

# INTRODUCTION TO THE BOOK OF GENESIS | PASTOR MARK BOFILL | 3/05/2023

I. The Title | II. The Author/Date | III. The Background/Setting | IV. The Themes/Purposes | V. The Structure

**INTRO: Genesis is the first book of the Bible** which begins with one of the most well-known opening phrases in all of literature: *"In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth."* **All of mankind must contemplate this opening statement!** – *It is a statement of Truth that believers adhere to, which provides meaning and purpose in life. It is a statement of Non-Sense to non-believers, who will ultimately be condemned in the afterlife!*

- The book of Genesis provides us with vital information concerning **the ORIGIN** of all things. It gives us the only true and reliable account from which we gain understanding about our existence. **It is the starting point which provides the foundation of reality!** – *If the book of Genesis were excluded from the Biblical canon, the rest of the Bible would be **INCOMPREHENSIBLE**.* (Or at least extremely difficult to understand).
- Genesis is the first part of the five-part: TORAH (also known as the Pentateuch), which is the **core text of the Old Testament**. **The Torah is Israel's origin story:** it's the history of how the nation of Israel got its population, its land, and its religion. (Vital to our Judeo-Christian faith)

When studying the **book of Genesis**, bear in mind that it was **NOT** written with the intention of being a scientific textbook. Rather, it is **a Theological narrative written to reveal the God of creation and His relationship with humanity.** – This is a simple definition of HIS-STORY! (It began with God, and it will end with God... He is in full control of everything in-between! – Yet, so many reject it still!)

- Genesis is far more concerned with the questions of **WHO** made creation and **WHY** He made creation, than **WHEN** He made creation. This explains why the largest exposition of creation in all scripture is only a few pages in our Bible (Genesis Ch. 1-2). (He created a world so that we...His first fruits of all creation, can inhabit it and enjoy existence with Him! WOW)
- Galileo said, *"the Holy Ghost intended to teach us how to GO to heaven, not how the heavens go."* – Yet, the detail provided is sufficient knowledge for our finite minds.
  - **The Bible is the inspired, infallible Word of God.** It is an eyewitness account of history and is accurate in everything it says. It is the authority for Christian life and practice and is a foundation on which believers must build their thinking.
  - **The Bible was composed supernaturally:** Comprised of 66 different books, written by 40 different authors, over a period of 1600 years, and in three different languages; yet there isn't one contradiction!

**I. THE TITLE OF GENESIS:** It's true that *"You can't judge a book by its cover,"* but the *Title of a book often suggests the topic of the book.* The title Genesis does this exactly!

- A. The Greek Title** – According to **the Septuagint (LXX)**, which is the Greek translation of the O.T., we acquire **GENESIS** as the title of this book, which means **ORIGINS**.

B. **The Hebrew Title** – **BERESHITH** {*Re-Shiyth*}, comes from the Bible's very first word (**Gen 1:1**), translated "*in the beginning.*" i.e., the first in place, time, order or rank.

C. **The Pentateuch** – Genesis is the first of 5 books of the OT, better known as the **Pentateuch**. The Pentateuch is referred to as the "**5-fold vessel**" or the "**5 Scrolls.**" It is as referred to as the **Torah** - "**law.**"

**P/A** – I am no scholar, but my assessment of the application of this title and its placement in the Bible is appropriate... and I am glad it's there... *In the Beginning!*

## II. THE AUTHOR/DATE OF GENESIS:

A. **The Author:** As with each book of the Bible, scholars often scrutinize authorship.

1. **Liberal View: Composite Authorship** e.g., **The Documentary Hypothesis** aka the **JEDP Theory** by Julius Wellhausen (1877) suggests that the Torah, was not written entirely by Moses. (I've omitted the explanation of this view for time's sake)
2. **Conservative View: Mosaic Authorship** Throughout history and without any real dispute this composition is generally ascribed to Moses. He is the fitting author in light of his educational background (**cf. Acts 7:22**). **No compelling reasons have been forthcoming to challenge Mosaic authorship.**

b. Many O.T and N.T. passages refer to Moses' writing as the law: (**Ex. 17:14; Num. 33:2; Josh. 8:31; 1 Kin. 2:3**) and the NT (**Matt. 8:4; John 7:22; Acts 15:1; Rom. 10:19**)

c. Even **JESUS** referred to Moses' writings: (**Luke 24:44**) **Then He said to them, "These are the words which I spoke to you while I was still with you, that all things must be fulfilled which were written in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms concerning Me."** – (**John 5:46**) **"For if you believed Moses, you would believe me; for he wrote about me."**

B. **The Date** – Thousands of years before time was carefully recorded, **Creation and the Flood occurred**. Events before the time of Abraham (2166 B.C.) **CANNOT BE DATED**.

However, general dates can be drawn from the fact that Genesis was written **AFTER THE EXODUS**, but **BEFORE MOSES' DEATH**. Therefore, it is safe to conclude the dates to be between **1445 - 1405 B.C.**

**III. The BACKGROUND / SETTING OF GENESIS** – Regarding the initial setting of Genesis, *"The initial setting for Genesis is **ETERNITY PAST**. God then, by willful act and divine Word, spoke all creation into existence, furnished it, and finally breathed life into a lump of dirt, which He fashioned in His image to become Adam. God made mankind the **CROWNING POINT** of His creation, i.e., His companions who would enjoy fellowship with Him and bring glory to His name."* (As we study Genesis, we must always bear in mind that God, our Creator has a divine plan and purpose)

The historical background for the early events in Genesis begins in Mesopotamia, where God **GENERATES** mankind, **GRIEVES FOR** mankind, and then **GROWS** mankind. – A simple **Geographical Overview** of Genesis reveals **3 Sequential Settings**:

<u>Chapters</u>	<u>Location</u>	<u>Time Span</u>
Gen. 1-11	- Mesopotamia	- Creation to 2100 BC
Gen. 12-36	- Promised Land	- 2100 BC to 1900 BC
Gen. 37-50	- Egypt	- 1900 BC to 1800 BC

**P/A – But the story of Genesis is really all about setting the stage for the rest of the Pentateuch:** It's the long prologue to Israel's beginnings as a nation. Specifically, the story of the promises that God begins to carry out through the rest of the Bible.

- It is worth noting that the book of Genesis **SPANS MORE TIME** than any of the remaining books of the Bible combined!

## IV. THE THEMES / PURPOSES OF GENESIS

**A. The Beginnings:** [*of ALL THINGS, of MAN, and of ISRAEL*]. *First, let's expound on the Beginnings...*

**1. Of All Things** – Once again, Genesis provides us with **the only true and reliable account** from which we gain purpose and meaning in this life, as we know it.

**a. There are 4 Outstanding Events** that take place in the first eleven chapters:

**i. The CREATION (Ch. 1-2)** - An extensive list of origins **in just 2 chapters!**

- *The Universe*                      *Order and Complexity*                      *The Solar System*
- *Atmosphere/Hydrosphere*                      *Life*                      *Mankind*                      *Marriage*
- Scientific examination of the world around us reveals such intricate detail in design, creation and sustainability, all for the purpose of habitation.  
*God... calls those things which do not exist as though they did. (Rom 4:17b)*

**ii. The FALL (Ch. 3-6)** – This includes the **temptation of man**, which led to the ultimate **corruption of man**, from which we acquire the term **Original Sin**.

The sin of Adam has affected all mankind because Adam was made by God to be our **COVENANT HEAD** and **REPRESENTATIVE**. – (Rom 5:12) *says, Therefore, just as through one man sin entered the world, and death through sin, and thus death spread to all men, because all sinned.*

It is for this reason that we find so much evidence of disorder, imperfection and corruptibility. In the world we find **dangers** and **disasters**. In ourselves we find **wicked thoughts**, we experience **pain** and **illness** and eventually death.

**iii. The FLOOD (Ch. 7-10)** – The Flood was a **CATASTROPHIC** event which radically altered the antediluvian world. – **Why would God do this to His creation?**  
Our simple answer is found in **READ (tt. Gen 6:5-7)** *Expound.*

- iv. **The DISPERSION (Ch. 11)** – Even after the flood, human sinfulness continued as man tried to trespass on God’s realm by building a skyscraping temple known as the TOWER OF BABEL. This **prompted another great judgment** affecting the whole human race. Mankind was scattered across the face of the earth and linguistic diversity was introduced to prevent any further human efforts to storm heaven.

**P/A – To conclude this lengthy sub-point on Beginnings of All things**, the apostle John says: All things were made through Him, and without Him nothing was made that was made. (John 1:3)

2. **Of Man (Ch. 1-11)** - When considering the doctrine of ANTHROPOLOGY, it is important to understand the historical procession as mentioned in these chapters.
  - a. Mankind Created (Ch. 1)
  - b. Mankind’s Marriage (Ch. 2)
  - c. Mankind’s Corruption (Ch. 3-6)
  - d. Mankind’s Judgment (Ch.7)
  - e. Mankind’s Dispersion (8-11)
3. **Of Israel (Ch. 12-50)** – Genesis is also a book of BEGETTING, it describes the family tree from Adam to the founding of the nation of Israel. **Ten different genealogies are recorded in Genesis**, while the account focuses on six persons and their families:
  - a. Adam (Ch. 1-5)
  - b. Noah (Ch. 6-10)
  - c. Abraham (Ch. 11:1-25:18)
  - d. Isaac (Ch. 25:19-27:46)
  - e. Jacob (Ch. 28-36)
  - f. Joseph (Ch. 37-50)

**P/A** – If the main thrust of Genesis were summed up in one verse, it would be these words that God said to Abraham, And I will establish My covenant between Me and you and your descendants after you in their generations, for an everlasting covenant, to be God to you and your descendants after you. (Gen 17:7) *Again, it is His story, His plan! Now let’s take a look at...*

**B. The Beginner – GOD:** The sublime opening of the Scriptures announces the fact of God and His existence. **(Gen 1:1)** plainly tells us that, “In the beginning GOD created...”

1. **Firsthand Declaration:** It does not say, “nothing made everything,” or “god’s” made the heavens and the earth. Throughout scripture we have **proof of God** as the beginner of all things. – **(Isa 45:18)** says, “For thus says the Lord, who created the heavens, Who IS GOD, who formed the earth and made it, who did not create it in vain, who formed it to be inhabited: I am the Lord, and there is no other.”

2. **Evident Notion:** [NONE] of the writers of either the Old or the New Testament's attempt to prove or to argue for the existence of God. All throughout scripture, **God's existence is a fact taken for granted.** / *"God capable of proof would be no god at all."* - Jacobi / (Ex 3:14) declares that **He is the self-existent One**, and (John 5:26) reveals that He is the Source of all lights.

P/A – *We cannot overlook... we must not overlook what scriptures declare about **God's Existence!***

3. The **TELEOLOGICAL** argument – (*telos* means "purpose" or "design"). The fact that there is amazing harmony within everything that exists (*creation*) seems to point to the fact that there is an **INTELLIGENT DESIGNER** who created everything. – *In the same way that a piece of music reveals something of a composer, and artwork reveals something of the artist, so too creation reveals something of the Creator.*

- Psalm 19:1-2 says, *"The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament shows His handiwork. Day unto day utters speech, and night unto night reveals knowledge."*

3. **ATTRIBUTES** of the Beginner – As we study about **the One who made everything**, scripture reveals many of His attributes. To name a few:

- God is **TRINITARIAN** – (Gen 1:26) *speaks of the Godhead creating.*
- God is eternally **UNCAUSED** – (Ex 3:14) *God is NOT created! He always existed.*
- God is **INDEPENDENT** – (Acts 17: 24-25) *Dependent upon no one or no thing!*
- God is **TRANSCENDENT** and **IMMANENT** – *He is superior to everything, yet actively at work in His creation; sustaining it and ruling over it.*
- God is **PERSONAL** – *God is a personal 'HE,' not an impersonal it!*
- God is **POWERFUL** – *God made everything from nothing and uphold it all.*
- God is **GRACIOUS** – (Gen 6:8) *From the opening of scripture to the end.*
- God is **SOVEREIGN** – *All creation comes from God, is ruled by God, and belongs to God...and will give an account before God.*
- God is **HOLY** – *God is without evil/wickedness. (Hab 1:13) You are of purer eyes than to behold evil, And cannot look on wickedness.*

P/A – Scripture also reveals that God's Character is immutable! The same, yesterday, today, and forever (**Heb 13:8**) This should bring great comfort to us, especially in is seemingly ever-changing world.

**V. THE STRUCTURE OF GENESIS** – Because the book of Genesis serves as a foundation for God's revelation and history of all that is true, it is important to understand from a **GENERATIONAL VIEW.** The Hebrew word for Generation is *toledot* – lit. *"the generations of."*

<b>Introduction:</b>	Creation (1:1-2:3)
1st Story:	The Origin of the Universe (2:4 - 4:26)
2nd Story:	The Origin of Adam (5:1 - 6:8)
3rd Story:	The Origin of Noah (6:9 - 9:29)
4th Story:	The Origin of Noah's Sons (10:1 - 11:9)
5th Story:	The Origin of Shem (11:10 - 11:26)
6th Story:	The Origin of Abraham (11:27 - 25:11)
7th Story:	The Origin of Ishmael (25:12 - 25:18)
8th Story:	The Origin of Isaac and Jacob (25:19 - 35:29)
9th Story:	The Origin of Esau (36:1 - 37:1)
10th Story:	The Origin of Joseph (37:2 - 50:6)

**\* The Outline of Genesis by Irving Jensen (OT Survey)**

**The influence of Genesis in Scripture is demonstrated by its being quoted over 100 times in the NT and hundreds of allusions appearing in both Testaments.**

**P/A** – God Designed and created a place for us to dwell, then He called us into existence so that we can learn of His Love and Goodness. And so that we can have purpose in this Life!

- **NEXT WEEK: Genesis Chapter 1-2 (Read Ahead)**