

# GENESIS

## THE BIG PICTURE

### A. GOD SETS THE STAGE

(1:1–11:32)

#### 1. Formation of the Universe

(1:1–2:25)

- a. God creates matter, energy, and the natural order (1:1–2:3)
- b. God prepares pristine surroundings for the first family (2:4–25)

#### 2. Fall of the Human Race

(3:1–24)

- a. Commission of sin (3:1–8)
- b. Curse on sin (3:9–24)

#### 3. Failure of Society (4:1–9:29)

- a. Failure of humankind (4:1–6:22)
- b. Flood of judgment (7:1–9:29)

#### 4. Folly of Rebellion

(10:1–11:32)

- a. Dispersal of the people (10:1–32)
- b. Disobedience of the people (11:1–32)

### B. GOD CHOOSES THE PLAYERS

(12:1–50:26)

1. Abraham (12:1–25:18)
2. Isaac (25:19–27:46)
3. Jacob (28:1–36:43)
4. Joseph (37:1–50:26)

The book of Genesis is a book of beginnings. It records how the world began and how God created it to be good. It tells us about the first people and how God made them to be excellent. But then it tells us about the beginning of sin—about the first time people decided to reject the program God had laid out for them. It records the first days of shame and of covering up. It records the beginning of our separation from God, each other, and the world God gave us.

We will see how people with perfect health, living in a perfect environment, rebelled against God. And we will see the consequences of their rebellion. We are given intimate glimpses of individuals dominated by hatred, drunkenness, lust, unhealthy family relationships, greed, cheating, irresponsibility, dishonesty, jealousy, violence, and other problems.

But the book of Genesis doesn't leave us in despair. It tells us of yet another beginning. It records how God chose a man named Abraham to father a special nation. And through this nation would come the solution for our separation from God, each other, and the world God gave us. Genesis begins the story of how God began his work of healing broken humanity—a healing to be expressed in the laws he would give his people and culminating in the coming of Jesus, the promised Messiah.

The book of Genesis reminds us of where all our problems began. It spells out the fatal consequences of rejecting God's program. But it also begins the age-long story of God's amazing love for the human race. Through this book we will discover that the only pathway to spiritual wholeness is in following God's program.

## THE BOTTOM LINE

**PURPOSE:** To tell us about the beginning of things, including human opportunities and difficulties, and to demonstrate that God's solutions are the only ones that work. **AUTHOR:** Moses. **AUDIENCE:** The people of Israel. **DATE WRITTEN:** Chapters 1–11 deal with the undatable past; the events of chapters 12–50 are to be dated between about 2000 and 1800 B.C. The book was probably written shortly after 1445 B.C. **SETTING:** Mesopotamia, then Canaan, finally Egypt. **KEY VERSE:** "And he believed in the LORD; and he counted it to him for righteousness" (15:6). **KEY EVENTS:** Creation, the Fall, the Flood, the Tower of Babel. **KEY PEOPLE:** Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph.

## RECOVERY THEMES

**A Good Creation:** Everything about God’s creation was described as being good except the fact that Adam was alone. In fact, Adam’s isolation is the only thing in the first two chapters of Genesis that God considered to be a problem. When God created a partner for man, then God was pleased with everything in his creation. Because God was pleased with what he created, he stayed involved, even after Adam and Eve disobeyed him. In fact, ever since the Fall God has been seeking to make things right again. Our sinfulness always leads us away from God and distorts the way God created us to be. But recovery always involves growth toward God’s original ideal for the human race. As we progress in recovery, we take part in God’s re-creation of our fallen world.

**A Ruined World:** Adam’s and Eve’s disobedience affected all of God’s creation. The idyllic world of the garden was gone forever, and life became a struggle. Our futile attempts to avoid the realities of a ruined world have led us into all kinds of destructive behaviors. Recovery begins when we squarely face the broken realities of our world—its daily struggles and hardships. Once we have done this, we have started down the road of recovery. We have entered the spiritual arena where battles are fought to regain what has been lost.

**Promises of Healing:** The book of Genesis presents us with a series of “new beginnings” that come out of the ruin of our sinfulness. In the original Fall, God promised hope and healing for us when he told the serpent that the offspring of the woman would crush his head. When people generally continued to disobey, God sent the Flood as judgment for their sinfulness. After the Flood, God again promised victory and confirmed that promise with a rainbow. Then the people rejected God again, building a great tower as a memorial of their pride. In response, God confused their languages, further fragmenting society. Then God chose a man named Abram and promised to bless all nations of the world through his offspring. Each time that human sin brought ruin, God promised victory and recovery in the face of it.

**Hope for Reconciliation:** As people began to experience the terrible consequences of their disobedience, God didn’t leave them to figure out a plan for recovery all alone; nor did he leave a long list of principles or rules to follow that would repair their damaged relationships. Instead, God always worked with people on a very personal level in the recovery process. As we enter into the recovery process, we find it to be relational in nature. It requires us to seek reconciliation with people close to us, and this includes God. In Genesis, God modeled this pattern for us time and again. He chose certain individuals and worked patiently in their lives, reconciling them with himself and the people around them.

## CHAPTER 1

### The Account of Creation

In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth. <sup>2</sup>And the earth was without form, and void; and darkness *was* upon the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters.

<sup>3</sup>And God said, Let there be light: and there was light. <sup>4</sup>And God saw the light, that *it was* good: and God divided the light from the darkness. <sup>5</sup>And God called the light Day, and

1:6 *firmament*: space.

the darkness he called Night. And the evening and the morning were the first day.

<sup>6</sup>And God said, Let there be a firmament in the midst of the waters, and let it divide the waters from the waters. <sup>7</sup>And God made the firmament, and divided the waters which *were* under the firmament from the waters which *were* above the firmament: and it was so. <sup>8</sup>And God called the firmament Heaven. And the evening and the morning were the second day.

<sup>9</sup>And God said, Let the waters under the

**1:4** God was pleased with his creation. He declared that it was good. God stopped now and then to approve of what he had designed and created (1:4-5, 9-10, 11-12, 18, 21-22, 25, 31). Many of our problems and dependencies result from the misuse of God’s good creation. Recovery sometimes involves discovering the good things that we have misused and learning how to enjoy them in the way God intended.

**1:24** The phrase “and it was so” (also in 1:9-12, 14-15) shows us that God’s creative activity was done in complete conformity to the specifications he had originally intended. God accomplishes his will with certainty and precision. It should reassure us to know that God’s good desires for us can be accomplished with the same certainty.

heaven be gathered together unto one place, and let the dry *land* appear: and it was so. <sup>10</sup>And God called the dry *land* Earth; and the gathering together of the waters called he Seas: and God saw that *it was good*. <sup>11</sup>And God said, Let the earth bring forth grass, the herb yielding seed, *and* the fruit tree yielding fruit after his kind, whose seed *is* in itself, upon the earth: and it was so. <sup>12</sup>And the earth brought forth grass, *and* herb yielding seed after his kind, and the tree yielding fruit, whose seed *was* in itself, after his kind: and God saw that *it was good*. <sup>13</sup>And the evening and the morning were the third day.

<sup>14</sup>And God said, Let there be lights in the firmament of the heaven to divide the day from the night; and let them be for signs, and for seasons, and for days, and years: <sup>15</sup>and let them be for lights in the firmament of the heaven to give light upon the earth: and it was so. <sup>16</sup>And God made two great lights; the greater light to rule the day, and the lesser light to rule the night: *he made* the stars also. <sup>17</sup>And God set them in the firmament of the heaven to give light upon the earth, <sup>18</sup>and to rule over the day and over the night, and to divide the light from the darkness: and God saw that *it was good*. <sup>19</sup>And the evening and the morning were the fourth day.

<sup>20</sup>And God said, Let the waters bring forth abundantly the moving creature that hath life, and fowl *that* may fly above the earth in the open firmament of heaven. <sup>21</sup>And God created great whales, and every living creature that moveth, which the waters brought forth abundantly, after their kind, and every winged fowl after his kind: and God saw that *it was good*. <sup>22</sup>And God blessed them, saying, Be fruitful, and multiply, and fill the waters in the seas, and let fowl multiply in the earth. <sup>23</sup>And the evening and the morning were the fifth day.

<sup>24</sup>And God said, Let the earth bring forth the living creature after his kind, cattle, and creeping thing, and beast of the earth after his kind: and it was so. <sup>25</sup>And God made the beast of the earth after his kind, and cattle after their kind, and every thing that creepeth upon the earth after his kind: and God saw that *it was good*.

<sup>26</sup>And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth. <sup>27</sup>So God created man in his *own* image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them. <sup>28</sup>And God blessed them, and God said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and

► **The Recovery Principle devotional reading plan begins here.**

## SELF- PERCEPTION

### READ GENESIS 1:26-31

If we have lived in bondage to our compulsive behaviors for a while, we probably see more bad than good inside us. Many of us tend to see life in terms of all or nothing. As a result, we probably think we are all bad. But in recovery, we need a balanced understanding of ourself. We need to see that along with our bad points we have also been gifted with strengths. It's not an either/or proposition. A balanced view of ourself will help us better understand our shortcomings while also giving us greater hope in our potential.

At the end of the fifth day of creation God had made everything except the first people. The Bible tells us that when he looked at what he had made so far, "God saw that *it was good*." Then God created the first man and woman. "So God created man in his *own* image, . . . male and female created he them. And God blessed them, and God said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it: and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth. . . . And God saw every thing that he had made, and, behold, *it was very good*." (Genesis 1:25, 27-31).

God distinguished between the human race and the rest of creation. He made us in his very image, with capacities far beyond those of mere animals. God was (and is) excited about us! He gave us abilities and responsibilities to reflect his own nature in all of creation. When he created us, he was proud of what he had made!

Although we have a sinful nature that came as a result of the Fall, we also must remember that we were created in the likeness of God. There are excellence and dignity inherent in being human that should cause us to ponder our potential for good as well as for bad. **Turn to page 31, Genesis 22.**

replenish the earth, and subdue it: and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth.

<sup>29</sup>And God said, Behold, I have given you every herb bearing seed, which *is* upon the face of all the earth, and every tree, in the which *is* the fruit of a tree yielding seed; to you it shall be for meat. <sup>30</sup>And to every beast of the earth, and to every fowl of the air, and to every thing that creepeth upon the earth, wherein *there is* life, *I have given* every green herb for meat: and it was so. <sup>31</sup>And God saw every thing that he had made, and, behold, *it was* very good. And the evening and the morning were the sixth day.

## CHAPTER 2

Thus the heavens and the earth were finished, and all the host of them. <sup>2</sup>And on the seventh day God ended his work which he had made; and he rested on the seventh day from all his work which he had made. <sup>3</sup>And God blessed the seventh day, and sanctified it: because that in it he had rested from all his work which God created and made.

### The Man and Woman in Eden

<sup>4</sup>These *are* the generations of the heavens and of the earth when they were created, in the day that the LORD God made the earth and the heavens, <sup>5</sup>and every plant of the field before it was in the earth, and every herb of the field before it grew: for the LORD God had not caused it to rain upon the earth, and *there was* not a man to till the ground. <sup>6</sup>But there went up a mist from the earth, and watered the whole face of the ground. <sup>7</sup>And the LORD God formed man *of* the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul.

1:29 *meat*: food. 2:18 *help meet*: suitable helper.

<sup>8</sup>And the LORD God planted a garden eastward in Eden; and there he put the man whom he had formed. <sup>9</sup>And out of the ground made the LORD God to grow every tree that is pleasant to the sight, and good for food; the tree of life also in the midst of the garden, and the tree of knowledge of good and evil.

<sup>10</sup>And a river went out of Eden to water the garden; and from thence it was parted, and became into four heads. <sup>11</sup>The name of the first *is* Pison: that *is* it which compasseth the whole land of Havilah, where *there is* gold; <sup>12</sup>and the gold of that land *is* good: there *is* bdellium and the onyx stone. <sup>13</sup>And the name of the second river *is* Gihon: the same *is* it that compasseth the whole land of Ethiopia. <sup>14</sup>And the name of the third river *is* Hiddekel: that *is* it which goeth toward the east of Assyria. And the fourth river *is* Euphrates.

<sup>15</sup>And the LORD God took the man, and put him into the garden of Eden to dress it and to keep it. <sup>16</sup>And the LORD God commanded the man, saying, Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat: <sup>17</sup>but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die.

<sup>18</sup>And the LORD God said, *It is* not good that the man should be alone; I will make him an help meet for him. <sup>19</sup>And out of the ground the LORD God formed every beast of the field, and every fowl of the air; and brought *them* unto Adam to see what he would call them: and whatsoever Adam called every living creature, that *was* the name thereof. <sup>20</sup>And Adam gave names to all cattle, and to the fowl of the air, and to every beast of the field; but for Adam there was not found an help meet for him.

<sup>21</sup>And the LORD God caused a deep sleep to fall upon Adam, and he slept: and he took one of his ribs, and closed up the flesh instead

**2:2-3** This is the first mention of sabbath rest—one day of rest in seven. By his example God encourages us to designate a portion of our life to rest and spiritual rejuvenation. Without proper rest, it is very difficult to deal with the other matters in our life, especially our progress in recovery.

**2:8-14** God provided a perfect environment for the first people. We often blame our outward circumstances for our difficulties. It is important to note here that in spite of their ideal surroundings, our first parents fell—they failed. Although the environments we live in can certainly add to our problems, they are never entirely at fault. We need to take responsibility for our own mistakes and failures.

**3:1-5** The account here pictures for us the process of temptation. The serpent offered something that had been forbidden by God as a very attractive option. The serpent also caused Eve to doubt God and the truth of his word. During the debate, Eve offered some halfhearted opposition, but her growing doubt in God weakened her resolve. In the end she gave in. Satan strengthened his temptation by weakening Eve's faith in God. Staying close to God and maintaining our faith in him will weaken the power of temptation in our life.



# ADAM & EVE

It was an ideal situation: a man and his wife living harmoniously together in a lush, beautiful garden that God had created for their pleasure. They each enjoyed a perfect relationship with God and with each other. But when Adam and Eve gave in to temptation, they overstepped their God-given boundaries and plunged the human race into sin. Harmony was broken. Shame and guilt penetrated their lives and created an invisible barrier between them and God. The consequences of their disobedience and lack of self-control are with us to this day.

Adam and Eve knew that they had gone against God's plan—a plan that was created with their best interests in mind. And the consequences of their sin followed immediately. Right away they became afraid of the God who loved them so much, and they hid from his presence. They also became ashamed of their nakedness and set out to cover themselves. The relationship between Adam and Eve began to show cracks and strains. Accusations were made. Blame was shifted. Neither of them wanted to be held accountable. Both of them refused to admit that they were wrong. Needless to say, their relationship was damaged. Their sin had separated them from each other and from God.

But the story doesn't end there. Adam and Eve stayed together in spite of the shame and guilt they felt. Their lives were marred by sin and scarred by wounds inflicted on one another. However, they faced the reality that life had to go on and began to build a new life together. And by love, commitment, and the grace of God, they persevered through life's trials.

The story of Adam and Eve is found in the opening chapters of Genesis. Adam and/or Eve are also mentioned in 1 Chronicles 1:1; Romans 5:12-19; 1 Corinthians 15:22, 45-49; 2 Corinthians 11:3; and 1 Timothy 2:13-15.

## STRENGTHS AND ACCOMPLISHMENTS:

- They were the parents of the entire human race.
- They were committed to each other through the trials they faced.
- Their story provides us with the first illustration of God's grace.

## WEAKNESSES AND MISTAKES:

- They were disobedient to the plan that God had revealed to them.
- They were not willing to take responsibility for their sin.
- They made excuses rather than admit the truth.
- Their actions brought sin into the world.

## LESSONS FROM THEIR LIVES:

- A good marriage requires love and commitment even through tough times.
- Relationships that accept God's grace and forgiveness persevere through life's difficulties.
- Complacency is a breeding ground for temptation—be on guard against Satan's schemes.
- The mistakes of parents are often passed on to their descendants.

## KEY VERSES:

"And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth. So God created man in his *own* image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them" (Genesis 1:26-27).

thereof; <sup>22</sup>and the rib, which the LORD God had taken from man, made he a woman, and brought her unto the man. <sup>23</sup>And Adam said, This *is* now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh: she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man. <sup>24</sup>Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh. <sup>25</sup>And they were both naked, the man and his wife, and were not ashamed.

## CHAPTER 3 Adam and Eve Sin

Now the serpent was more subtil than any beast of the field which the LORD God had **2:24** *cleave*: be joined. **3:1** *subtil*: cunning.

made. And he said unto the woman, Yea, hath God said, Ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden?

<sup>2</sup>And the woman said unto the serpent, We may eat of the fruit of the trees of the garden: <sup>3</sup>but of the fruit of the tree which *is* in the midst of the garden, God hath said, Ye shall not eat of it, neither shall ye touch it, lest ye die.

<sup>4</sup>And the serpent said unto the woman, Ye shall not surely die: <sup>5</sup>for God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil. <sup>6</sup>And when the woman saw that the tree *was* good for food, and that it *was*