actually say,

'You⁸ shall not eat of any tree in the garden?'" ² And the woman said to the serpent, "We may eat of the fruit of the trees in the garden, ³ but God said, 'You shall not eat of the fruit of the tree that is in the midst of the garden, neither shall you touch it, lest you die.'" ⁴ But the serpent said to the woman, "You will not surely die. ⁵ For God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil."⁶ So when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was to be desired to make one wise,⁹ she took of its fruit and ate, and she also gave some to her husband who was with her, and he ate. ⁷ Then the eyes of both were opened, and they knew that they were naked. And they sewed fig leaves together and made themselves loincloths.

⁸ And they heard the sound of the LORD God walking in the garden in the cool¹⁰ of the day, and the man and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the LORD God among the trees of the garden. ⁹ But the LORD God called to the man and said to him, "Where are you?" ¹¹ And he said, "I heard the sound of you in the garden, and I was afraid, because I was naked, and I hid myself." ¹¹ He said, "Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten of the tree of which I commanded you not to eat?" ¹² The man said, "The woman whom you gave to be with me, she gave me fruit of the tree, and I ate." ¹³ Then the LORD God said to the woman, "What is this that you have done?" The woman said, "The serpent deceived me, and I ate."

¹⁴ The LORD God said to the serpent,

"Because you have done this,
cursed are you above all livestock
and above all beasts of the field;
on your belly you shall go,
and dust you shall eat
all the days of your life.

¹⁵ I will put enmity between you and the woman,
and between your offspring¹² and her off-
spring;
he shall bruise your head,
and you shall bruise his heel."

¹⁶ To the woman he said,

"I will surely multiply your pain in childbearing;
in pain you shall bring forth children.
Your desire shall be for¹³ your husband,
and he shall rule over you."

¹⁷ And to Adam he said,

"Because you have listened to the voice of your wife
and have eaten of the tree
of which I commanded you,
'You shall not eat of it,'

¹ Or a canopy; also verses 7, 8, 14, 15, 17, 20 ² Or fashioned; also verse 16 ³ Or Sky; also verses 9, 14, 15, 17, 20, 26, 28, 30; 2:1 ⁴ Or Land; also verses 11, 12, 22, 24, 25, 26, 28, 30; 2:1 ⁵ Or small plants; also verses 12, 29 ⁶ Or appointed times ⁷ Or flying things; see Leviticus 11:19–20 ⁸ The Hebrew word for man (adam) is the generic term for mankind and becomes the proper name Adam ⁹ Or open country ¹⁰ Or earth; also verse 6

¹⁰ Or spring ¹¹ Or when you eat ¹² Or corresponding to; also verse 20 ¹³ Or And out of the ground the LORD God formed ¹⁴ Or the man ¹⁵ Hebrew built ¹⁶ The Hebrew words for woman (ishshah) and man (ish) sound alike ¹⁷ In Hebrew, you is plural in verses 1–5 ¹⁸ Or to give insight ¹⁹ Hebrew wind ²⁰ In Hebrew you is singular in verses 9 and 11 ²¹ Hebrew seed; so throughout Genesis ²² Or against

cursed is the ground because of you;
in pain you shall eat of it all the days of
your life;
¹⁸ thorns and thistles it shall bring forth for you;
and you shall eat the plants of the field.
¹⁹ By the sweat of your face
you shall eat bread,
till you return to the ground,
for out of it you were taken;
for you are dust,
and to dust you shall return.”

²⁰ The man called his wife's name Eve, because she
was the mother of all living.¹ ²¹ And the LORD God
made for Adam and for his wife garments of skins
and clothed them.

²² Then the LORD God said, “Behold, the man has
become like one of us in knowing good and evil.
Now, lest he reach out his hand and take also of
the tree of life and eat, and live forever—” ²³ there-
fore the LORD God sent him out from the garden
of Eden to work the ground from which he was
taken. ²⁴ He drove out the man, and at the east of
the garden of Eden he placed the cherubim and a
flaming sword that turned every way to guard the
way to the tree of life.

Cain and Abel

⁴ Now Adam knew Eve his wife, and she conceived
and bore Cain, saying, “I have gotten² a man
with the help of the LORD.” ² And again, she bore his
brother Abel. Now Abel was a keeper of sheep, and
Cain a worker of the ground. ³ In the course of time
Cain brought to the LORD an offering of the fruit of
the ground, ⁴ and Abel also brought of the firstborn
of his flock and of their fat portions. And the LORD
had regard for Abel and his offering, ⁵ but for Cain
and his offering he had no regard. So Cain was very
angry, and his face fell. ⁶ The LORD said to Cain,
“Why are you angry, and why has your face fallen?
⁷ If you do well, will you not be accepted?³ And if you
do not do well, sin is crouching at the door. Its desire
is for⁴ you, but you must rule over it.”

⁸ Cain spoke to Abel his brother.⁵ And when they
were in the field, Cain rose up against his brother
Abel and killed him. ⁹ Then the LORD said to Cain,
“Where is Abel your brother?” He said, “I do not
know; am I my brother's keeper?” ¹⁰ And the LORD
said, “What have you done? The voice of your brother-
er's blood is crying to me from the ground. ¹¹ And
now you are cursed from the ground, which has
opened its mouth to receive your brother's blood
from your hand. ¹² When you work the ground, it
shall no longer yield to you its strength. You shall
be a fugitive and a wanderer on the earth.” ¹³ Cain
said to the LORD, “My punishment is greater than
I can bear.” ¹⁴ Behold, you have driven me today
away from the ground, and from your face I shall be
hidden. I shall be a fugitive and a wanderer on the
earth, and whoever finds me will kill me.” ¹⁵ Then
the LORD said to him, “Not so! If anyone kills Cain,

vengeance shall be taken on him sevenfold.” And the
LORD put a mark on Cain, lest any who found him
should attack him. ¹⁶ Then Cain went away from
the presence of the LORD and settled in the land of
Nod,⁷ east of Eden.

¹⁷ Cain knew his wife, and she conceived and bore
Enoch. When he built a city, he called the name of the
city after the name of his son, Enoch. ¹⁸ To Enoch was
born Irad, and Irad fathered Mehujael, and Mehujael
fathered Methushael, and Methushael fathered
Lamech. ¹⁹ And Lamech took two wives. The name
of the one was Adah, and the name of the other
Zillah. ²⁰ Adah bore Jabal; he was the father of those
who dwell in tents and have livestock. ²¹ His brother's
name was Jubal; he was the father of all those who
play the lyre and pipe. ²² Zillah also bore Tubal-cain;
he was the forger of all instruments of bronze and
iron. The sister of Tubal-cain was Naamah.

²³ Lamech said to his wives:

“Adah and Zillah, hear my voice;
you wives of Lamech, listen to what I say:
I have killed a man for wounding me,
a young man for striking me.

²⁴ If Cain's revenge is sevenfold,
then Lamech's is seventy-sevenfold.”

²⁵ And Adam knew his wife again, and she bore a
son and called his name Seth, for she said, “God has
appointed⁸ for me another offspring instead of Abel,
for Cain killed him.” ²⁶ To Seth also a son was born,
and he called his name Enosh. At that time people
began to call upon the name of the LORD.

Adam's Descendants to Noah

⁵ This is the book of the generations of Adam.
When God created man, he made him in the
likeness of God. ² Male and female he created them,
and he blessed them and named them Man⁹ when
they were created. ³ When Adam had lived 130 years,
he fathered a son in his own likeness, after his image,
and named him Seth. ⁴ The days of Adam after he
fathered Seth were 800 years; and he had other sons
and daughters. ⁵ Thus all the days that Adam lived
were 930 years, and he died.

⁶ When Seth had lived 105 years, he fathered
Enosh. ⁷ Seth lived after he fathered Enosh 807 years
and had other sons and daughters. ⁸ Thus all the days
of Seth were 912 years, and he died.

⁹ When Enosh had lived 90 years, he fathered
Kenan. ¹⁰ Enosh lived after he fathered Kenan 815
years and had other sons and daughters. ¹¹ Thus
all the days of Enosh were 905 years, and he died.

¹² When Kenan had lived 70 years, he fathered
Mahalalel. ¹³ Kenan lived after he fathered Mahalalel
840 years and had other sons and daughters. ¹⁴ Thus
all the days of Kenan were 910 years, and he died.

¹⁵ When Mahalalel had lived 65 years, he fathered
Jared. ¹⁶ Mahalalel lived after he fathered Jared 830
years and had other sons and daughters. ¹⁷ Thus all
the days of Mahalalel were 895 years, and he died.

¹⁸ When Jared had lived 162 years he fathered
Enoch. ¹⁹ Jared lived after he fathered Enoch 800
years and had other sons and daughters. ²⁰ Thus all
the days of Jared were 962 years, and he died.

²¹ When Enoch had lived 65 years, he fathered
Methuselah. ²² Enoch walked with God¹ after he
fathered Methuselah 300 years and had other sons
and daughters. ²³ Thus all the days of Enoch were
365 years. ²⁴ Enoch walked with God, and he was
not,² for God took him.

²⁵ When Methuselah had lived 187 years, he
fathered Lamech. ²⁶ Methuselah lived after he
fathered Lamech 782 years and had other sons and
daughters. ²⁷ Thus all the days of Methuselah were
969 years, and he died.

²⁸ When Lamech had lived 182 years, he fathered
a son ²⁹ and called his name Noah, saying, “Out of
the ground that the LORD has cursed, this one shall
bring us relief³ from our work and from the painful
toil of our hands.” ³⁰ Lamech lived after he fathered
Noah 595 years and had other sons and daughters.
³¹ Thus all the days of Lamech were 777 years, and
he died.

³² After Noah was 500 years old, Noah fathered
Shem, Ham, and Japheth.

Increasing Corruption on Earth

⁶ When man began to multiply on the face of the
land and daughters were born to them, ² the sons
of God saw that the daughters of man were attrac-
tive. And they took as their wives any they chose.
³ Then the LORD said, “My Spirit shall not abide in⁴
man forever, for he is flesh: his days shall be 120
years.” ⁴ The Nephilim⁵ were on the earth in those
days, and also afterward, when the sons of God came
in to the daughters of man and they bore children
to them. These were the mighty men who were of
old, the men of renown.

⁵ The LORD saw that the wickedness of man was
great in the earth, and that every intention of the
thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. ⁶ And
the LORD regretted that he had made man on the
earth, and it grieved him to his heart. ⁷ So the LORD
said, “I will blot out man whom I have created from
the face of the land, man and animals and creeping
things and birds of the heavens, for I am sorry that
I have made them.” ⁸ But Noah found favor in the
eyes of the LORD.

Noah and the Flood

⁹ These are the generations of Noah. Noah was a
righteous man, blameless in his generation. Noah
walked with God. ¹⁰ And Noah had three sons, Shem,
Ham, and Japheth.

¹¹ Now the earth was corrupt in God's sight, and
the earth was filled with violence. ¹² And God saw
the earth, and behold, it was corrupt, for all flesh
had corrupted their way on the earth. ¹³ And God
said to Noah, “I have determined to make an end of
all flesh,⁶ for the earth is filled with violence through
them. Behold, I will destroy them with the earth.

¹⁴ Make yourself an ark of gopher wood.⁷ Make
rooms in the ark, and cover it inside and out with
pitch. ¹⁵ This is how you are to make it: the length
of the ark 300 cubits,⁸ its breadth 50 cubits, and its
height 30 cubits. ¹⁶ Make a roof⁹ for the ark, and fin-
ish it to a cubit above, and set the door of the ark in
its side. Make it with lower, second, and third decks.
¹⁷ For behold, I will bring a flood of waters upon the
earth to destroy all flesh in which is the breath of life
under heaven. Everything that is on the earth shall
die. ¹⁸ But I will establish my covenant with you, and
you shall come into the ark, you, your sons, your
wife, and your sons' wives with you. ¹⁹ And of every
living thing of all flesh, you shall bring two of every
sort into the ark to keep them alive with you. They
shall be male and female. ²⁰ Of the birds according
to their kinds, and of the animals according to their
kinds, of every creeping thing of the ground, accord-
ing to its kind, two of every sort shall come in to you
to keep them alive. ²¹ Also take with you every sort
of food that is eaten, and store it up. It shall serve as
food for you and for them.” ²² Noah did this; he did
all that God commanded him.

⁷ Then the LORD said to Noah, “Go into the ark,
you and all your household, for I have seen that
you are righteous before me in this generation.
² Take with you seven pairs of all clean animals,¹⁰
the male and his mate, and a pair of the animals
that are not clean, the male and his mate, ³ and seven
pairs¹¹ of the birds of the heavens also, male and
female, to keep their offspring alive on the face of
all the earth. ⁴ For in seven days I will send rain on
the earth forty days and forty nights, and every living
thing¹² that I have made I will blot out from the
face of the ground.” ⁵ And Noah did all that the LORD
had commanded him.

⁶ Noah was six hundred years old when the flood
of waters came upon the earth. ⁷ And Noah and his
sons and his wife and his sons' wives with him went
into the ark to escape the waters of the flood. ⁸ Of
clean animals, and of animals that are not clean,
and of birds, and of everything that creeps on the
ground, ⁹ two and two, male and female, went into
the ark with Noah, as God had commanded Noah.
¹⁰ And after seven days the waters of the flood came
upon the earth.

¹¹ In the six hundredth year of Noah's life, in the
second month, on the seventeenth day of the month,
on that day all the fountains of the great deep burst
forth, and the windows of the heavens were opened.
¹² And rain fell upon the earth forty days and forty
nights. ¹³ On the very same day Noah and his sons,
Shem and Ham and Japheth, and Noah's wife and
the three wives of his sons with them entered the
ark, ¹⁴ they and every beast, according to its kind, and
all the livestock according to their kinds, and every
creeping thing that creeps on the earth, according to
its kind, and every bird, according to its kind, every
winged creature. ¹⁵ They went into the ark with
Noah, two and two of all flesh in which there was
the breath of life. ¹⁶ And those that entered, male and

¹ Eve sounds like the Hebrew for life-giver and resembles the word for living ² Cain sounds like the Hebrew for gotten ³ Hebrew will there not be a lifting up [of
your face]? ⁴ Or against ⁵ Hebrew: Samaritan, Septuagint, Syriac, Vulgate add Let us go out to the field ⁶ Or My guilt is too great to bear ⁷ Nod means wandering
⁸ Seth sounds like the Hebrew for he appointed ⁹ Hebrew adam

¹ Septuagint pleased God ² Septuagint was not found ³ Noah sounds like the Hebrew for rest ⁴ Or My Spirit shall not contend with ⁵ Or giants ⁶ Hebrew The end of
all flesh has come before me ⁷ An unknown kind of tree; transliterated from Hebrew ⁸ A cubit was about 18 inches or 45 centimeters ⁹ Or skylight ¹⁰ Or seven of
each kind of clean animal ¹¹ Or seven of each kind ¹² Hebrew all existence; also verse 23