



The Old Testament

Genesis

“In the beginning God . . .” (1:1).

Who wrote Genesis?

Even though Genesis is anonymous, Moses is believed to have recorded the events in this book and the rest of the Pentateuch, the first five books of the Old Testament. Elsewhere in the Old Testament, the Pentateuch is referenced as “the book of the Law of Moses” (Jos 8:31; 2Kg 14:6; cp. Neh 13:1). The New Testament also notes Moses as the author (Mt 19:8; Lk 24:27; Jn 5:45-47; Ac 3:22; Rm 10:5; Rv 5:3). Jesus did not specifically say that Moses wrote Genesis, but in the Lord’s day the Jews regarded the Pentateuch (Hb *Torah*, “law”) as a whole unit. Jesus affirmed this truth (Mt 19:8; Mk 7:10; Lk 16:16-18; Jn 7:19).

Who were the recipients?

The book was written initially to the nation of Israel, especially the new generation who would be taking possession of the promised land.

When was Genesis written?

The events recorded in Genesis stretch historically from creation to the death of Joseph, a period of at least 2,500 years. Although the date of writing cannot be fixed with certainty, the date of Genesis must be within Moses’s lifetime (ca 1525–1405 BC), with the time of the wilderness wandering just before the people entered the land of promise under Joshua as the most likely date for writing. Accepting the date of the exodus as ca 1445 BC, then suggests ca 1400 BC as a reasonable date.

Where did it happen?

Beginning with the creation of the universe, the setting moves through history to the settling of the nation of Israel in the small but fertile Nile Delta region of Egypt.

What is Genesis about?

- **God as Creator.** The first glimpse of God in the Bible displays His power as Creator of the heavens and the earth and of mankind—male and female.
- **God as Redeemer.** When sin enters the world, God’s nature demands punishment of sin because of His personal holiness.

Why should women read Genesis?

The purpose of the book of Genesis is to reveal the history and basic principles of God’s relationship with His people. Particularly important for women are the opening chapters in which the creation order is presented as the basis for biblical womanhood. The account of God’s creation of the woman upholds her worth and reveals the divine design of her assignment as her husband’s “helper” (2:18). Genesis provides the historical basis for the rest of the Pentateuch and of the entire Bible. Throughout the book of Genesis, you can see God’s plan for the redemption of His people as He enters into covenant with them. Israel, as God’s chosen people from whom the Messiah (“the offspring” of the woman, 3:14-15) would come, was the conduit for God’s redemptive work. Throughout Genesis, God is the covenant-making and covenant-keeping God.

How do you read Genesis?

The book of Genesis should be read as the definitive source of truth upon which the other 65 books of the canon are based. God presents Himself as *the* Creator of all who fashioned man and woman in His own image and commissioned them to rule over His creation. Genesis bears witness to the goodness of the created order and reveals why the world we inhabit is full of brokenness rather than perfection. The book also directs the reader’s attention toward the future where the fulfillment of God’s promises and prophecies is sure. Genesis is also the first book in the Pentateuch, the five books containing the Torah or God’s law—God’s instruction to His people for establishing the nation of Israel.

Genesis is a carefully structured book. This historical narrative has an initial section on the creation itself. Thereafter the book is divided by a recurring phrase (Hb *toledot*, “these are the family records”), marking changes in God’s people as His covenant promises are faithfully passed from one generation to the next. One might say that Genesis is “the story behind” the God who drew the Israelites to Himself as His covenant people. The book also includes poetry, such as the passage where Adam introduces Eve (2:23) and the description of Jacob’s blessing (49:2-27).

Timeline	2166–1991 BC	2156–2029 BC	2085 BC	2066–1886 BC
■ World Events	Life of Abraham	Life of Sarah	Destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah	Life of Isaac
■ Biblical Events				

Outline

- I. The Creation (1:1–2:25)
- II. The Fall (3:1–24)
- III. The Family Records of Adam (4:1–6:7)
- IV. The Family Records of Noah (6:8–11:32)
- V. The Family Records of Abraham (12:1–25:18)
 - A. God's Covenant with Abraham (12:1–13:4)
 - B. God's Faithfulness in Renewing His Covenant (13:5–17:27)
 - C. Abraham's Obedience in Responding to the Covenant (18:1–25:18)
- VI. The Family Records of Isaac (25:19–35:29)
 - A. The Birth of Two Sons (25:19–34)
 - B. God's Covenant with Isaac (26:1–35)
 - C. God's Choice of Jacob (27:1–35:29)
- VII. The Family Records of Esau (36:1–43)
- VIII. The Family Records of Jacob and the Saving of Israel (37:1–50:26)
 - A. The Sowing of Conflict (37:1–11)
 - B. The Slavery of Joseph (37:12–36)
 - C. The Faithfulness of God to Joseph During His Rise to Power (38:1–41:57)
 - D. The Reunion of Joseph and His Brothers (42:1–45:15)
 - E. The Journey of Jacob to Egypt (45:16–48:22)
 - F. The Blessing of Jacob's Descendants (49:1–28)
 - G. The Death of Jacob and Then of Joseph (49:29–50:26)

The Creation (1:1–2:25)

The Heavens and the Earth (1:1–19)

1 In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.^A

²Now the earth was formless and empty, darkness covered the surface of the watery depths, and the Spirit of God was hovering over the surface of the waters. ³Then God said, "Let there be light," and there was light. ⁴God saw that the light was good, and God separated the light from

^A 1:1 Or *created the universe* ^B 1:8 Or *"heavens."*

the darkness.⁵ God called the light "day," and the darkness he called "night." There was an evening, and there was a morning: one day.

⁶Then God said, "Let there be an expanse between the waters, separating water from water."⁷ So God made the expanse and separated the water under the expanse from the water above the expanse. And it was so. ⁸God called the expanse "sky."^B Evening came and then morning: the second day.

⁹Then God said, "Let the water under the sky

Title In the Hebrew Bible every book of the Pentateuch originally received its title from its first word or phrase. The Hebrew title is *Berē'shit* ("In the beginning"). "Genesis" is a transliteration of the title in the Septuagint (the Greek translation of the OT), meaning "origins" (Gk *geneseōs*). "Family records" or "records" (Hb *toledot*, "generations") is the key term associated with the structure of Genesis (2:4; 5:1; 6:9; 10:1; 11:10,27; 25:12,19; 36:1,9; 37:2).

1:1 In the beginning signifies the beginning of existence, of the universe,

as these relate to mankind. It does not refer to the creation of the angelic or spiritual world, which is outside the scope of the physical universe.

1:2 God created the earth **formless and empty** that He might give it form and fill it. He covered it with water that He might produce from it what would be altered by His hand. There is no thought that it had "become" this way or was naturally so, nor were forces of chaos with which God had to contend at work. His creative handiwork was as He had determined it to be.



WORD STUDY

1:1 The Hebrew word translated **God** (Hb *ʾelohim*) is the plural form of *ʾEl* (or strictly *ʾeloh*, which in the Bible is used only in poetry), the Hebrew and Canaanite word for a divine or supernatural being. It can also be used of the supernatural, such as angels or other-world beings (e.g., 1Sm 28:13) or of the "gods" of other nations (used with a plural verb). The plural found here with a singular verb, however, is intensive. In Hebrew this phenomenon is a plural of majesty, suggesting the greatness of God, who is complex and wonderful beyond description. Although the author probably did not think in terms of a trinity (as shown by the plural word's use with a singular verb), a believer, with the help of the NT, may see this conclusion as implied by the plural form.

1:1 **Created** (Hb *baraʾ*) is only used of divine workmanship, always indicating the production of something new. The word is used three times in this account—the initial creation of matter (1:1), the creation of animal life (1:21), and the creation of man "in the image of God" (1:27)—each seen as a unique beginning.

1:6 The word **expanse** (Hb *raqiyaʿ*, "firmament") indicated "something trodden on and stamped out." In its verbal form, the word suggests "making thin like a piece of metal beaten into shape" as in the work of a craftsman and thus "spreading out, expanding." The implication is that the "expanse" is the handiwork of a craftsman (i.e., specifically designed and crafted by God, thus with an inherent permanence and perfection as worthy of Him).

2026 BC

Isaac's marriage to Rebekah

2006–1859 BC

Life of Jacob

1915–1805 BC

Life of Joseph

1876 BC

Settlement of Jacob's Family in Egypt

DAYS OF CREATION GENESIS 1:1–2:3	
Day One (1:2-5)	Light (day and night)
Day Two (1:6-8)	Expanse (sky)
Day Three (1:9-13)	Dry land (earth), seas, and vegetation
Day Four (1:14-19)	Sun, moon, and stars
Day Five (1:20-23)	Living creatures (every kind of sea-creature and every kind of bird)
Day Six (1:24-31)	Living creatures on the land as well as the man and the woman
Day Seven (2:1-3)	God’s rest

be gathered into one place, and let the dry land appear.” And it was so. ¹⁰God called the dry land “earth,” and the gathering of the water he called “seas.” And God saw that it was good. ¹¹Then God said, “Let the earth produce vegetation: seed-bearing plants and fruit trees on the earth bearing fruit with seed in it according to their kinds.” And it was so. ¹²The earth produced vegetation: seed-bearing plants according to their kinds and trees bearing fruit with seed in it according to their kinds. And God saw that it was good. ¹³Evening came and then morning: the third day. ¹⁴Then God said, “Let there be lights in the ex-

^A 1:14 Or for the appointed times

1:11-12 Light and shape and differentiation—the building blocks of life—are being put in place. God provided the sustenance that animals and man would require. Notice the stress on the diversity of the **vegetation** He produced: **seed-bearing plants and fruit trees on the earth bearing fruit with seed in it**. By creating plants with seeds, God ensured that these plants would reproduce and provide sustenance for generations to come.

1:14-19 From the fourth day, periods of **light** and **darkness** were determined by the action of sun and moon. These **lights** now marked the length of **days and years**. Henceforth the heavenly **lights** would rule ideas of time and seasons. Days and months and years resulted from their activity. They were the signs of God’s continued provision. Later the rainbow became God’s sign of their permanence for man (8:22; 9:12-17). Significantly, “naming” occurred in the first three days, and in days five and six the results of God’s creative activity were blessed as living and reproductive; but the “lights” were neither named nor blessed. God did not give them names indicating their background nature. Unlike plants and animals, the lights of heaven were not living and were not under man’s dominion. All thought of their being divine or of any importance other than as created objects is deliberately excluded. This truth will be important as Israel encounters nations who worship these celestial bodies.



HARD QUESTION

*Racism, abortion, euthanasia—
what does the Bible say?*

The importance of the concept of men and women as bearers of God’s **image** speaks to the dignity and worth of each human being (1:26-27). No one person can be considered more like the Creator than another. In addition, every life, whether in the beginning stages or at the end of days, shares the same value before God. This fact should encourage Christians with two important truths:

- You should seek to protect life at every stage. The assault on human life—whether abortion or euthanasia—is an assault on the concept of mankind as bearers of God’s image because abortion and euthanasia employ a logic that life in the embryonic stage or in the final stage is not as valuable. This lie is from the pit of hell.
- You should never hold to racist beliefs. All humans—not just a certain race—are created in God’s image. Each person equally bears the image of God.



pans of the sky to separate the day from the night. They will serve as signs for seasons ^A and for days and years. ¹⁵They will be lights in the expanse of the sky to provide light on the earth.” And it was so. ¹⁶God made the two great lights—the greater light to rule over the day and the lesser light to rule over the night—as well as the stars. ¹⁷God placed them in the expanse of the sky to provide light on the earth, ¹⁸to rule the day and

1:20-23 God created two categories of **living creatures** (Hb *nephesh chayyah*) on the fifth day. The word *nephesh*, meaning “throat” (i.e., the source for breath) evolves to mean “the life within” and thus “living things.” The whole phrase, therefore, is more literally “living things that have life.” God spoke into being **the large sea-creatures** (Hb *tannin*, “sea monsters, vast fish”) and **every living creature that swarms** [Hb *sharats*, “teem, multiply, abound”; cp. 9:7; Ex 1:7; Ezk 47:9] **in the water and birds** to populate **the sky**. The writer was aware of huge creatures in the sea. To many they must have seemed terrifying, but he knew that they were creatures of God. Many ancient myths spoke of semi-divine sea monsters, which caused distress and chaos (and the psalmists used the ideas pictorially to demonstrate God’s control over creation, e.g., Pss 74:13; 148:7), but their role here had nothing to do with chaos or conflict. They were made by God, and, therefore, they are under His control and will.

1:24-25 On the sixth day of creation again **God** planned a diversity of **creatures according to their kinds**. Diversity in creation is not blind chance but results from the purpose of God. Note that His plan included animals that would later be domesticated as well as the “wild” animals. Man’s good is clearly in mind as God filled **the earth** with animal life—from **the livestock to creatures that crawl**, including the tiny scavengers that clean up the world. All have their place in God’s creation.



WORD STUDY

1:10 He called the dry land “**earth**” (Hb *’erets*), a word originally referring to the whole earth, including the waters (1:1-2). It can mean “the earth” as opposed to “the heavens” (1:1; 2:1,4), “land” as opposed to sea (1:10), or a particular area of “land” (2:12-13).

DOCTRINE

The Image of God

The fact that men and women are created in the **image** (Hb *tselem*) and **likeness** (Hb *demut*) of God affirms that human beings represent God in a way unlike any other part of His creation (1:26-27). In what ways are humans like God? Four key areas of commonality help answer this question and illustrate exactly how men and women can be set apart from every other part of creation: moral, spiritual, mental, and relational. They share a moral aspect with God because they have an innate sense of right and wrong and a sense of accountability; in the spiritual commonality between man and God, there is an immaterial part of man that will survive after death. Man's ability to use abstract reasoning and logic and to have both an awareness of and the capacity to plan for the future illustrates a mental acumen that sets him apart from the rest of creation. Finally, interpersonal relationships between men and women, such as family systems and marriage, display a relational aspect of God beyond what any other part of God's creation can display.

the night, and to separate light from darkness. And God saw that it was good. ¹⁹Evening came and then morning: the fourth day.

The Living Creatures (1:20-25)

²⁰Then God said, "Let the water swarm with ^A living creatures, and let birds fly above the earth across the expanse of the sky." ²¹So God created the large sea-creatures ^B and every living creature that moves and swarms in the water, according to their kinds. He also created every winged creature according to its kind. And God saw that it was good. ²²God blessed them: "Be fruitful, multiply, and fill the waters of the seas, and let the birds multiply on the earth." ²³Evening came and then morning: the fifth day.

²⁴Then God said, "Let the earth produce living creatures according to their kinds: livestock, creatures that crawl, and the wildlife of the earth according to their kinds." And it was so. ²⁵So God made the wildlife of the earth according to their kinds, the livestock according to their kinds, and all the creatures that crawl on the ground according to their kinds. And God saw that it was good.

Mankind—Male and Female (1:26–2:25)

²⁶Then God said, "Let us make man ^C in ^D our image, according to our likeness. They will rule the fish of the sea, the birds of the sky, the livestock, the whole earth, ^E and the creatures that crawl ^F on the earth."

²⁷ So God created man in his own image;

^A 1:20 Lit with swarms of ^B 1:21 Or created sea monsters ^C 1:26 Or human beings; Hb 'adam, also in v. 27 ^D 1:26 Or as ^E 1:26 Syr reads sky, and over every animal of the land ^F 1:26 Or scurry ^G 1:27 Or man as his own image; he created him as ^H 1:28 Or and all scurrying animals ^I 1:30 I have given added for clarity ^J 2:2 Sam, LXX, Syr read sixth

2:1-3 The description of the final day is solely in the writer's words. God Himself does not act or speak. The writer describes **the seventh day** as the culmination of the work of creation, as the day on which **God had completed His work**. Then He **rested**. Previously when God is said to

DOCTRINE

Creation of Mankind

Four different Hebrew verbs are used for God's creative activity in Genesis 1–2:

- **Created** (Hb *bara**, "made from nothing," 1:1) is used only of divine activity. In the context of Gn 1:1, this word means "made from nothing" (cp. Lat *ex nihilo*, "out of nothing"). Regarding man, whom God made "from the dust of the ground," *bara*⁷ means "created" in the sense of "fashioned, shaped, or produced" (1:27; 5:1-2; 6:7).
- **Made** (Hb *'asah*; 1:7,16,25-26; 2:18) is a common word meaning to "produce, create, render" from pre-existing materials.
- **Formed** (Hb *yatsar*, "fashioned," 2:7-8, 19—only these three times in Gn; cp. Pss 95:5; 139:16; Is 29:16; 43:1,7,21; 44:21,24) is used of the potter or craftsman shaping his material according to his purpose (cp. 1Ch 4:23; Is 44:9-12; 45:9; 46:11; 64:8). The writer uses this word to depict God's creative work as skillful.
- Another verb translated **made** (Hb *banah*, "build with careful planning"; cp. Gn 11:4-5) appears for the first time in Scripture in 2:22 to convey God's active "building" of the woman.

The description of man's creation is twofold. In one sense, **man** (Hb *'adam*) is of the earth, **formed . . . out of the dust from the ground** (Hb *'adamah*) as were the animals (2:7,19). The Hebrew play on words in the name "Adam" is a reminder of his earthly source. On the other hand, his life was inbreathed by the breath of God, bringing him in touch with heaven. The fact that God **breathed the breath of life into his [Adam's] nostrils** (v. 7), which He did not do with the animals, demonstrated that this new life was intended to be seen as something unique, a "something other," which makes him distinctive from the rest of creation. He is not just an animal; he possesses something that comes directly from God, confirming the uniqueness of being in the image of God (1:26).

he created him in ^G the image of God;
he created them male and female.

²⁸God blessed them, and God said to them, "Be fruitful, multiply, fill the earth, and subdue it. Rule the fish of the sea, the birds of the sky, and every creature that crawls ^H on the earth." ²⁹God also said, "Look, I have given you every seed-bearing plant on the surface of the entire earth and every tree whose fruit contains seed. This will be food for you, ³⁰for all the wildlife of the earth, for every bird of the sky, and for every creature that crawls on the earth — everything having the breath of life in it — I have given ^I every green plant for food." And it was so. ³¹God saw all that he had made, and it was very good indeed. Evening came and then morning: the sixth day.

2 So the heavens and the earth and everything in them were completed. ²On the seventh^J

have bestowed blessing. His words followed to explain the blessing, but there are no words of explanation here. The writer affirms the day as **blessed** and set apart by God because the day marked the completion of His **work**.

day God had completed his work that he had done, and he rested^A on the seventh day from all his work that he had done.³ God blessed the seventh day and declared it holy, for on it he rested from all his work of creation.^B

⁴These are the records of the heavens and the earth, concerning their creation. At the time^C that the LORD God made the earth and the heavens, ⁵no shrub of the field had yet grown on the land,^D and no plant of the field had yet sprouted, for the

^A2:2 Or ceased, also in v. 3 ^B2:3 Lit work that God created to make ^C2:4 Lit creation on the day ^D2:5 Or earth

2:4 This verse is not the start of a record of another creation; rather, the creation account is reiterated and expanded as the emphasis moves from the overall summary of God's creative activity to a focus on the creation of the man and the woman. These verses are concerned with God's

specific provision for His creation. Man is central to the account. God's provision for him included fruitful trees in a chosen place, abundant water, animals to provide a kind of companionship, and, finally, the one who was to be this man's suitable companion.

Biblical WOMANHOOD

The Judgment on the Woman

There are three popular views on how the judgment on the woman would affect her relationship to the man:

- The popular view among evangelical feminists is that the submission of a woman to a man comes as a direct consequence of the fall and thus is a punishment for sin and completely undesirable and even evil.
- Another view among evangelicals suggests that the husband's role of leadership and the wife's submission to her husband, which is part of the original plan in creation, are not a curse but a blessing intended to console the woman in her role as a mother.
- The third view, which is slightly nuanced from the second view and is most strongly supported in the Christian tradition and also heavily supported among scholars, suggests that the judgment brought upon the woman is a form of submission tainted by domination. Sin corrupted the headship of a husband over his wife and turned what God designed as a blessing into a burden. The woman then seeks to contend with her husband for the leadership in their relationship.

However, others hold that the "desire" of Genesis 3:16 is not the desire of the woman to control and dominate her husband, which would have been a curse on the man; rather this comment is an explanation of the relationships as they will exist after the fall. The woman's desire to dominate or rule over the man is just the essence, character, and result of all sin against God. The woman would still possess the strong desire to be with the man. The contention that sin has corrupted both the willing submission of the wife and the loving headship of the husband is true; but it is a natural consequence of sin, not a result of God's judgment.

The judgments may be summarized:

- The serpent would "move" on his "belly" (v. 14).

- Satan would receive a death blow by the "offspring" of the woman (v. 15).
- The man would have difficulty in getting "the ground" to yield fruit, i.e., his work (vv. 17-19).
- The woman would experience pain in childbearing, and God's plan for servant headship of the husband and gracious submission of the wife would be marred by the selfishness of both.

In other words, when the woman and the man chose to disobey God and thus forfeit living in the perfect place God had prepared for them, they did not thwart or destroy God's creation order and the perfect plan as set forth in Gn 2. Rather, their sin of disobedience would make the future more difficult. Work for the man was always part of God's plan (1:26-30; 2:15; Ex 20:9), but in a sinful world it would be done with difficulty (Gn 3:17-19). The continuing of generations through bearing children was also God's plan for the woman (1:28; 2:24; 3:20); but because of sin, conceiving and bearing a child would be accompanied by pain (3:16). The nature of the curse has no essential relationship to the nature of the sin committed, which at its root is disobedience, but rather the disobedience and its consequences distort and make more difficult God's plan.

God did not curse the man or the woman as He cursed the snake and the ground, but He did declare that they would experience painful consequences. From that point forward, as a constant reminder of what he had done, the man would have to toil in pain for his food, contending with "thorns and thistles." Then, the ground, which had been "cursed," would receive him. He would "return to" the dust. Thus the curse fully embraces him in the end. But the cursing of "the ground," and not the man, was God's indication that in mercy He delays punishment. The man will die, but not yet.

Matthew

“From then on Jesus began to preach, ‘Repent, because the kingdom of heaven has come near’” (4:17).

Who wrote Matthew?

The apostle Matthew, also called Levi (Mk 2:14-15; Lk 5:27-29), who left his career as a tax collector to follow Jesus the Messiah (Mt 9:9-13)

Who were the recipients?

Matthew wrote primarily for Jewish Christians but also for Gentiles and Jews who did not yet know or believe in Jesus. The primary destination is generally understood to be Antioch in Syria.

When was Matthew written?

Sometime in the 60s of the first century AD, before the fall of the temple (AD 70)

Where did it happen?

In Israel, except for the months when Jesus, as an infant, was in Egypt (1:13-15)

What is Matthew about?

Matthew portrays Jesus as the long-awaited Messiah-King, the Son of David, whose kingdom God had promised would last forever.

Why should women read Matthew?

The Gospel of Matthew introduces women to the God of history who spotlights rather than sidesteps the importance of women in His orchestration of the history of Israel as the people through whom the Messiah-King would be given (1:1,3,5,6,17-

23). This account of the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus the Messiah is the story of “God is with us” (1:23), of the divine King who came into the world through a young virgin’s womb (1:18-25) and entrusted women with the first news report of His resurrection (28:1-10). Matthew especially underscores the way the story of Jesus fulfills Scripture (e.g., 1:22-23; 2:5-6,15,17-18,23; esp. 5:17), proving that all God’s promises are true and therefore making especially precious the resurrected Lord’s promise to those who follow Him: “I am with you always, to the end of the age” (28:20).

How do you read Matthew?

The Gospel of Matthew presents Jesus as the Jewish Messiah, the Anointed One who came to fulfill the Old Testament Law and the Prophets (5:17). Preferably, read through the entire book at least once to gain a sense of the overall portrait of Christ being presented, paying attention to the kind of king Jesus presents Himself to be. Take note not only of what He says and does but also of how people respond to Him and what they say about Him. Also note the many Old Testament references and quotations, and spend some time reading these verses in their original contexts. Consider recording or in some way marking all the uses of the word “fulfill” in this Gospel. Always as you read, listen for the Spirit’s application of Jesus’s teachings (this Gospel contains five sermons or discourses) and observe Jesus’s life. Matthew especially highlights the impossibly high standards of righteousness that are met only in Christ, who bestows His righteousness on those who follow Him (cp. 6:33; Rm 3:20-25).

WORD STUDY

1:1-17 Matthew begins telling the good news by providing the **account of the genealogy** (Gk *biblos geneaseōs*, “book of [one’s] generation or source,” v. 1)—the lineage or ancestry—of the Messiah. Matthew aimed to show that **Jesus** (Gk transliteration of Hb *Yehoshua*—i.e., “Joshua”—meaning “Yahweh saves”) was the messianic **Son of David**—the Davidic King whose throne would be established forever (see 2Sm 7:12-16; Is 9:6-7). This **Jesus** is also identified, therefore, by the title **Christ** (Gk *christou*, “anointed one,” vv. 1,16-17)—i.e., “Messiah.” Furthermore, as **the Son of Abraham**, Jesus is presented as the consummate fulfillment of God’s covenant promises to Abraham (see Gn 12:3; 17:7-8; 18:18; 22:18), the true Israelite through whom all the nations would be blessed. Matthew includes in this “account of the genealogy” a number of Gentile women representative of “the nations” partaking in the kingdom blessings (Gn 22:18). Four of the five

women named in the genealogy were Gentiles: **Tamar** (v. 3), **Rahab** (v. 5), **Ruth** (v. 5), and **Uriah’s wife** (Bathsheba, v. 6).

1:2-16 **Fathered** (Gk *egennēsen*) is a verb properly used of men “begetting” children. It is followed by *ek* (Gk, “by”) and the mother’s name when she is identified, as in verses 3,5-6. Although in this genealogy most of the wives and mothers of the patriarchs are not mentioned by name, readers familiar with the Hebrew Scriptures knew well the stories of women such as Sarah, Abraham’s wife. In the Greek text of verse 16, the phrase translated as **Mary, who gave birth to Jesus** literally reads, “Mary, from [*ek*, “out of,” here a reference to origin or source] who [*hēs*] was born Jesus.” The relative pronoun *hēs* is feminine, making it clear that only Mary was Jesus’s biological parent.

Timeline

- World Events
- Biblical Events

2166–1991 BC

Life of Abraham

1010–970 BC

Reign of King David over Judah and Israel

586–538 BC

Babylonian exile

63 BC

Beginning of Roman dominance of Israel

Outline

- I. The Identification of Jesus: Who He Is (1:1–4:11)
 - A. The Genealogy and Birth of Jesus (1:1–2:23)
 - B. The Preparation for Jesus's Ministry (3:1–4:11)
- II. The Development of Jesus's Ministry: What He Did (4:12–16:20)
 - A. The Beginning of Ministry (4:12–25)
 - B. Preaching: The Sermon on the Mount (5:1–7:29)
 - C. Healing the People (8:1–9:38)
 - D. The Opposition to Jesus's Mission (10:1–12:50)
- E. Predicting Progressive Opposition Toward Jesus (13:1–16:20)
- III. The Climax of Jesus's Ministry (16:21–28:20)
 - A. A Focus on Coming Death and Resurrection (16:21–18:35)
 - B. The Road to Jerusalem: The Coming Judgment (19:1–25:46)
 - C. An Account of Jesus's Ultimate Destiny (26:1–28:20)

The Genealogy and Birth of Jesus (1:1–2:23)

From Abraham to David (1:2–6a)

1 An account of the genealogy of Jesus Christ, the Son of David, the Son of Abraham:

- ² Abraham fathered^A Isaac, Isaac fathered Jacob, Jacob fathered Judah and his brothers,
- ³ Judah fathered Perez and Zerah by Tamar, Perez fathered Hezron, Hezron fathered Aram,
- ⁴ Aram fathered Amminadab, Amminadab fathered Nahshon, Nahshon fathered Salmon,
- ⁵ Salmon fathered Boaz by Rahab, Boaz fathered Obed by Ruth, Obed fathered Jesse,

⁶ and Jesse fathered King David.

From David to the Babylonian Exile (1:6b–11)

- David fathered Solomon^B by Uriah's wife,
- ⁷ Solomon fathered Rehoboam, Rehoboam fathered Abijah, Abijah fathered Asa,^C
 - ⁸ Asa^C fathered Jehoshaphat, Jehoshaphat fathered Joram,^D Joram fathered Uzziah,
 - ⁹ Uzziah fathered Jotham, Jotham fathered Ahaz, Ahaz fathered Hezekiah,
 - ¹⁰ Hezekiah fathered Manasseh, Manasseh fathered Amon,^E Amon fathered Josiah,
 - ¹¹ and Josiah fathered Jeconiah and his brothers at the time of the exile to Babylon.

^A1:2 In vv. 2–16 either a son, as here, or a later descendant, as in v. 8
^B1:8 = Jehoram ^C1:10 Other mss read *Amos*
^D1:6 Other mss add *King* ^E1:7,8 Other mss read *Asaph*

Title The Greek title (*Kata Maththaion*, "According to Matthew") reflects the early church's conviction that the apostle Matthew is this Gospel's author.

1:2–3 The Messiah would come from the tribe of **Judah**. Judah married a Canaanite woman by whom he had three sons. He arranged for his oldest son Er to marry **Tamar** (see Gn 38 for the entire account). When Er died (the Lord "put him to death" because he "was evil in the Lord's sight"), the second son Onan was responsible, according to the laws of levirate marriage (Dt 25:5–6), to marry and provide an heir for his deceased brother. The Lord "put . . . to death" Onan for his "evil" behavior in spurning this obligation. Judah was afraid to give his third son as a husband to Tamar and put off the marriage past the son's being old enough to fulfill his duty. Tamar disguised herself as a prostitute and became pregnant by Judah, her father-in-law. Her actions secured for him the continued existence of the tribe as well as the lineage of David and the Messiah (see Gn 49:8–12).

1:5 **Rahab** was the prostitute who protected the spies Joshua sent into the city of Jericho before Israel attacked (see Jos 2). As she requested, Rahab and her family were spared when the city was destroyed. She committed herself to the God of Israel and became the mother of kings.

Ruth, a Moabite woman, married a Jew who had immigrated with his family to her homeland (see Ru 1–4). Her husband died, and as a widow she moved to Judah with her mother-in-law Naomi. **Boaz**, a distant relative of Ruth's first husband, who owned land in Judah, became Ruth's kinsman-redeemer ("family redeemer") and husband.

1:6 **Uriah's wife** was Bathsheba, the woman with whom King **David** committed adultery (see 2Sm 11–12). David arranged for Uriah's certain death in battle and took Bathsheba to be one of his wives. The child born of this adultery died, but Bathsheba conceived again and gave birth to **Solomon**, who became one of the greatest kings of Israel.

1:7 The OT identifies the mother of **Rehoboam** (Gk *Rhoboam*, "enlarger of the people") three times as "Naamah the Ammonite," another Gentile woman (1Kg 14:21,31; 2Ch 12:13).

1:11 The Jews who were exiled were taken captive to Babylon in three waves. The first group (including Daniel) was exiled in 605 BC, another (including Ezekiel) in 597 BC, and finally the third group was taken in 586 BC when Babylon destroyed the walls of Jerusalem and the temple (see 2Ch 36:11–21).

5 BC	4 BC	AD 29	March 28–April 3, AD 33
Birth of Jesus	Death of Herod the Great	Beginning of the ministries of John the Baptist and of Jesus	Passover week leading to Jesus's crucifixion

THE JOURNEYS OF MARY		
Location	Purpose	Reference
From Nazareth to Bethlehem	Mary traveled with Joseph to be registered in his ancestral village; there Christ was born.	Lk 2:1-7
Jerusalem	Jesus was presented at the temple, and the prophetess Anna bore witness to Him.	Lk 2:22-38
Bethlehem	The wise men visited Jesus.	Mt 2:1-11
Egypt	Joseph and Mary, with Jesus, fled Bethlehem for safety.	Mt 2:13-15
Nazareth	The family returned home.	Mt 2:19-23

From the Exile to the Messiah (1:12-17)

- ¹² After the exile to Babylon Jeconiah fathered Shealtiel, Shealtiel fathered Zerubbabel,
- ¹³ Zerubbabel fathered Abiud, Abiud fathered Eliakim, Eliakim fathered Azor,
- ¹⁴ Azor fathered Zadok, Zadok fathered Achim, Achim fathered Eliud,
- ¹⁵ Eliud fathered Eleazar, Eleazar fathered Matthan, Matthan fathered Jacob,
- ¹⁶ and Jacob fathered Joseph the husband of Mary, who gave birth to Jesus who is called the Christ.

¹⁷ So all the generations from Abraham to David were fourteen generations; and from David

until the exile to Babylon, fourteen generations; and from the exile to Babylon until the Christ, fourteen generations.

The Birth of the Messiah (1:18-25)

¹⁸ The birth of Jesus Christ came about this way: After his mother Mary had been engaged^A to Joseph, it was discovered before they came together that she was pregnant from the Holy Spirit. ¹⁹ So her husband Joseph, being a righteous man, and not wanting to disgrace her publicly, decided to divorce her secretly.

²⁰ But after he had considered these things, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, “Joseph, son of David, don’t be afraid to take Mary as your wife, because what has been conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. ²¹ She will give birth to a son, and you are to name him Jesus, because he will save his people from their sins.”

²² Now all this took place to fulfill what was spoken by the Lord through the prophet:

²³ See, the virgin will become pregnant and give birth to a son, and they will name him Immanuel,^B which is translated “God is with us.”

²⁴ When Joseph woke up, he did as the Lord’s angel had commanded him. He married her²⁵ but did not have sexual relations with her until she gave birth to a son. ^C And he named him Jesus.

Wise Men and the King (2:1-12)

2 After Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of King Herod, wise men from the east arrived in Jerusalem, ²saying, “Where is he who has been born king of the Jews? For we saw his star at its rising and have come to worship him.”^D

³ When King Herod heard this, he was deeply disturbed, and all Jerusalem with him. ⁴ So he assembled all the chief priests and scribes of the people and asked them where the Christ would be born.

^A1:18 Or betrothed ^B1:23 Is 7:14 ^C1:25 Other mss read to her firstborn son ^D2:2 Or to pay him homage

1:20-25 As a righteous man, Joseph obeyed the Lord. Joseph knew that Mary’s child was not his, but he believed what the Lord revealed to him in a dream about the conception being **from the Holy Spirit**. Not only did he stop pursuing the divorce but he married her and did not exercise his right, as her husband, to sexual intimacy until after Jesus was born, thereby honoring and preserving her virginity. By prescribing the name **Jesus** (Gk equivalent of Joshua—Hb, “*Yahweh* is salvation”), the Lord asserted His authority over the child (cp. Lk 1:31).

Matthew recognized the significance of **all this**—the circumstances he has summarized in these verses. The events surrounding Jesus’s conception fulfilled the prophecy quoted (Is 7:14).

2:1-2 See **map**, p. 1216. The **wise men** were probably an educated group of philosophers, scientists, or astrologers—possibly from a priestly class, coming from Persia or Babylon. The word describing these “magi” was also used of Babylonian priests or men who were especially gifted in the interpretation of dreams and stars and was used in the Septuagint in Dn 2:2 to describe the “mediums” to whom King Nebuchadnezzar

gave orders to interpret his dream. Although the text does not record the number of wise men, the fact that three gifts were presented has led to the tradition of “three” wise men.

2:2-4 When the magi came to Jerusalem, looking for the one who had been **born king of the Jews**, **King Herod** and the whole city were **disturbed** (Gk *etarachthē*, “stirred, unsettled and thrown into confusion, frightened”). Herod was one of the cruelest rulers of all time, and he did not hesitate even to murder members of his own family if they appeared to be a threat to his throne. In fact, Caesar Augustus, the Roman Emperor, used a Greek play-on-words to say that it was safer to be Herod’s pig (Gk *hus*) than Herod’s son (Gk *huios*).

The **chief priests** included past high priests and the current high priest, most of whom were Sadducees (see chart, p. 1220). Their position required working with Herod. Most of the **scribes** were Pharisees. They were summoned for their biblical expertise. These select groups, along with “the elders,” comprised the Great Sanhedrin (i.e., the Jewish supreme court; cp. 16:21).

⁵“In Bethlehem of Judea,” they told him, “because this is what was written by the prophet:

⁶ **And you, Bethlehem, in the land of Judah, are by no means least among the rulers of Judah:**

Because out of you will come a ruler who will shepherd my people Israel.”^A

⁷Then Herod secretly summoned the wise men and asked them the exact time the star appeared.

⁸He sent them to Bethlehem and said, “Go and search carefully for the child. When you find

him, report back to me so that I too can go and worship him.”^B

⁹After hearing the king, they went on their way. And there it was — the star they had seen at its rising. It led them until it came and stopped above the place where the child was.¹⁰When they saw the star, they were overwhelmed with joy.¹¹Entering the house, they saw the child with Mary his mother, and falling to their knees, they worshiped him.^C Then they opened their treasures and presented him with gifts: gold, frankincense, and myrrh.¹²And being warned

^A2:6 Mc 5:2 ^B2:8 Or and pay him homage ^C2:11 Or they paid him homage

2:9-11 The phrase, **entering the house** (Gk *oikian*, “residence,” usually inhabited by a family), indicates that when the magi arrived, Mary and Joseph had moved to a permanent dwelling in Bethlehem. Additionally, Jesus was referred to as a **child** (Gk *paidon*) instead of as a “baby” (Gk *brephos*; see Lk 2:16), suggesting that Jesus could then have been about two years old.

The wise men presented the child with gifts befitting a king. **Gold**

was prized for its beauty and worth. **Frankincense**, a fragrant spice, was taken from the bark of trees and used in incense. **Myrrh** was a costly perfume often used for embalming the dead.

2:12-15 The journey to **Egypt** on which Joseph obediently took his family fulfilled the prophetic statement in Hs 11:1. They stayed in Egypt until **Herod’s death** in 4 BC.

Biblical WOMANHOOD

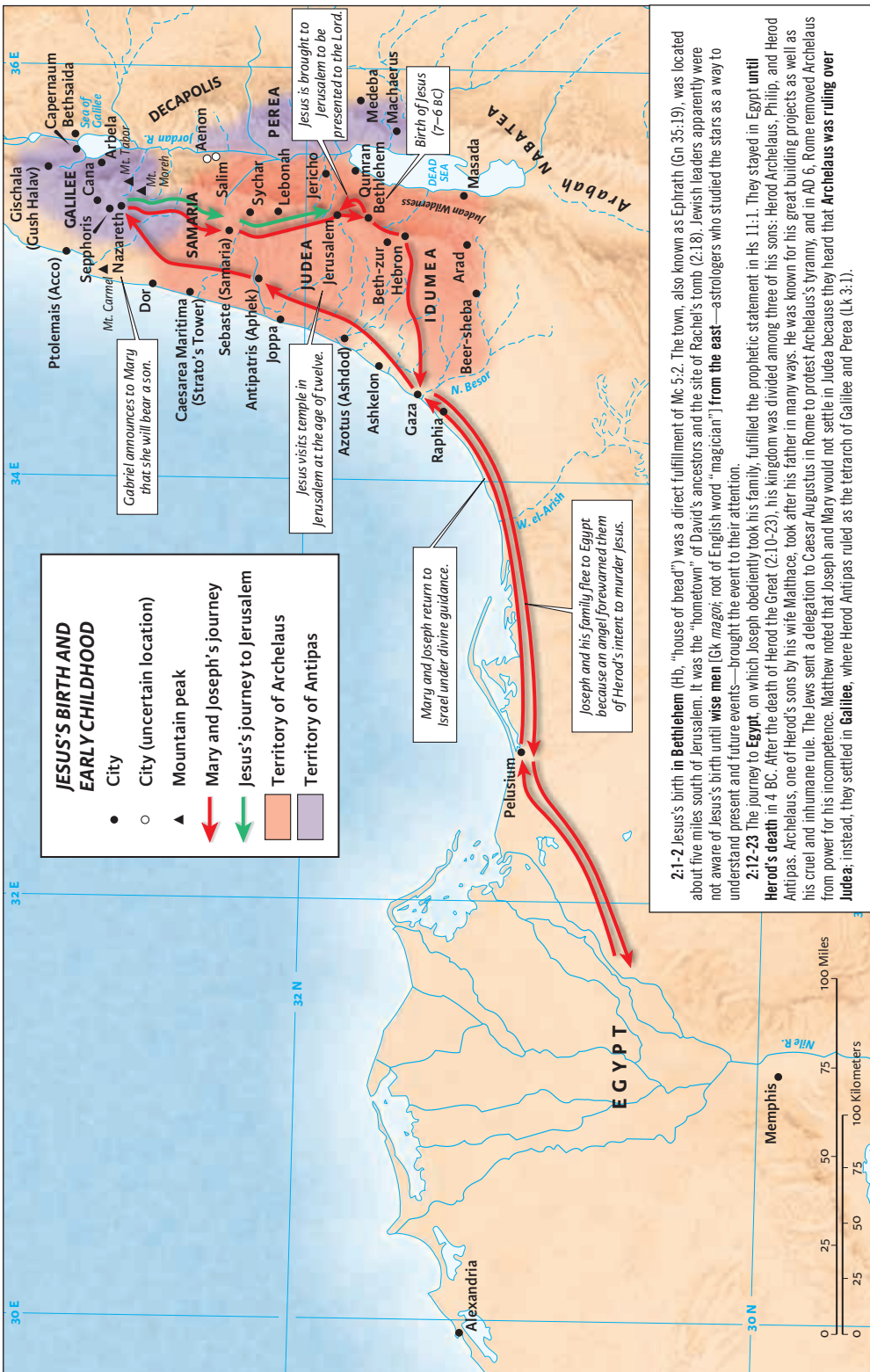
Sexual Purity: The Example of Jewish Betrothal

In first-century Jewish culture, being **engaged** (Gk *mnēsteutheisēs*, “be promised in marriage, be betrothed, be espoused”) was a legally binding relationship that could be dissolved only through an official, legal divorce (1:18-19). An “engaged” or betrothed woman was bound by a marriage contract (Hb *ketubah*; see **Biblical Womanhood**, p. 112). The consequences of infidelity during the betrothal period were the same as those after the wedding and consummation of the marriage. Although the obligations for the betrothed couple were the same as if they were married, they did not live together but remained sexually pure. Therefore, the discovery that Mary **was pregnant** before they came together demanded that Joseph terminate the betrothal on grounds of Mary’s apparent unfaithfulness. Jewish, Roman, and Greek law made it virtually impossible for a man to retain his honor and do anything other than **divorce** the betrothed wife. Not to do so raised suspicions that he had acted immorally by having slept with her himself before the wedding.

Matthew describes **Joseph** as a **righteous man** because, despite the extreme disappointment and pain of apparent betrayal presented by the circumstances and the confusion of Mary’s unbelievable explanation, he did not want to **disgrace** [Gk *paradeigmatissai*, “expose, make an example of, humiliate publicly”] **her publicly** (i.e., subject her to the shame of public divorce proceedings). By pursuing the divorce privately, Joseph demonstrated godly compassion (see 3:15; 5:20 regarding the importance of righteousness

in Matthew). Furthermore, he forfeited the bride price and dowry (the assets Mary brought into the marriage) promised to her in the *ketubah*; the only way to recover these would be to prove her adultery in a public divorce trial. Nevertheless, to end the betrothal would mean drafting an official certificate of divorce, which required the signature of two witnesses. Once in her hands, the bill of divorce was final; and because of the presumed infidelity, Joseph could not thereafter take her back as his wife.

As an example of Jewish law and custom, the circumstances imposed on Mary and Joseph by her pregnancy **from the Holy Spirit** (1:20) challenge the prevailing views of engagement and marriage in contemporary secular cultures. Sexual intimacy was rightfully enjoyed only within marriage—after, absolutely not before, the public wedding. The betrothed or engaged couple were not customarily allowed to be alone together in order to protect them from accusation as well as temptation. Even in the absence of such protections and in the face of immense pressure from society, peers, entertainment, and even non-Christian parents or other family members and friends, Christian women who determine to maintain their sexual purity as a gift to be enjoyed only after the wedding can establish clear guidelines for themselves (and their daughters). By writing down such guidelines and treating them as concrete provisions of a contract you will keep to honor the Lord, you will not only be more likely to follow them but you can also articulate and explain your reasons for them. You can also share them with someone who will hold you accountable.



THE WIVES OF HEROD THE GREAT, KING OF JUDEA			
Wife	Description	Children	Descendants
Mariamne II	Daughter of the high priest Simon	Herod Philip	Salome (daughter of Herod Philip and Herodias, Mt 14:1-12; Mk 6:17)
Mariamne I	Hasmonean princess and Herod's favorite wife	Salampsio Alexander Cypros Aristobulus	Herod Agrippa I (King of Judea, Ac 12:1-24) Bernice (Ac 25:13; 26:30) Drusilla (Ac 24:24) Herod Agrippa II (King of Judea, Ac 25:13–26:32) Mariamne
Malthace	A Samaritan	Herod Antipas (tetrarch of Galilee) Archelaus (King of Judea, Mt 2:22)	
Cleopatra		Herod Philip (tetrarch of Iturea, Lk 3:1)	
Doris		Antipater	
5 other wives	Unnamed	Other children	

in a dream not to go back to Herod, they returned to their own country by another route.

The Flight into Egypt (2:13-15)

¹³After they were gone, an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream, saying, "Get up! Take the child and his mother, flee to Egypt, and stay there until I tell you. For Herod is about to search for the child to kill him."¹⁴So he got up, took the child and his mother during the night, and escaped to Egypt. ¹⁵He stayed there until Herod's death, so that what was spoken by the Lord through the prophet might be fulfilled: **Out of Egypt I called my Son.**^A

The Massacre of the Innocents (2:16-18)

¹⁶Then Herod, when he realized that he had been outwitted by the wise men, flew into a rage. He gave orders to massacre all the boys in and around Bethlehem who were two years old and under, in keeping with the time he had learned from the wise men. ¹⁷Then what was

spoken through Jeremiah the prophet was fulfilled:

¹⁸ **A voice was heard in Ramah, weeping,^B and great mourning, Rachel weeping for her children; and she refused to be consoled, because they are no more.**^C

The Holy Family in Nazareth (2:19-23)

¹⁹After Herod died, an angel of the Lord appeared in a dream to Joseph in Egypt, ²⁰saying, "Get up, take the child and his mother, and go to the land of Israel, because those who intended to kill the child are dead."²¹So he got up, took the child and his mother, and entered the land of Israel. ²²But when he heard that Archelaus was ruling over Judea in place of his father Herod, he was afraid to go there. And being warned in a dream, he withdrew to the region of Galilee. ²³Then he went and settled in a town called Nazareth to fulfill what was spoken through the prophets, that he would be called a Nazarene.

^A2:15 Hs 11:1 ^B2:18 Other mss read *Ramah, lamentation, and weeping,* ^C2:18 Jr 31:15

2:16-17 Herod had slaughtered two of his own sons, Aristobulus and Alexander, and their mother, Mariamne I, even though she was considered the favorite of his 10 wives.

Herod's acute paranoia claimed victim after victim. When he realized that the **wise men** had bypassed him on their return journey, Herod **flew into a rage** (Gk *ethumōthē lian*—the adverb *lian*, "exceedingly, greatly," modifying the verb *ethumōthē*, "be provoked to anger," stressed the intensity of Herod's violent reaction). Determined to eliminate the life of the child who would be expected by those who knew of Him to become "King of the Jews" (Herod's position), Herod ordered the slaughtering of all male children who would be close to Jesus's age in Bethlehem.

2:18 Women at the time of the exile were mourning the loss of their children (Jr 31:15). **Rachel** was a wife of Jacob and the mother of Joseph and Benjamin (see Gn 29–31). She was a "type" of all Israelite women who mourned the loss of their children. Matthew applied this theme at the time of Herod's slaughter to the mothers of Bethlehem who lost their children age two years and under. Rachel herself died in childbirth on the way to Bethlehem (Gn 35:16-20).

2:23 The precise wording that He **would be called a Nazarene**, is nowhere to be found in the OT. But Matthew introduced the quote as representing the teachings not of one prophet, but of **the prophets** in general, concerning the obscurity of the place of Christ's birth and childhood.