

# Genesis Introduction



Genesis is the grand gateway into the Word of God: Creation, rebellion, judgment, and forgiveness are showcased. Genesis emphasizes human dignity, God's authority, and His plan to redeem His wayward creatures. The book describes the origins of the Hebrew nation, the people through whom God chose to bring the Messiah, His instrument of salvation. God comes to help His creatures in need and to reveal Himself as the answer to the longings of the human heart.

The Bible claims that Moses, the Hebrew lawgiver and prophet, wrote Genesis. The Hebrew Scriptures affirm that in many places (Joshua 8:31; Ezra 7:6; Daniel 9:13). The New Testament also asserts that Moses was the author of the first five books of the Bible, and the Lord Jesus Christ himself describes these books as the work of Moses (Matthew 19:7-8; Mark 1:44; John 5:45-46). Moses was born about 1525 BC and died about 120 years later. Guided by the Holy Spirit, Moses received much of the Genesis content directly from God and added information from documents and oral tradition.

The book opens with the creation of the world and ends with the death of Joseph in the late 19th century B.C. The exact date of Creation itself cannot be determined. The 50 chapters of Genesis are highly compressed — especially the first 11, which cover many centuries. Genesis covers more time than all the other 65 books of the Bible combined. The book does not claim to be a history of the world, but focuses on the origins of the Hebrew nation, through which God would bring His Redeemer into the world. The first 11 chapters of Genesis focus on matters that touch the human race as a whole and center around four great events: Creation, the Fall, the Great Flood, and the Tower of Babel. The last 39 chapters of Genesis focus on four central figures: Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and Joseph — the patriarchs of the Hebrew people.

The name of Jesus Christ does not appear in the text of Genesis. As the second person of the Trinity, however, He has always existed. The apostle John points out, "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was with God in the beginning. Through Him all things were made" (1:1-3). The Creator who appears in the opening chapters of Genesis is Jesus Christ Himself, acting in the days before He "became flesh and made His dwelling among us" (John 1:14). Christ also appears as "the angel of the lord" (Genesis 22:11, 15). God enters His own drama to affirm His love for creatures who have declared their independence from Him. In time, He will enter the womb of a Hebrew maiden to become the Redeemer and offer Himself as a sacrifice for sins. Jesus also appears in the verbal pictures of the book of Genesis. People featured in the book illustrate what the Lord Jesus would later do and say. The apostle Paul notes the strong likeness between Adam and Jesus. Jesus came to undo the damage done by Adam (Romans 5:9-19).

## ***Check It Out:***


What are the answers to life's ultimate questions? Our society seems to be experiencing more and more despair as people seek answers to questions like "Why am I here?" Be prepared to find those answers in this incredible book! Genesis unfolds the remarkable plan of a loving Creator God who designed us with a purpose. In the midst of an increasingly rootless society, it provides a solid basis for hope — in the Creator and Redeemer of our world.

People sometimes scoff at the Genesis description as a primitive explanation of the origin of the universe. Yet as its designer, God speaks His Word into it, and created things spring into being. Genesis explains that the world is filled with troubles because humanity, the pinnacle of God's creative work, rebelled against God. Since the time when humanity first defied Him (Genesis 3), God has been seeking to reclaim His authority in their hearts, which is achieved only when people submit their wills to Him. God woos rather than crushes, urging the rebels home. God's creatures in their current condition are fallen and unhappy. Sadly, humanity draws no connection between its fallenness and its distress. The Creator permits heartaches and disappointments so we can see our own incompleteness and turn back to the One who gives us life.

Chapters 1–11 form what is largely a record of the failure and judgment of humanity. Beginning at chapter 12, God takes the initiative and reveals Himself to one man. From that moment, the world begins to move toward a grand climax of redemption. Sacrifice forms another major theme in Genesis. Once humanity rebels and is removed from the Garden of Eden, the Creator shows how the blood of an innocent animal substitute can cover sin's curse. The principle will emerge repeatedly in Genesis and in the rest of Scripture, reaching its height in the Gospels when Jesus comes personally to serve as God's sacrificial Lamb, the perfect and final sacrifice for sin (Romans 6:23).

The book gives the historical setting for God's covenant with Israel and describes His character. It separates Yahweh, God of Israel, from the strange gods worshiped by pagans. Further, it explains human nature by describing man's original condition, and then relating how he rebelled and continued to do so. Finally, the book shows how God prepares His people for the covenant He later establishes with them in the book of Exodus. In Egypt, however, God allows Israel's condition as a nation of slaves to deteriorate to the point where their need of Him is impossible to ignore.

Broadly speaking, science and Genesis approach the answers to the question of the origins of the universe differently. Many scientists accept the Genesis Creation account, but others believe that the universe originated by chance. Science deals with what may be observed, recorded, measured, weighed, and tested. The Bible insists that the world began by a God, who is separate from His creation. This places the matter of origins outside the scope of what is generally considered science. Scientists can yield to personal biases just as readily as non-scientists. Some unbelieving scientists are candid enough to admit that they exclude God from the origins of the universe, because His presence implies that people are accountable to Him.



## Walk the Walk:

**Genesis is far more than the biblical account of how the world began. It is that, but it also records the first marriage, the first family, the first rebellion against God, and sin's tragic consequences. We will read of the first dysfunctional family – and incidentally, that first family failed in a perfect environment. We'll read about the first murder and the wickedness of a culture trying to function without God's guidelines. Later, we'll see how God chooses a "people of promise."**

**It is almost impossible to imagine a more relevant study. Do you know of a family touched by rebellion, sexual immorality, divorce, drug use? Perhaps it is your own. Genesis will challenge us to respond personally in the world of the 21st century.**