

Begin with God

Text: Gen. 1:1

Introduction:

1. Genesis has been called the seed plot of the Bible. Every subject of major importance can be traced back to its “first mention” in Genesis. In fact, “all the foundational doctrines and morality of the Christian faith can be found in Genesis, at least in embryonic form.”¹
2. As we will discuss further, the importance of Genesis cannot be overstated as it lays the foundation to the rest of the Bible. Take Genesis out of the Bible and the rest of the Word of God makes little sense. It is so important to accurately understand both the first and last book of the Bible. They are like two bookends that hold the Bible together. The first and last Books of the Bible have been subjected to the most vicious attacks by Satan. Someone said, “The devil hates most the two books which describe his entrance and exit, Genesis and Revelation.”
3. Illustration: Two strainer posts in a fence. Get them wrong and everything in between will be out of alignment.
4. Comparison between Genesis & Revelation. There is a tie between Genesis and Revelation, the first and last books of the Bible. Genesis presents the beginning and Revelation presents the end (By J. Vernon McGee)
 - In Genesis the earth was created; in Revelation the earth passes away.
 - In Genesis was Satan’s first rebellion; in Revelation is Satan’s last rebellion.
 - In Genesis the sun, moon, and stars were for earth’s government; in Revelation these same heavenly bodies are for earth’s judgment.
 - In Genesis the sun was to govern the day; in Revelation there is no need of the sun.
 - In Genesis darkness was called night; in Revelation there is “no night” (See Rev. 21:25; 22:5)
 - In Genesis the waters were called seas; in Revelation there is no more sea.
 - In Genesis was the entrance of sin; in Revelation is the exodus of sin.
 - In Genesis the curse was pronounced; in Revelation the curse is removed.
 - In Genesis death entered; in Revelation there is no more death.
 - In Genesis was the beginning of sorrow and suffering; in Revelation there is no more sorrow or tears.
 - In Genesis was the marriage of the first Adam; in Revelation is the marriage of the Last Adam.
 - In Genesis we saw man’s city, Babylon, being built; in Revelation we see man’s city, Babylon, destroyed, and God’s city, the New Jerusalem, brought into view.
 - In Genesis Satan’s doom was pronounced; in Revelation Satan’s doom is executed.
5. In this introductory message we will consider **4 introductory points** that will aid our study of the Book of Genesis.

¹ J Sarfati, *The Genesis Account*, Creation Book Publishers, April 2015, p. 8.

I. THE TITLE OF THE BOOK

A. The English Title

1. The word 'genesis' is a transliteration from the Greek word γενεσις which means 'generation'. Significantly this word is used in Matthew 1:1 at the opening of the New Testament – “The book of the generation (genesis) of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham.”
2. The word means origin, beginning. So, Genesis is rightly referred to as the Book of origins/beginnings. It describes the genesis or beginning of the universe.

B. The Jewish Title

1. The Jews refer to it as 'Bereshith' which is the very first Hebrew word meaning “in the beginning.”
2. It has been well said, “Genesis reveals the beginning of everything, except God.”
3. Genesis is the first Book of the five books of Moses that form the Pentateuch (called the Torah by the Jews).

C. Genesis is the Book of Origins

Genesis details the origins of²:

1. The universe.
2. Order & complexity.
3. The solar system.
4. The atmosphere and hydrosphere.
5. The origin of life.
6. The origin of man.
7. Marriage and the home.
8. Evil.
9. Language.
10. Human government.
11. Culture.
12. Nations.
13. The chosen people.
14. Henry Morris writes, “The Book of Genesis is in reality the foundation of all true history, as well as of true science and true philosophy. It is above all else the foundation of God's revelation, as given in the Bible. No other book of the Bible is quoted as copiously or referred to so frequently, in other books of the Bible, as in Genesis.” Not only is Genesis frequently referenced in the other O.T. writings but “there are at least 165 passages in Genesis that are either directly quoted or clearly referred to in the New Testament. Many of these are alluded to more than once, so that there are at least two hundred quotations or allusions to Genesis in the New Testament.”³

II. THE AUTHOR OF THE BOOK

A. The Divine Inspiration of the Book

The Bible, of which Genesis is a part, is:

² Adapted from Henry Morris (The Genesis Record).

³ Henry Morris. Morris has these 200 citations listed in Appendix 4 of his commentary.

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1. The Inspired Word – “All scripture is given by **inspiration** of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.” (2 Tim. 3:16-17)
2. The Infallible Word – Prov. 30:5 “**Every word of God is pure**: he is a shield unto them that put their trust in him.” John 17:17 “Sanctify them through thy truth: **thy word is truth**.” We believe in verbal, plenary inspiration. By this we mean that the inspiration extends to all parts of the written Word of God and it includes the guiding hand of the Holy Spirit even in the selection of the words of Scripture. “...It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by **every word** that proceedeth out of the mouth of God.” (Matt. 4:4)
3. The Indestructible Word
Jesus said:
 - a. “...the scripture **cannot be broken**,” (Jn. 10:35);
 - b. “Heaven and earth shall pass away: **but my words shall not pass away**.” (Lk. 21:33)
 - c. “For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled.” (Matt. 5:18)
 - d. “And it is easier for heaven and earth to pass, than one tittle of the law to fall.” (Lk. 16:17)
 - e. The Bible teaches not only the inspiration of the Word but also the preservation of the Word. Psalm 12:6-7 “The words of the LORD are **pure words**: as silver tried in a furnace of earth, purified seven times. **Thou shalt keep them**, O LORD, thou shalt preserve them **from this generation for ever**.”

B. The Human Instrument for the Book

1. 2 Pet. 1:21 “For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were **moved by the Holy Ghost**.”
2. A good KJV Bible has at the top of the page “The first Book of Moses, called Genesis”. We hold unashamedly to the Mosaic authorship of Genesis. Moses’s education in the palace in God’s providence would have prepared him for this scholarly work. Acts 7:22 “And Moses was **learned in all the wisdom** of the Egyptians, and was mighty in **words** and in **deeds**.” In fact, it is highly likely that Moses developed early written Hebrew. He would have written between 1446-1406 B.C.⁴
3. That Genesis was written by Moses was the all but unanimous view of both Jewish and Christian scholars for the last 1800 years. This began to be viciously attacked at the turn of the 19th century with the rise of liberal theology and the practice of so called “higher criticism”. Victor Hamilton writes, “For almost eighteen hundred years hardly anyone questioned the unity of Genesis, whether the writers were the rabbinical scholars of Judaism or the ecclesiastical

⁴ H. Richard Hester, *Old Testament Bible History*, p. 17.

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scholars of Christendom. Thus, a Maimonides⁵ within Judaism, an Augustine within Catholicism, and a Calvin within Protestantism shared no disagreement on the point of Genesis' origin and composition. For all of them Genesis was a unified work, and more specifically, the work of Moses. It is now fashionable to label such an approach as "traditional" or "precritical."

4. We offer four solid, Bible proofs for Moses' authorship:
 - a. The Pentateuch Affirms Mosaic Authorship
 - i. Exodus 17:14 "And the LORD said unto Moses, Write this *for* a memorial **in a book**, and rehearse *it* in the ears of Joshua: for I will utterly put out the remembrance of Amalek from under heaven."
 - ii. Exodus 24:3-7 "And Moses came and told the people all the words of the LORD, and all the judgments: and all the people answered with one voice, and said, All the words which the LORD hath said will we do. (4) And Moses **wrote all the words of the LORD**, and rose up early in the morning, and builded an altar under the hill, and twelve pillars, according to the twelve tribes of Israel. (5) And he sent young men of the children of Israel, which offered burnt offerings, and sacrificed peace offerings of oxen unto the LORD. (6) And Moses took half of the blood, and put *it* in basons; and half of the blood he sprinkled on the altar. (7) **And he took the book of the covenant**, and read in the audience of the people: and they said, All that the LORD hath said will we do, and be obedient."
 - iii. Exodus 34:27 "And the LORD said unto Moses, **Write thou these words**: for after the tenor of these words I have made a covenant with thee and with Israel."
 - i. Numbers 33:1-2 "These *are* the journeys of the children of Israel, which went forth out of the land of Egypt with their armies under the hand of Moses and Aaron. **And Moses wrote their goings out** according to their journeys by the commandment of the LORD: and these *are* their journeys according to their goings out."
 - ii. Deut. 31:9, 22, 24-26 (9) "And Moses wrote this law, and delivered it unto the priests the sons of Levi, which bare the ark of the covenant of the LORD, and unto all the elders of Israel...(22) Moses therefore wrote this song the same day, and taught it the children of Israel (24) And it came to pass, when Moses had made an end of writing **the words of this law in a book**, until they were finished, (25) That Moses commanded the Levites, which bare the ark of the covenant of the LORD, saying, (26) **Take this book of the law**, and put it in the side of the ark of the

⁵ Jewish scholastic philosopher and rabbi (1135-1204 A.D.). He was a Jewish philosopher, jurist, and physician, the foremost intellectual figure of medieval Judaism. Bokser, Ben Zion. "Moses Maimonides". Encyclopedia Britannica, 26 Mar. 2021, <https://www.britannica.com/biography/Moses-Maimonides>. Accessed 24 September 2021.

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covenant of the LORD your God, that it may be there for a witness against thee.”

b. Other O.T. Books affirm Mosaic Authorship

For example:

- i. Josh. 1:7-8 “Only be thou strong and very courageous, that thou mayest observe to do according to all the law, which **Moses my servant commanded thee**: turn not from it *to the right hand or to the left*, that thou mayest prosper whithersoever thou goest. This **book of the law** shall not depart out of thy mouth; but thou shalt meditate therein day and night, that thou mayest observe to do according to all that is written therein: for then thou shalt make thy way prosperous, and then thou shalt have good success.”
- ii. Judg. 3:4 “And they were to prove Israel by them, to know whether they would hearken unto the commandments of the LORD, which he commanded their fathers **by the hand of Moses.**”
- iii. 1 Kings 2:3 “And keep the charge of the LORD thy God, to walk in his ways, to keep his statutes, and his commandments, and his judgments, and his testimonies, as it is written in **the law of Moses**, that thou mayest prosper in all that thou doest, and whithersoever thou turnest thyself:”
- iv. Ezra 6:18 “And they set the priests in their divisions, and the Levites in their courses, for the service of God, which *is* at Jerusalem; as it is written in **the book of Moses.**”
- v. Neh. 8:1 “And all the people gathered themselves together as one man into the street that *was* before the water gate; and they spake unto Ezra the scribe to bring **the book of the law of Moses**, which the LORD had commanded to Israel.”
- vi. Dan. 9:11 “Yea, all Israel have transgressed thy law, even by departing, that they might not obey thy voice; therefore the curse is poured upon us, and the oath that *is* written in **the law of Moses** the servant of God, because we have sinned against him.”

c. N.T. writers affirm Mosaic Authorship

- i. John 1:17 “For **the law was given by Moses**, *but* grace and truth came by Jesus Christ.”
- ii. 1 Cor. 9:9 “For it is written in **the law of Moses**, Thou shalt not muzzle the mouth of the ox that treadeth out the corn. Doth God take care for oxen?”
- iii. 2 Cor. 3:15 “But even unto this day, when **Moses is read**, the vail is upon their heart.”
- iv. Heb. 10:28 “He that despised Moses' law died without mercy under two or three witnesses:”

d. Jesus Christ affirms Mosaic Authorship

- i. Matt. 8:4 “And Jesus saith unto him, **See thou tell no man; but go thy way, shew thyself to the priest, and offer**

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- the gift that **Moses** commanded, for a testimony unto them.” A reference to the Book of Leviticus.
- ii. Mark 7:10 “**For Moses** said, Honour thy father and thy mother; and, Whoso curseth father or mother, let him die the death:” Reference to the 10 commandments in Exodus.
 - iii. Mark 12:26 “**And as touching the dead, that they rise: have ye not read in the book of Moses**, how in the bush God spake unto him, saying, I *am* the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob?
 - iv. Luke 24:27, 44 “**And beginning at Moses** and all the prophets, he expounded unto them in **all the scriptures** the things concerning himself. (44) And he said unto them, **These are the words which I spake unto you, while I was yet with you, that all things must be fulfilled, which were written in the law of Moses**, and *in* the prophets, and *in* the psalms, concerning me.”
 - v. John 7:19 “**Did not Moses give you the law**, and *yet* none of you keepeth the law? Why go ye about to kill me?”

III. THE OUTLINE OF THE BOOK

A. A Suggested Outline

1. Genesis 1-11 – Focus on humanity in general and four great events:
 - a. The Creation (Chap. 1-2)
 - b. The Fall (Chap. 3-5)
 - c. The Flood (Chap. 6-9)
 - d. The Tower of Babel (Chap. 10-11)
2. Genesis 12-50 – Focus on Israel in particular and the lives of four great men:
 - a. Abraham (12:1-25:18)
 - b. Isaac (25:19-27:46)
 - c. Jacob (28-36)
 - d. Joseph (37-50)

B. A Scriptural Outline

There is a discernable outline within Genesis itself, each section being introduced with the words “These are the generations of...” or something similar occurring 11 times in total. This translates into 10 sections in Genesis:

1. The generations of the heavens and the earth (Gen. 2:4)
2. The generations of Adam (Gen. 5:1)
3. The generations of Noah (Gen. 6:9)
4. The generations of the sons of Noah (Gen. 10:1)
5. The generations of Shem (Gen. 11:10)
6. The generations of Terah (Gen. 11:27)
7. The generations of Ishmael (Gen. 25:12)
8. The generations of Isaac (Gen. 25:19)
9. The generations of Esau (Gen. 36:1, 9)
10. The generations of Jacob (Gen. 37:2)

IV. THE INTERPRETATION OF THE BOOK

The debate over how to interpret Genesis must be addressed as to err on this point will lead to devastating outcomes on the Christian's worldview and doctrinal framework. To summarize, there are essentially two methods:

A. The Popular and Perverse Methods

1. Sadly, much of Christendom today seeks to twist the creation account, indeed, the first 11 chapters of Genesis to accommodate and old earth, evolutionary view of "science".
2. Dr. Jonathan Sarfati comments on this: "Around the turn of the 19th century, the unbiblical philosophy of uniformitarianism smuggled its way into geology, and theologians responded in different ways. Nigel Cameron and Doug Kelly have documented the change in commentaries over this period. Before the rise of uniformitarianism, a straightforward view of Genesis was practically unanimous. They also documented how most conservative commentators were intimidated by 'science'. It is only after the rise of this philosophy that we see the invention of ways to add millions of years to the Bible. Since long ages were previously not even thought of by conservative exegetes, it is strong evidence that they are not in the text at all."⁶ In other words, these new interpretations of Genesis were not the result of diligent and careful exposition but a response to the external pressures of unbelieving scholarship and the rise in the popularity of the evolutionary theory.
3. This desire to conform to the dictates of mainstream "science" has led even many who claim to be evangelical, to seek to interpret the Genesis creation account in such a way so as to accommodate molecules to man evolution. Some of these are as follows:
 - a. The gap theory – they say there is a gap between the first and second verse of Genesis and try and fit billions of years in there. That means you end up with death and decay preceding man's fall when in actual fact, the Bible clearly states that death and suffering came as a result of man's sin (Rom. 5:12).
 - b. The day age theory – this promotes the idea that instead of 6 literal, 24-hour days, the days were actually long periods of time to accommodate billions of years. The wording of the text itself rules this out where it references the "evening and the morning", a clear reference to a 24-hour period. Further, Exodus 20:11 re-affirms that creation took place in six literal days. Ex. 20:11 "**For in six days** the LORD made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day: wherefore the LORD blessed the sabbath day, and hallowed it." Since the sabbath day is a literal 24-hour day, then it follows that the six days of creation were also literal 24-hour periods.
 - c. The poetry theory – the proponents of this theory claim that Genesis 1 is poetic language and not to be taken as a literal, historical account. This is refuted for the following reasons:
 - i. **Hebrew grammar** affirms that Genesis is historical narrative. Hebrew experts who have studied the Hebrew

⁶ J Sarfati, *The Genesis Account*, Creation Book Publishers, April 2015, p. 64.

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grammar of Genesis 1-11 have found that it has the same literary style as the other historical books such as Exodus, Joshua, Judges etc... If Genesis were poetry, then it the Hebrew would resemble the poetic books like the Psalms. Hebrew poetry does not rely on rhyme or metre like English poetry but something called *parallelism*. This is where “the statements in two or more consecutive lines are related in some way.” Sarfati writes, “Despite what is so often claimed, any doubts about the genre of Genesis don’t stem from the grammar and style of the text itself. Rather, they come from considerations outside the text, such as long-age uniformitarian geology and evolutionary biology.”⁷ Psalm 19:1-2 is a good example of what is called *synonymous parallelism*. Parallelism is absent from Genesis except where people are quoted so it is not poetry but historical narrative.⁸ Further, there is no change in style from Gen.1-11 to Gen. 12-50.

- ii. **Other Biblical writers** quote Genesis as historical narrative. We will consider a number of examples under the next point.

B. The Principled and Proper Method

1. The key to understanding the Bible is to use the Literal, Grammatical-Historical method of interpretation.
2. This is how Christ; the Apostles and the other Biblical writers interpreted the Book of Genesis.
 - a. 1 Chronicles 1-8 is a “concise but comprehensive genealogy from Adam and Noah through the 12 tribes of Israel through the kings of Israel and Judah until after the Babylonian Exile.”⁹
 - b. Luke 3:23-38 is a “genealogy of Christ through Mary through David (via his son Nathan) through Abraham, Noah, then finally Adam, “the son of God” (Note: not the descendent of ape-like ancestors!).¹⁰
 - c. Hebrews 11 is the Bible’s Hall of faith and lists Abel, Enoch and Noah from the early chapters of Genesis as literal people.
 - d. Most importantly, Christ believed in a literal creation account. When asked the divorce question the Lord Jesus replied, Matt. 19:4-5 “And he answered and said unto them, **Have ye not read, that he which made *them* at the beginning made them male and female, And said, For this cause shall a man leave father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife: and they twain shall be one flesh?**” Further, Jesus believed in a literal Noah and a literal flood. He also believed in a literal lot and the literal destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah (Luke 17:26-29) To claim a “superior” position to that of the Son of God Himself is ignorance, arrogance, pride and blindness of heart.

⁷ Ibid, pp. 48-50.

⁸ Ibid, p. 50.

⁹ Ibid, p. 47.

¹⁰ Ibid.

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- e. The Apostle Paul believed in a literal Adam as found in Romans, the N.T. thesis on the doctrine of salvation (Rom. 5:12-21).
 - f. The Apostle John believed in a literal Cain (1 John 3:12).
 - g. The Apostle Peter believed in a literal Noah and his family and the worldwide flood (1 Pet. 3:20; 2. Peter 3:6)
 - h. Jude believed in a literal Sodom and Gomorrah (Jude 1:6), a literal Cain (Vs. 11) and a literal Enoch (Vs. 14-15).
3. To summarize, "If the plain sense makes sense, seek no other sense or you will end up with nonsense."

Conclusion: Do you know God? He has revealed Himself in the Bible so that you might know Him. Have faith in God's Word. It is the most reliable document in the entire world!