

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 worshipping 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. ²The 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.

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

⁶And God said, “Let there be an expanse¹ in the midst of the waters, and let it separate the waters from the waters.” ⁷And 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. ⁸And God called the expanse Heaven.³ And there was evening and there was morning, the second day.

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

¹¹And 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. ¹²The 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. ¹³And there was evening and there was morning, the third day.

¹⁴And 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. ¹⁶And God made the two great lights—the greater light to rule the day and the lesser light to rule the night—and the stars. ¹⁷And God set them in the expanse of the heavens to give light on the earth, ¹⁸to rule over the day and over the night, and to separate the light from the darkness. And God saw that it was good. ¹⁹And there was evening and there was morning, the fourth day.

²⁰And God said, “Let the waters swarm with swarms of living creatures, and let birds⁷ fly above the earth across the expanse of the heavens.” ²¹So 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. ²²And 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.

²⁴And 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. ²⁵And 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.

²⁶Then 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.

²⁸And 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.” ²⁹And 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. ³⁰And 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. ³¹And 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. ²And 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. ³So 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.

⁵When 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, ⁶and 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. ⁸And the LORD God planted a garden in Eden, in the east, and there he put the man whom he had formed. ⁹And 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.

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

¹⁵The LORD God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to work it and keep it. ¹⁶And the LORD God commanded the man, saying, “You may surely eat of every tree of the garden, ¹⁷but 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.”

¹⁸Then the LORD God said, “It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him a helper fit for³ him.” ¹⁹Now 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. ²⁰The 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. ²¹So 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. ²²And the rib that the LORD God had taken from the man he made⁶ into a woman and brought her to the man. ²³Then 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

²⁴Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife, and they shall become one flesh. ²⁵And 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?’” ²And the woman said to the serpent, “We may eat of the fruit of the trees in the garden, ³but 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.’” ⁴But the serpent said to the woman, “You will not surely die. ⁵For God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil.” ⁶So 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. ⁷Then the eyes of both were opened, and they knew that they were naked. And they sewed fig leaves together and made themselves loincloths.

⁸And 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. ⁹But the LORD God called to the man and said to him, “Where are you?”¹¹ ¹⁰And he said, “I heard the sound of you in the garden, and I was afraid, because I was naked, and I hid myself.” ¹¹He said, “Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten of the tree of which I commanded you not to eat?” ¹²The man said, “The woman whom you gave to be with me, she gave me fruit of the tree, and I ate.” ¹³Then the LORD God said to the woman, “What is this that you have done?” The woman said, “The serpent deceived me, and I ate.”

¹⁴The 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 offspring; he shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise his heel.”

¹⁶To 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.”

¹⁷And 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,’

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

¹Or Spring ²Or when you eat ³Or corresponding to; also verse 20 ⁴Or And out of the ground the LORD God formed ⁵Or the man ⁶Hebrew built ⁷The Hebrew words for woman (ishshah) and man (ish) sound alike ⁸In Hebrew you is plural in verses 1–5 ⁹Or to give insight ¹⁰Hebrew wind ¹¹In Hebrew you is singular in verses 9 and 11 ¹²Hebrew seed; so throughout Genesis ¹³Or 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.”

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

²²Then 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 therefore the LORD God sent him out from the garden of Eden to work the ground from which he was taken. ²⁴He 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.”

⁸Cain 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'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.⁶ ¹⁴Behold, 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.

¹⁷Cain 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.

²³Lamech 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.”

²⁵And 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 Man³ 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.

⁶When 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.

⁹When 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.

¹²When 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.

¹⁵When 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.

¹⁸When 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.

²¹When 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.

²⁵When 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.

²⁸When Lamech had lived 182 years, he fathered a son²⁹ 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.

³²After 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 attractive. 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.

⁵The 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

⁹These 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.

¹¹Now 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.

¹⁴Make 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 finish 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, according 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.

⁶Noah 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.

¹¹In 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

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

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