

OLD TESTAMENT

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GENESIS

Have you ever turned on a TV in the middle of a show? You probably turned it off because you couldn't figure out what was going on. To fully understand the plot, you needed to see the beginning of the show.

That applies to the Bible, too. Genesis is the right place to begin if you want to know the plot. Why? Because Genesis means "beginnings." In Genesis you see the creation of the universe, the first sin, the beginning of God's plan to rescue his people from sin, and how the nation of Israel began.

Genesis is the first place we learn about God's character. God didn't have a beginning. He has always existed. Chapters 1 and 2 show his creativity and power, while chapter 3 reveals his holiness and judgment of sin. Through the story of Adam and Eve and their descendants, we see God's incredible love for his people even when they constantly disobey him.

As you read Genesis, what other beginnings do you see? How do those beginnings change how you view God?

WHO Adam, Eve, Cain, Abel, Noah, Abraham, Sarah, Lot, Isaac, Rebekah, Jacob, Esau, Joseph, and many others.

WHERE Genesis begins with the story of Adam and Eve. Their story takes place in the Garden of Eden. Other stories in Genesis take place in the parts of the world that today are called Iraq, Israel, and Egypt.

WHEN Moses probably wrote this book between 1450 and 1410 BC while leading God's people to the Promised Land of Israel.

WHY To tell about God's creation of the world and to show that God wants people to worship and obey him.

THEN GOD LOOKED
OVER ALL HE HAD
MADE, AND HE
SAW THAT IT WAS
VERY GOOD!

GENESIS 1:31

KEY POINTS

BEGINNINGS Genesis introduces God as Creator of all that exists, from planets to plants to people. All people were created in God's own image.

DISOBEDIENCE Sin results when people choose their own way instead of obeying God. Adam and Eve learned this the hard way. Only God can reverse the consequences of sinful choices.

PROMISES God promised to protect and provide for his people. He made specific promises known as *covenants*, which are binding agreements. God made a covenant with his people as a guarantee of what they could expect from him.

OBEDIENCE AND PROSPERITY Obedience to God keeps our relationship with him intact and causes us to prosper like Abraham. Prosperity doesn't necessarily mean wealth or other material possessions. Rather, true prosperity means living life as God created it to be lived—in his presence.

THE ACCOUNT OF CREATION

In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.* ²The earth was formless and empty, and darkness covered the deep waters. And the Spirit of God was hovering over the surface of the waters.

³Then God said, “Let there be light,” and there was light. ⁴And God saw that the light was good. Then he separated the light from the darkness. ⁵God called the light “day” and the darkness “night.”

And evening passed and morning came, marking the first day.

⁶Then God said, “Let there be a space between the waters, to separate the waters of the heavens from the waters of the earth.” ⁷And that is what happened. God made this space to separate the waters of the earth from the waters of the heavens. ⁸God called the space “sky.”

And evening passed and morning came, marking the second day.

⁹Then God said, “Let the waters beneath the sky flow together into one place, so dry ground may appear.” And that is what happened. ¹⁰God called the dry ground “land” and the waters “seas.” And God saw that it was good. ¹¹Then God said, “Let the land sprout with vegetation—every sort of seed-bearing plant, and trees that grow seed-bearing fruit. These seeds will then produce the kinds of plants

and trees from which they came.” And that is what happened. ¹²The land produced vegetation—all sorts of seed-bearing plants, and trees with seed-bearing fruit. Their seeds produced plants and trees of the same kind. And God saw that it was good.

¹³And evening passed and morning came, marking the third day.

¹⁴Then God said, “Let lights appear in the sky to separate the day from the night. Let them be signs to mark the seasons, days, and years. ¹⁵Let these lights in the sky shine down on the earth.” And that is what happened.

¹⁶God made two great lights—the larger one to govern the day, and the smaller one to govern the night. He also made the stars. ¹⁷God set these lights in the sky to light the earth, ¹⁸to govern the day and night, and to separate the light from the darkness. And God saw that it was good.

¹⁹And evening passed and morning came, marking the fourth day.

²⁰Then God said, “Let the waters swarm with fish and other life. Let the skies be filled with birds of every kind.”

²¹So God created great sea creatures and every living thing that scurries and swarms in the water, and every sort of bird—each producing offspring of the same kind. And God saw that it was good. ²²Then God blessed them, saying, “Be fruitful and multiply. Let the fish fill the seas, and let the birds multiply on the earth.”

²³And evening passed and morning came, marking the fifth day.

²⁴Then God said, “Let the earth produce every sort of animal, each producing offspring of the same kind—livestock, small animals that scurry along the ground, and wild animals.” And that is what happened. ²⁵God made all sorts of wild animals, livestock, and small animals, each able to produce offspring of the same kind. And God saw that it was good.


1:1 Or In the beginning when God created the heavens and the earth, . . . Or When God began to create the heavens and the earth, . . .

TRUE WORTH

(1:1-27) God created everything there is—the heavens, earth, plants, and animals. When God finished creating everything else, he then chose to make people in his image. This doesn't mean that God made us exactly like himself. It means that we are reflections of God's glory. We can reflect his characteristics, like love, patience, forgiveness, kindness, and faithfulness.

Our worth is not defined by possessions, achievements, physical attractiveness, or popularity. Instead, it is based on knowing that God created us in his likeness. Putting ourselves down is finding fault with what God has made. Because we are like God, we can feel good about ourselves and our abilities. Knowing that you are a person of infinite worth gives you the freedom to love God, know him personally, and make a valuable contribution to the lives of those around you.

²⁶Then God said, “Let us make human beings* in our image, to be like us. They will reign over the fish in the sea, the birds in the sky, the livestock, all the wild animals on the earth,* and the small animals that scurry along the ground.”

 ²⁷ So God created human beings* in his own image.
 In the image of God he created them;
 male and female he created them.

²⁸Then God blessed them and said, “Be fruitful and multiply. Fill the earth and govern it. Reign over the fish in the sea, the birds in the sky, and all the animals that scurry along the ground.”

²⁹Then God said, “Look! I have given you every seed-bearing plant throughout the earth and all the fruit trees for your food. ³⁰And I have given every green plant as food for all the wild animals, the birds in the sky, and the small animals that scurry along the ground—everything that has life.” And that is what happened.

³¹Then God looked over all he had made, and he saw that it was very good!

And evening passed and morning came, marking the sixth day.

2 So the creation of the heavens and the earth and everything in them was completed. ²On the seventh day God had finished his work of creation, so he rested* from all his work. ³And God blessed the seventh day and declared it holy, because it was the day when he rested from all his work of creation.

⁴This is the account of the creation of the heavens and the earth.

THE MAN AND WOMAN IN EDEN

When the LORD God made the earth and the heavens, ⁵neither wild plants nor grains were growing on the earth. For the

1:26a Or *man*; Hebrew reads *adam*. **1:26b** As in Syriac version; Hebrew reads *all the earth*. **1:27** Or *the man*; Hebrew reads *ha-adam*. **2:2** Or *ceased*; also in 2:3. **2:6** Or *mist*.



LORD God had not yet sent rain to water the earth, and there were no people to cultivate the soil. ⁶Instead, springs* came up from the ground and watered all the land. ⁷Then the LORD God formed the man from the dust of the ground. He breathed the breath of life into the man's nostrils, and the man became a living person.

⁸Then the LORD God planted a garden in Eden in the east, and there he placed the man he had made. ⁹The LORD God made all sorts of trees grow up from the ground—trees that were beautiful and that produced delicious fruit. In the middle of the garden he placed the tree of life and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.

DAYS OF CREATION

DAY 1: Light (so there was light and darkness)

DAY 2: Sky and water

DAY 3: Seas and land

DAY 4: Sun, moon, and stars

DAY 5: Fish and birds


DAY 6: Animals, man and woman

DAY 7: God rested and was pleased

¹⁰A river flowed from the land of Eden, watering the garden and then dividing into four branches. ¹¹The first branch, called the Pishon, flowed around the

entire land of Havilah, where gold is found. ¹²The gold of that land is exceptionally pure; aromatic resin and onyx stone are also found there. ¹³The second branch, called the Gihon, flowed around the entire land of Cush. ¹⁴The third branch, called the Tigris, flowed east of the land of Asshur. The fourth branch is called the Euphrates.

¹⁵The LORD God placed the man in the Garden of Eden to tend and watch over it. ¹⁶But the LORD God warned him, “You may freely eat the fruit of every tree in the garden—¹⁷except the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. If you eat its fruit, you are sure to die.”

 ¹⁸Then the LORD God said, “It is not good for the man to be alone. I will make a helper who is just right for him.” ¹⁹So the LORD God formed from the ground all the wild animals and all the birds of the sky. He brought them to the man* to see what he would call them, and the man chose a name for each one. ²⁰He gave names to all the livestock, all the birds of the sky, and all the wild animals. But still there was no helper just right for him.

²¹So the LORD God caused the man to fall into a deep sleep. While the man slept, the LORD God took out one of the man’s ribs* and closed up the opening. ²²Then the LORD God made a woman from the rib, and he brought her to the man.

²³“At last!” the man exclaimed.

“This one is bone from my bone,
and flesh from my flesh!
She will be called ‘woman,’
because she was taken from
‘man.’”

²⁴This explains why a man leaves his father and mother and is joined to his wife, and the two are united into one.

²⁵Now the man and his wife were both naked, but they felt no shame.

THE MAN AND WOMAN SIN

3 The serpent was the shrewdest of all the wild animals the LORD God had made. One day he asked the woman, “Did God really say you must not eat the fruit from any of the trees in the garden?”

²“Of course we may eat fruit from the trees in the garden,” the woman replied.

³“It’s only the fruit from the tree in the middle of the garden that we are not allowed to eat. God said, ‘You must not eat it or even touch it; if you do, you will die.’”

⁴“You won’t die!” the serpent replied to the woman. ⁵“God knows that your eyes will be opened as soon as you eat it, and you will be like God, knowing both good and evil.”

⁶The woman was convinced. She saw that the tree was beautiful and its fruit looked delicious, and she wanted the wisdom it would give her. So she took some of the fruit and ate it. Then she gave some to her husband, who was with her, and he ate it, too. ⁷At that moment their eyes were opened, and they suddenly felt shame at their nakedness. So they sewed fig leaves together to cover themselves.

⁸When the cool evening breezes were blowing, the man* and his wife heard the LORD God walking about in the garden. So they hid from the LORD God among the trees. ⁹Then the LORD God called to the man, “Where are you?”

¹⁰He replied, “I heard you walking in the garden, so I hid. I was afraid because I was naked.”

¹¹“Who told you that you were naked?” the LORD God asked. “Have you eaten from the tree whose fruit I commanded you not to eat?”

¹²The man replied, “It was the woman you gave me who gave me the fruit, and I ate it.”

¹³Then the LORD God asked the woman, “What have you done?”

“The serpent deceived me,” she replied. “That’s why I ate it.”

¹⁴Then the LORD God said to the serpent,

“Because you have done this, you are cursed
more than all animals, domestic
and wild.

You will crawl on your belly,
groveling in the dust as long as
you live.

¹⁵ And I will cause hostility between you and the woman,

2:19 Or Adam, and so throughout the chapter. 2:21 Or took a part of the man’s side. 3:8 Or Adam, and so throughout the chapter.



THE SLEEPOVER

Maddy had invited her friends for a sleepover in the downstairs family room of her house. After Maddy’s parents went to bed, Shelly said, “Hey, they’re showing reruns of this really funny TV show soon. We should watch that.” “I don’t know,” Maddy said, “I’m not allowed to watch that show.” Shelly didn’t give up. “Come on. Just one episode?” *I guess it can’t hurt to see the show just once,* Maddy thought. She didn’t want to disappoint her friends. And her parents would never know.

WHAT WOULD YOU DO? CHECK OUT GENESIS 3:1-7.

Satan tempted Eve and succeeded in getting her to sin. How could Eve have resisted temptation? By following the same guidelines we can follow: (1) Pray for strength to resist, (2) say no to things we know are wrong, and (3) run—sometimes literally! James 1:12 says that God blesses those who don’t give in when tempted.

and between your offspring and her offspring.
He will strike* your head,
and you will strike
his heel.”

3:15 Or bruise; also in 3:15b. **3:16** Or *And though you will have desire for your husband, / he will rule over you.* **3:20** Eve sounds like a Hebrew term that means “to give life.” **3:22** Or *the man*; Hebrew reads *ha-Adam*. **4:1a** Or *the man*; also in 4:25. **4:1b** Or *I have acquired.* Cain sounds like a Hebrew term that can mean “produce” or “acquire.”

16 Then he said to the woman,
“I will sharpen the pain of your pregnancy,
and in pain you will give birth.
And you will desire to control your husband,
but he will rule over you.*”

17 And to the man he said,
“Since you listened to your wife and ate from the tree whose fruit I commanded you not to eat,
the ground is cursed because of you.
All your life you will struggle to scratch a living from it.

18 It will grow thorns and thistles for you,
though you will eat of its grains.

19 By the sweat of your brow will you have food to eat until you return to the ground from which you were made.
For you were made from dust,
and to dust you will return.”

PARADISE LOST: GOD’S JUDGMENT

20 Then the man—Adam—named his wife Eve, because she would be the mother of all who live.* **21** And the LORD God made clothing from animal skins for Adam and his wife.

22 Then the LORD God said, “Look, the human beings* have become like us, knowing both good and evil. What if they reach out, take fruit from the tree of life, and eat it? Then they will live forever!”

23 So the LORD God banished them from the Garden of Eden, and he sent Adam out to cultivate the ground from which he had been made. **24** After sending them out, the LORD God stationed mighty cherubim to the east of the Garden of Eden. And he placed a flaming sword that flashed back and forth to guard the way to the tree of life.

CAIN AND ABEL

4 Now Adam* had sexual relations with his wife, Eve, and she became pregnant. When she gave birth to Cain, she said, “With the LORD’s help, I have produced* a man!” **2** Later she gave birth to his brother and named him Abel.

When they grew up, Abel became

a shepherd, while Cain cultivated the ground. ³When it was time for the harvest, Cain presented some of his crops as a gift to the LORD. ⁴Abel also brought a gift—the best portions of the firstborn lambs from his flock. The LORD accepted Abel and his gift, ⁵but he did not accept Cain and his gift. This made Cain very angry, and he looked dejected.

⁶“Why are you so angry?” the LORD asked Cain. “Why do you look so dejected? ⁷You will be accepted if you do what is right. But if you refuse to do what is right, then watch out! Sin is crouching at the door, eager to control you. But you must subdue it and be its master.”

⁸One day Cain suggested to his brother, “Let’s go out into the fields.”* And while they were in the field, Cain attacked his brother, Abel, and killed him.

⁹Afterward the LORD asked Cain, “Where is your brother? Where is Abel?”

“I don’t know,” Cain responded. “Am I my brother’s guardian?”

¹⁰But the LORD said, “What have you done? Listen! Your brother’s blood cries out to me from the ground! ¹¹Now you are cursed and banished from the ground, which has swallowed your brother’s blood. ¹²No longer will the ground yield good crops for you, no matter how hard you work! From now on you will be a homeless wanderer on the earth.”

¹³Cain replied to the LORD, “My punishment* is too great for me to bear! ¹⁴You have banished me from the land and from your presence; you have made me a homeless wanderer. Anyone who finds me will kill me!”

¹⁵The LORD replied, “No, for I will give a sevenfold punishment to anyone who kills you.” Then the LORD put a mark on Cain to warn anyone who might try to kill him.

¹⁶So Cain left the LORD’s presence and settled in the land of Nod,* east of Eden.

THE DESCENDANTS OF CAIN

¹⁷Cain had sexual relations with his wife, and she became pregnant and gave birth to Enoch. Then Cain founded a city, which he named Enoch, after his son. ¹⁸Enoch had a son named Irad. Irad became the father of* Mehujael. Mehujael became the father of Methushael. Methushael became the father of Lamech.

¹⁹Lamech married two women. The first was named Adah, and the second was Zillah. ²⁰Adah gave birth to Jabal, who was the first of those who raise livestock and live in tents. ²¹His brother’s name was Jubal, the first of all who play the harp and flute. ²²Lamech’s other wife, Zillah, gave birth to a son named Tubal-cain. He became an expert in forging tools of bronze and iron. Tubal-cain had a sister named Naamah. ²³One day Lamech said to his wives,

“Adah and Zillah, hear my voice;
listen to me, you wives of Lamech.
I have killed a man who attacked me,
a young man who wounded me.

²⁴ If someone who kills Cain is
punished seven times,
then the one who kills me will be
punished seventy-seven times!”

THE BIRTH OF SETH

²⁵Adam had sexual relations with his wife again, and she gave birth to another son. She named him Seth,* for she said, “God has granted me another son in place of Abel, whom Cain killed.”

4:8 As in Samaritan Pentateuch, Greek and Syriac versions, and Latin Vulgate; Masoretic Text lacks “Let’s go out into the fields.” 4:13 Or My sin. 4:16 Nod means “wandering.” 4:18 Or the ancestor of, and so throughout the verse. 4:25 Seth probably means “granted”; the name may also mean “appointed.”

IS IT OK IF I MOPE AROUND?

Does God really care if you have a bad attitude? Take a look at Genesis 4:6-7. Cain was a walking bad attitude. He didn’t care what others thought, and he certainly didn’t try to correct his attitude problem. But look at God’s warning. A bad attitude is the first step toward bigger, uglier problems. Does your attitude need adjusting?

