

## Lesson 3

# GENESIS

---

The Hebrew title for *Genesis* is “In the beginning” (*Bereshith* in the Hebrew Bible) because in the Hebrew Bible, books are named for their first words. When the Hebrew Old Testament was translated into Greek in about 250 BC, the translators changed the name to “Genesis,” which actually means “origins” or “beginnings.”

### A BOOK OF BEGINNINGS

“Genesis” is an appropriate title because that’s what it’s all about—  
\_\_\_\_\_ [a]. It tells us the beginning of everything except  
\_\_\_\_\_ [b].

- The beginning of the universe (Gen 1:1-25)
- The beginning of man and woman (Gen 1:26-2)
- The beginning of sin, death, and suffering (Gen 3:1-7)
- The beginning of marriage, sex, family life (Gen 2:24-25; 4:1-5)
- The beginning of civilization (Gen 4:16-9:29)
- The beginning of diverse languages and nations (Gen 10-11)
- The beginning of the Jewish nation as a specially chosen people through whom the Messiah will come into the world (Gen 12-50)

### WHO WROTE IT?

Genesis is one of the five books which form a unit in the Jewish Scriptures (Old Testament) known as the *Pentateuch* (from two Greek words: *penta* means “five” and *teuchos* means “scroll”) or the *Torah* (which means “instruction”) or “The Law of Moses.”

Traditionally Jews and Christians have believed that \_\_\_\_\_ [c] wrote these five books. Even though the Pentateuch doesn’t explicitly say that Moses wrote it, there’s plenty of evidence to support the belief that Moses is the author.

- \_\_\_\_\_ [d] believed Moses wrote it (Luke 5:14; 24:44; John 5:46; 7:19)
- The \_\_\_\_\_ [e] believed Moses wrote it (Luke 24:27)
- The \_\_\_\_\_ [f] assumes Moses wrote it (Neh 8:1; Psa 103:7; Mal 4:4)

It's obvious in Genesis, however, that when Moses tells us how the universe began, he's not sharing an eyewitness testimony. The only person who was there at creation was God himself. Clearly, then, God gave the information about creation to Moses by direct revelation. God, then, is the ultimate \_\_\_\_\_[g] of Genesis (as well as the rest of the Bible too, 2 Tim 3:16-17).

## A BOOK OF MYTHS OR REAL HISTORY?

Some people suggest that Genesis is a book of \_\_\_\_\_[h] rather than a book of real \_\_\_\_\_[i]. So, which is it? The answer: *It's a book of real history*. How do we know it's real history? Because \_\_\_\_\_[j] believed it was real history. He frequently references the characters of Genesis as real people and the events as real history:

- He endorsed Genesis 1 and 2 as historical (Matt 19:4-5)
- He refers to Abel (Matt 23:35)
- He refers to Noah (Matt 24:37-39)
- He refers to Abraham (John 8:56, 58)
- He refers to Sodom and Gomorrah (Matt 10:14-15; 11:23)
- He refers to Isaac and Jacob (Matt 22:32)

If Jesus believed the book of Genesis is real history, and if we follow Jesus, then we must believe what He believed.

## GENESIS: KEY TO THE BIBLE

Genesis is not just the first book of the Bible, it's the \_\_\_\_\_[k] book for the whole Bible. This book is the \_\_\_\_\_[l] that unlocks the rest of the Bible.

We learn that there is one God who is the creator of the universe, and we learn about his nature. We learn about our nature as human beings and our relationship to God and the world. We learn why the world is messed up and see God set in motion his plan to fix it. And we learn about the significance of the nation of Israel in God's plan to fix the world (if the Bible started with Exodus, we'd be left wondering why we should be interested in a bunch of Jewish slaves in Egypt).

## GENESIS OUTLINED IN EIGHT WORDS

Genesis can be easily remembered with eight words. These eight words include four \_\_\_\_\_[m] and four \_\_\_\_\_[n]. The four events come first and are recorded in Genesis 1-11. The stories of the four people are recorded in Genesis 12-50.

1. \_\_\_\_\_ [o] (Gen 1 and 2)

The Bible begins with God the Creator who creates the world out of nothing in six days. On the first three days he forms the universe (day and night, atmosphere and sea, and land), and on the next three days he fills the universe (heavenly bodies, air and sea creatures, land creatures and man). As he creates, he reveals the sort of God that he is:

- God is \_\_\_\_\_ [p]. God is not an “it,” but rather a “he.” God has feelings, thoughts, and motives. He wants to have a relationship with human beings which he created in his image.
- God is \_\_\_\_\_ [q]. His power is unlimited. He spoke everything into existence out of nothing with a simple “Let there be . . .”
- God is \_\_\_\_\_ [r]. God is already there when the Bible opens. He has always been there, and will always be there. Nothing precedes him.
- God is \_\_\_\_\_ [s]. All of His work is “good.” His masterpiece of creation is human beings, and he wants to bless them.
- God is \_\_\_\_\_ [t]. He created everything that exists. He is separate from the material universe. Since everything precedes from him, he has no rivals.

In Genesis 2 \_\_\_\_\_ [u]—male and female—is given the prominent role. Human beings alone are made in God’s image. That means we are like God in a unique way, and it means he intended to have a relationship with us. In that relationship, God has all authority. He wants to shower his people with blessings, but he demands that his people must obey him.

2. \_\_\_\_\_ [v] (Gen 3-5)

The perfection of God’s creation, and the perfection of God’s relationship with humanity, is damaged when Adam and Eve disobey God. When the first couple gave into temptation and took a bite of the forbidden fruit, evil and sin entered the world. No longer was everything “good.” This is referred to as “the Fall” of man.

God responds to Adam and Eve’s sin with judgment. This reveals another side of God’s nature and character—he \_\_\_\_\_ [w] sin and must deal with it. If he really is a good God, he can’t just ignore “badness.” He must punish sin and rebellion. So, Adam and Eve are driven from the Garden of Eden and must live outside the original blessing God intended for them.

3. \_\_\_\_\_ [x] (Gen 6-9)

After sin entered the universe, the human race degenerated into violence, wickedness, and a complete disregard for God. There is only one righteous family left on the earth (Noah and his family). In his displeasure with the wickedness of humanity, God determines to wipe out the human race with a worldwide flood with the exception of Noah's family. God instructs Noah to build an ark, and Noah responds with obedience and his family of eight are spared. The flood is a powerful testimony that sin is a serious, relentless problem.

We might have expected a fresh start for humanity after the flood, but it was not to be. Sin returned with a vengeance. The point God is making is that sin is so deeply rooted in the universe, that even destroying the world with a flood can't eradicate it. THERE HAS TO BE ANOTHER \_\_\_\_\_ [y] TO THE PROBLEM OF SIN.

4. \_\_\_\_\_ [z] (Gen 10-11)

The next incident that shows how bad the problem of sin had become is the Tower of Babel. God's plan was for his people to fill the earth, but people had no interest in obeying God. They were full of themselves and were determined to do whatever they wanted. They wanted to make a name for themselves, so they began to build a massive tower as a monument to their greatness.

Once more God responds to his people's rebellion. At this point in history, there was a single language spoken. But, to stop the prideful disobedience of humanity, God confused their language so they couldn't understand each other. From then on humanity split, scattered throughout the earth, and spoke different languages.

5. \_\_\_\_\_ [aa] (Gen 12-25)

So, God's problem is: "What to do with these human beings in his image who do not want to know him, love him, or obey him?"

The situation looks pretty hopeless after Genesis 1-11, but God was not about to give up. He loved people and was determined to rescue them from the sin that separated him from them.

The solution to the sin problem started with the founding of the nation of \_\_\_\_\_ [bb], and the founding of Israel started with \_\_\_\_\_ [cc] (he was called Abram when the Bible first introduces him). God calls Abraham to leave his home country and travel to a new land (Canaan, the Promised Land).

God then promised to bestow a series of blessings on Abraham, Those blessings were:

- Abraham would have many descendants (he was a childless old man when God made that promise) who would form a great nation.
- Abraham's descendants would possess the land of Canaan.
- Through Abraham's family "all the families of the earth will be blessed" (Gen 12:1-3). This promise, of course, would be fulfilled in Abraham's greatest descendant, \_\_\_\_\_[dd].

6. \_\_\_\_\_[ee] (Gen 24-28)

Abraham grew older and older and still did not have a child with his wife Sarah. He begins to despair, but God kept his promise and Isaac is born in their old age. We know less about Isaac than we do about his father (Abraham) or his son (Jacob).

7. \_\_\_\_\_[ff] (Gen 28-36)

Isaac has two sons, Jacob and Esau. Although Isaac favors his firstborn son, Esau. Jacob, however, schemes to secure the privileges of birthright from his father. Esau is furious at being swindled out of his birthright, and Jacob is forced to flee for his life.

After many adventures, including a mysterious late night wrestling match with God, Jacob finally matures into the man God intends him to be. God changed his name to \_\_\_\_\_[gg], which means "he who struggles with God," and Jacob's twelve sons become the 12 tribes of Israel.

8. \_\_\_\_\_[hh] (Gen 37-50)

Genesis closes with the account of Joseph, the favored son of Jacob. Joseph is sold into slavery in Egypt by his jealous brothers. But God has plans for Joseph and establishes him as a leader in Egypt. Joseph's position in Egypt makes it possible for Joseph's family to later settle there with him and survive a devastating famine. Genesis closes with the Israelites \_\_\_\_\_[ii] in Egypt.

### THE LESSONS OF GENESIS

- God created all things, including human beings which he created in his image. The human race is the crown of his creation.
- God loves us and wants to share his love with us, and he wants to bless us with all good things.

- When the first couple disobeyed God, sin entered the world and ruined everything. Now the world is full of pain, suffering, evil, and death.
- God hates sin and evil and must pour out his judgment on it.
- God loves us so much that he set in motion a plan to save us from the judgment that our sins deserve.
- God's plan to save the human race begins with the founding of the nation of Israel through a man named Abraham.

**FILL IN THE BLANK ANSWER KEY:**

[a] beginnings	[r] eternal
[b] God	[s] good
[c] Moses	[t] sovereign
[d] Jesus	[u] humanity
[e] apostles	[v] FALL
[f] Old Testament	[w] hates
[g] author	[x] FLOOD
[h] myths	[y] SOLUTION
[i] history	[z] BABEL
[j] Jesus	[aa] ABRAHAM
[k] foundational	[bb] Israel
[l] key	[cc] Abraham
[m] events	[dd] Jesus
[n] people	[ee] ISAAC
[o] CREATION	[ff] JACOB
[p] personal	[gg] Israel
[q] powerful	[hh] JOSEPH
	[ii] prospering