

# Genesis - Introduction & Background

## Title

The Hebrew Bible entitles the book *bereshith*, which means "in the beginning." This title is taken from the book's first word. In fact, it is a common practice among the books of the Torah to adopt for the title the book's opening word or words. The LXX entitles the book *geneseos* based upon the Greek translation of *toledoth* ("account" or "generations") in 2:4 and 5:1. Translating from the LXX, the Vulgate entitles the book *Liber Genesis*. The English Bible also adopted the title *Genesis*.

## Authorship

The Book of Genesis is an anonymous work. Mosaic authorship of the Pentateuch was the traditional view held not only by the Jews and the early church but also by most scholars prior to 1750. However, this consensus soon shifted with the advent of the Documentary Hypothesis. According to this theory, the Pentateuch is attributable to multiple authors writing long after the events transpired. Thus, Moses is not the author of the first five books of the Bible. Because of the thematic linkage between the end of the Book of Genesis and the beginning of the Book of Exodus, an attack upon Mosaic authorship of the rest of the Pentateuch is also an attack upon the Mosaic authorship of Genesis. Thus, the Documentary Hypothesis as a whole must be considered when discussing the Mosaic authorship of Genesis.

Proponents of the Documentary Hypothesis rely upon various pieces of internal evidence such as differing literary styles, differing names for God, couplets, and editorial insertions (14:14; 36:31; 47:11). They also argue that writing was unknown during the time of Moses. Witter (1711), Astruc (1753), and Eichhorn were among the first to attempt to explain some of the alleged differences in Genesis through the uses of documents that supposedly antedated Genesis. Geddes (1800), Vater (1802–1805), and Hartman (1831) then advanced this theory further by arguing that the Pentateuch was composed from fragments by an anonymous redactor working several centuries after the time of Moses. This notion then advanced even further as scholars appealed to alleged documents using differing names of God that an anonymous redactor used to piece together the Pentateuch long after the time of Moses. Such scholars included Ewald (1823–1845), De Wette (1840), Lengerke (1844), Knobel (1861), Shrader (1869), Hupfeld (1853), Graf (1860), and Keukenen (1869–1870). The Documentary Hypothesis was then given its classical articulation by Julius Wellhausen (1876–1878). According to Wellhausen, anonymous editors compiled the Pentateuch from the following four documents: J (Yahwist, 850 BC), E (Elohist 750 BC), D (Deuteronomist, 621 BC) and P (Priestly Code, 525 BC). More modern

advocates and revisers of this approach include Driver (1891), Briggs (1893), Eissfeldt (1922), Morgenstern (1927), and Pfeiffer (1941).

Despite the widespread acceptance of the Documentary Hypothesis, several reasons cause it to be suspect.

First, it is contradicted by the traditional view of the Jews and the early church.

Second, the Pentateuch itself declares Moses to be the author (Ex 17:14; 24:4,7; 34:27; Num 33:1-2; Deut 1:8; 31:9). Because the Torah was originally regarded as one book, claims of Mosaic authorship made later on in the Torah can also be taken to mean that Moses wrote Genesis as well.

Fourth, the NT designates Moses as the author of Genesis and the Pentateuch (Matt 19:4-8; Mark 7:10; 12:26; Luke 16:29-31; 20:37; 24:27; John 5:46-47; 7:19,23; Acts 15:1; Rom 10:5,19).

Fifth, the Pentateuch reflects a thematic literary unity that contends for a single author.

Sixth, the author writes as an eyewitness to much of the Pentateuch's content, which would be impossible for a writer long after the events already transpired (Ex 15:27; Num 2:1-31; 11:7-8).

Seventh, the writer demonstrates a familiarity with Egyptian culture and geography, which would be unlikely for a later writer (Gen 13:10; 16:1-3; 33:18; 39:4; 40:9-11; 41:40,43).

However, such knowledge would be consistent with Moses' Egyptian education (Acts 7:22). Third, the rest of the OT presupposes Mosaic authorship of the Pentateuch (Joshua 1:7-8; 8:32, 34; 22:5; 1 Kings 2:3; 2 Kings 13:23; 14:6; 21:8; 1 Chr 1:1; Ezra 6:18; Dan 9:11-13; Mal 4:4).

Eighth, Moses' Egyptian education also gave him the ability to produce such a literary masterpiece. In fact, "Moses is the only person we know of from this early time period who had the ability to write this book. The rest of the Israelites were a nation of uneducated slaves, whereas Moses was a highly educated son of the king...Moses was the only one who had both the interest and information to write Genesis. Being Jewish Moses would have access to the family records of his ancestors (Cf. Gen. 5:1; 10:1; 25:19; etc.) which were no doubt brought down to Egypt by Jacob (Gen 46). Since Moses was bent on delivering his people from Egypt, it is natural to assume that he was familiar with the promises of God passed down by his forefathers that God would indeed deliver them (Cf. Gen 46:3-4; Ex 2:24)."

Ninth, the documents that the Documentary Hypothesis relies upon have never been discovered. Tenth, the Documentary Hypothesis is built upon unfounded assumptions. For example, writing has been discovered as early as 1500 BC, which would predate the time of Moses. Other works of literary depth similar to the variety of genres displayed in Pentateuch also predate the time of Moses. Also, Moses could have used different names for God in order to accomplish different literary purposes. Moreover, an editor making

minor changes after Moses had already completed the bulk of the work could have been responsible for the editorial insertions.

Furthermore, the couplets are explainable in terms of different stories couched in the same literary framework. In addition, archeological finds routinely reveal a credible scenario whereby the events recorded in the Pentateuch could have transpired. These finds rebut the documentary presupposition that the Pentateuch's events are historically impossible. Finally, the upward evolutionary movement of religion from polytheism to monotheism that the Documentary Hypothesis assumes has never been proven. In sum, it is best to conclude that Moses is the author of the Pentateuch. While Moses most probably used sources (Gen 5:1), he, rather than some later figure, is the ultimate writer, redactor, compiler, and editor of Genesis.

### **Date, Place of Writing, and Recipients**

If Mosaic authorship of the Pentateuch is accepted, then Genesis had to be compiled sometime during Moses' lifetime (1525–1405 BC). This date presupposes an early date for the Exodus. If 966 BC was the fourth year of Solomon's reign and the Exodus transpired 480 years earlier (1 Kings 6:1), then the Exodus took place in 1446 BC. If Moses led the nation in the Exodus when he was 80 years old (Acts 7:23,30) and lived an additional 40 years (Deut 34:7; Acts 7:36), then the scope of Moses' life was 1525–1405 BC.

Jewish and Christian testimonies agree that Moses wrote the Pentateuch in the wilderness of Sinai. It is likely that Moses wrote Genesis to the Exodus generation to help prepare them for the coming conquest. More specifically he wrote the book to prepare his audience for entry into and obedience to the Mosaic Covenant. Thus, Moses wrote the book shortly after the Exodus. However, beyond this a specific date for the composition of the book is difficult to determine. While Moses completed the bulk of the Book Genesis, this is not to say that he completely finished the book since editorial insertions were apparently made at a later date (14:14; 36:31; 47:11).

### **Scope and Geographical Setting**

Regarding major shifts in setting, three sections are discernible. Genesis 1–11 elapses in between the creation and the birth of Terah (2296 BC) and takes place in the Fertile Crescent. This section transitions the reader from Eden to Haran. Thus, this section takes place over a 1500-mile area. Genesis 12–36 elapses in between the birth of Terah (2296 BC) and Joseph's arrival in Egypt (1899 BC) and takes place mostly in Canaan. Thus, this section takes place in a roughly 200-year time period and geographically moves from Haran to Canaan. Genesis 37–50 elapses in between Joseph's arrival in Egypt (1899 BC) and the death of Joseph (1806 BC) and takes place mostly in Egypt. Thus, this section takes place in less than 100 years and geographically moves from Canaan to Egypt.

Accepted dates for the patriarchs are captured on the following chart:

<b>Patriarch</b>	<b>Date</b>
Abraham	2166–1991 B.C.
Isaac	2066–1886 B.C.
Jacob	2006–1859 B.C.
Joseph	1916–1806 B.C.

## Structure

A key structural marker used throughout the book is the *toledoth*, which means, "these are the generations of" (Gen 2:4; 5:1; 6:9; 10:1; 11:10; 25:12,19; 36:1,9; 37:2). This repetition yields the following literary outline: introduction to the generations (1:1–2:3), generations of the heaven and earth (2:4–4:26), generations of Adam (5:1–6:8), generations of Noah (6:9–9:29), generations of the sons of Noah (10:1–11:9), generations of Shem (11:10–26), generations of Terah (11:27–25:11), generations of Ishmael (25:12–18), generations of Isaac (25:19–35:29), generations of Esau (36:1–37:1), and the generations of Jacob (37:2–50:26). Thus, *toledoth* introduces a section rather than concludes it. *Toledoth* says this is what became of someone (or the heavens and the earth in the case of 2:4). Each *toledoth* starts out broadly and then narrows to a person, line, or group of interest to the writer within that given section. Apparently, no *toledoth* was necessary to introduce the creation of the cosmos.

However, the outline followed here is a thematic one focusing on primeval (Gen 1–11:9) and patriarchal history (Gen 11:10–50:26) as the two key divisions in the book. These two sections can also be categorized as the beginning of the human race and the beginning of the Hebrew race. The four key events of primeval history include creation (1–2), fall (3–5), flood (6–9), and national dispersion (10:1–11:9). The four key people of patriarchal history include Abraham (11:10–25:11), Isaac (25:12–26:35), Jacob (27–36), and Joseph (37–50). Another possible thematic outline is God's generation (1–2), man's degeneration (3–11), and God's regeneration (12–50).

## Message

At the time of the Exodus, God reveals to Israel her divinely ordained role to mediate His redemptive purposes to a fallen world. This exalted position is communicated through the revelation of Israel's unconditional covenant and God's miraculous preservation of the nation in furtherance of this covenant. Moses' audience could enter into this redemptive purpose through faith and obedience.

## Purposes

Moses wrote the Book of Genesis to accomplish at least three purposes. First, it has often been said that a nation that does not know where it has been does not know where it is going. Therefore, it was necessary for Moses to give Israel an explanation of her history. After 400 years of slavery it would be easy to see how such a history could easily be forgotten. Thus, in Genesis Moses explains how God's original plan for creation had been

lost and how Israel had been set-aside for the special purpose of mediating God's redemptive blessings to the world.

Second, as the nation was on the verge of entering the land, Israel was in need of understanding the Abrahamic Covenant, which gave Israel a right to the land (Gen 15:18-21). Because they would soon have to take the land by fighting the Canaanites, Israel was also in need of grasping that the Canaanites were under the judgment of God and thus it was God's will for the nation to remove and exterminate them (Gen 9:25; 15:16).<sup>16</sup> Third, because success in the conquest would be predicated upon the nation's obedience to God's will, the nation needed to be reminded of the patriarchal stories where obedience resulted in blessing (Gen 22:18). In sum, the book was intended for Moses' generation to trust God by better understanding her past, purpose, and destiny as they anticipated entrance into Canaan.<sup>17</sup> In Genesis, Moses under the guidance of the Holy Spirit selectively arranges his material to accomplish these goals in the life of the recently emancipated and redeemed nation of Israel.

### **Theological Themes**

Several theological themes recur throughout the Book of Genesis. First, the book focuses upon God's election and preservation of Israel through whom He would redemptively bless the fallen world. Second, the book's emphasis upon the preservation of the nation reveals His covenant faithfulness. Third, the book is a book of beginnings. Examples include the beginning of the cosmos (1:1), kingdom (1-2), man (1:27), Sabbath (2:2-3), marriage (2:22-24), sin (3:1-7), Satan (3:1), sacrifice (3:21), salvation (3:15), family (4:1-15), civilization (4:16-21), government (9:1-6), Israel (12:1-3), covenant (15), and faith (15:6).

### **Unique Characteristics**

The Book of Genesis boasts some outstanding characteristics. First, "Genesis spans more time than any other book in the Bible; in fact, it covers more than all sixty-five other books of the Bible put together." Second, "...Genesis gives us a synoptic preface to the entire Bible. It is the seed-plot of the Bible. The germ or beginning of all truth is within this wonderful book. Genesis is the foundation upon which the entire revelation rests; the root out of which the rest grows. Truths found here are developed in successive ages."

### **Christ in Genesis**

Moses is careful to trace the messianic lineage throughout the book. Beginning with the *proto evangelium* (3:15) the seed is traced through Cain (4:1), Seth (4:25), Shem (9:26), Abraham (12:3), Isaac (21:12), Jacob (25:23), and Judah (49:10). Christ is also typologically seen in Adam (Rom 5:14), Abel (4:4; Heb 11:4), Melchizedek (Heb 7:3), Isaac (22:5; Heb 11:9), and Joseph (both are objects of fatherly love, hated by their brethren, rejected from ruling over their brothers, plotted against, sold for silver, innocently condemned, and divinely raised from humiliation).

### **Outline**

I. Prologue: Primeval history (Gen 1:1—11:9)

(1) Creation (Gen 1:1—2:3)

- (A) Creation of the cosmos (Gen 1:1—2:3)
  - (a) Beginning of creation (1:1-2)
  - (b) Days of creation (Gen 1:3—2:3)
    - (i) Day 1: light (1:3-5)
    - (ii) Day 2: water and sky (1:6-8)
    - (iii) Day 3: land and vegetation (1:9-13)
    - (iv) Day 4: luminaries (1:14-19)
    - (v) Day 5: sea animals and birds (1:20-23)
    - (vi) Day 6: land animals and man (1:24-31)
    - (vii) Day 7: God's rest (Gen 2:1-3)

(B) Creation of man and woman (Gen 2:4-25)

- (a) Creation of man (2:4-7)
- (b) Man's stewardship (2:8-20)
- (c) Creation of woman (2:21-25)

(2) Fall (Gen 3:1-24)

- (A) Temptation by the serpent (3:1-5)
- (B) Sin of Adam and Eve (3:6-8)
- (C) Denial of guilt by Adam and Eve (3:9-13)
- (D) Consequences (3:14-19)
  - (a) Upon serpent (3:14-15)
  - (b) Upon Eve (3:16)
  - (c) Upon man (3:17-19)
- (E) God's provision continues (3:20-24)
  - (a) Faith that the race continues (3:20)
  - (b) Initial act of redemption by God (3:21)
  - (c) The expulsion of Adam and Eve from the garden (3:22-24)

(3) The terrible progress of sin (Gen 4:1—11:9)

- (A) Two lines of human descent (Gen 4:1—5:32)
  - (a) The first murder (4:1-15)
    - (i) Births of Cain and Abel (4:1-2)
    - (ii) Murder of Abel (4:3-8)
    - (iii) Punishment of Cain (4:9-15)
  - (b) The ungodly line of Cain (4:16-24)
  - (c) The godly line of Seth (Gen 4:25—5:32)
    - (i) Birth of Seth (4:25-26)
    - (ii) Genealogy of Adam through Noah (5:1-32)

(B) The flood (Gen 6:1—9:29)

(a) Events prior to the flood (6:1-22)

- (i) Depravity of man (6:1-7)
- (ii) Righteousness of Noah (6:8-12)
- (iii) Building of the ark (6:13-22)

(b) The flood (7:1-24)

- (i) God's instructions to enter the ark (7:1-4)
- (ii) Entrance into the ark (7:5-12)
- (iii) God seals the ark (7:13-16)
- (iv) The flood (7:17-24)

(c) The abatement of the waters (8:1-19)

- (i) The receding of the waters (8:1-5)
- (ii) Tests for dry land (8:6-14)
- (iii) The exit from the ark (8:15-19)

(d) Post-flood events (Gen 8:20—9:29)

- (i) Noahic Covenant (Gen 8:20—9:17)
  - (a) God's promise not to flood again (8:20-22)
  - (b) God's provision for man (9:1-7)
  - (c) Sign of the covenant (9:8-17)
- (ii) Post flood sin (9:18-29)
  - (a) Noah's three sons (9:18-19)
  - (b) Noah's sin (9:20-21)
  - (c) Sin of Ham (9:22-24)
  - (d) Curse of Canaan (9:25-27)
  - (e) Death of Noah (9:28-29)

(C) Tower of Babel (Gen 10:1—11:9)

(a) Table of nations (10:1-32)

- (i) Line of Japheth (10:1-5)
- (ii) Line of Ham (10:6-14)
- (iii) Line of Canaan (10:15-20)
- (iv) Line of Shem (10:21-32)

(b) Tower of Babel (11:1-9)

- (i) Building of the tower (11:1-4)
- (ii) Dispersion of the nations (11:5-9)

II. Epilogue: Patriarchal history (Gen 11:10—50:26)

(1) Life of Abraham (Gen 11:10—25:11)

(A) Intro to Abram (11:10-32)

- (a) Lineage from Shem (11:10-26)

- (b) His father Terah (11:27-32)
- (B) Abrahamic Covenant (Gen 12:1—25:11)
  - (a) Establishment of the covenant (Gen 12:1—17:27)
    - (i) Abrahamic promises (12:1-20)
      - (a) Abrahamic promises (12:1-3)
      - (b) Arrival in Canaan (12:4-9)
      - (c) Egyptian stay (12:10-20)
    - (ii) Preparation for the covenant (Gen 13:1—14:24)
      - (a) Abram's separation from Lot (13:1-13)
      - (b) Promise reaffirmed (13:14-18)
      - (c) Abram rescues Lot (14:1-17)
      - (d) Abram's encounter with the kings (14:18-24)
    - (iii) Formation of the covenant (15:1-21)
      - (a) Heir promised (15:1-6)
      - (b) Preparation of the animal pieces (15:7-11)
      - (c) Prophecy of Egyptian bondage (15:12-16)
      - (d) Covenant ratified (15:17-21)
    - (iv) Covenant distinguished from alternate line (16:1-16)
      - (a) Hagar conceives (16:1-6)
      - (b) God's promises to Hagar (16:7-14)
      - (c) Birth of Ishmael (16:15-16)
    - (v) Sign of the covenant (17:1-27)
      - (a) Abram's change of name and promises reconfirmed (17:1-8)
      - (b) Command to circumcise (17:9-14)
      - (c) Sarai's change of name and promise of Isaac (17:15-22)
      - (d) Performance of circumcision (17:23-27)
  - (b) The maturation of Abraham and Sarah's faith in preparation for covenant blessings (Gen 18:1—22:19)
    - (i) Testing of Sarah's faith (18:1-15)
    - (ii) Trial of Sodom and Gomorrah (18:16—19:38)
      - (a) Abraham's intercession for the righteous in Sodom (18:16-33)
      - (b) Sin of Sodom (19:1-11)
      - (c) Destruction of Sodom (19:12-29)
      - (d) Origin of the Moabites and the Ammonites (19:30-38)
    - (iii) Test with Abimelech (20:1-18)
    - (iv) Birth of Isaac (21:1-7)
    - (v) Hagar and Ishmael depart (21:8-21)
    - (vi) Treaty with Abimelech (21:22-34)

- (vii) Offering of Isaac (22:1-19)
- (c) Transition of covenant from Abraham to Isaac (Gen 22:20—25:11)
  - (i) Family of Nahor and the birth of Rebekah (22:20-24)
  - (ii) Death and burial of Sarah (23:1-20)
    - (a) Death of Sarah (23:1-2)
    - (b) Purchase of Sarah's burial lot (23:3-18)
    - (c) Burial of Sarah (23:19-20)
  - (iii) Marriage of Isaac (24:1-67)
    - (a) Servant's search for a bride (24:1-14)
    - (b) Servant meets Rebekah (24:15-28)
    - (c) Servant's explanation to Laban (24:29-49)
    - (d) Servant leaves with Rebekah (24:50-61)
    - (e) Servant returns with Rebekah (24:62-67)
  - (iv) Final years of Abraham's life (25:1-11)
    - (a) Abraham marries Keturah and the birth of the Midianites (25:1-4)
    - (b) Inheritance of Isaac (25:5-6)
    - (c) Death of Abraham (25:7-8)
    - (d) Burial of Abraham (25:9-11)
- (2) Life of Isaac (Gen 25:12—26:35)
  - (A) Family of Ishmael distinguished (25:12-18)
  - (B) Family of Isaac (25:19-34)
    - (a) Birth of Esau and Jacob (25:19-28)
    - (b) Selling of Esau's birthright (25:29-34)
  - (C) Abrahamic Covenant reconfirmed with Isaac (26:1-35)
    - (a) Covenant confirmed to Isaac (26:1-5)
    - (b) Test with Abimelech (26:6-11)
    - (c) Trial with the Philistines (26:12-22)
    - (d) Covenant reconfirmed to Isaac (26:23-25)
    - (e) Covenant with Abimelech (26:26-33)
    - (f) Esau's alternate line distinguished (26:34-35)
- (3) Life of Jacob (Gen 27:1—36:43)
  - (A) Jacob's deception (27:1—28:5)
    - (a) Plot to deceive Isaac (27:1-17)
    - (b) Rebekah and Jacob deceive Isaac (27:18-29)
    - (c) Esau's grief (27:30-41)
    - (d) Jacob departs (27:42—28:5)
  - (B) Abrahamic Covenant reconfirmed with Jacob (28:6-22)
    - (a) Esau distinguished (28:6-9)

- (b) Jacob's dream (28:10-17)
- (c) Jacob's vow (28:18-22)
- (C) Jacob's lineage (Gen 29:1—30:24)
  - (a) Jacob's marriages (29:1-30)
    - (i) Jacob meets Rachel (29:1-14)
    - (ii) Jacob marries Leah (29:15-26)
    - (iii) Jacob marries Rachel (29:27-30)
  - (b) Jacob's children (29:31—30:24)
    - (i) Through Leah (29:31-35)
    - (ii) Through Bilhah (30:1-8)
    - (iii) Through Zilpah (30:9-13)
    - (iv) Through Leah (30:14-22)
    - (v) Through Rachel (30:22-24)
- (D) The preservation of Jacob (Gen 30:25—33:20)
  - (a) Threat of Laban (30:25—31:45)
    - (i) Business deal with Laban (30:25-43)
    - (ii) Flight from Laban (31:1-22)
    - (iii) Confrontation with Laban (31:22-42)
    - (iv) Covenant with Laban (31:43-55)
  - (b) Threat of Esau (32:1—33:20)
    - (i) Report of Esau's coming (32:1-8)
    - (ii) Prayer for divine protection (32:9-12)
    - (iii) Gift sent to Esau (32:13-21)
    - (iv) Wrestling with the angel of the Lord and Jacob's name changed (32:22-33)
    - (v) Welcome by Esau (33:1-11)
    - (vi) Proposal by Jacob (33:12-17)
    - (vii) Arrival in Canaan (33:18-20)
- (E) Covenant reconfirmed (Gen 34:1—35:15)
  - (a) Covenant threatened by rape of Dinah (34:1-31)
    - (i) Rape of Dinah (34:1-5)
    - (ii) Shechem's request for Dinah (34:6-12)
    - (iii) Proposal of circumcision (34:13-17)
    - (iv) Performance of circumcision (34:18-24)
    - (v) Vengeance of Simeon and Levi (34:25-31)
  - (b) Abrahamic Covenant reconfirmed at Bethel (35:1-15)
    - (i) Command to go to Bethel (35:1-4)
    - (ii) Journey to Bethel (35:5-8)

- (iii) Jacob's name changed and Abrahamic Covenant reconfirmed (35:9-15)
- (F) Transition from Jacob to Joseph (Gen 35:16—36:43)
  - (a) Birth of Benjamin and death of Rachel (35:16-20)
  - (b) Sin of Reuben resulting in loss of rights of firstborn (35:21-22)
  - (c) Sons of Jacob (35:23-26)
  - (d) Death of Isaac (35:27-29)
  - (e) Esau's line distinguished (36:1-43)
    - (i) Family of Esau (36:1-14)
      - (a) Wives (36:1-8)
      - (b) Sons (36:9-14)
    - (ii) Chiefs of the sons of Esau (36:15-19)
    - (iii) Sons of Seir (36:20-30)
    - (iv) Kings of Edom (36:31-39)
    - (v) Chiefs of Edom (36:40-43)
- (4) Life of Joseph (Gen 37:1—50:26)
  - (A) Sin of Joseph's family (Gen 37:1—38:30)
    - (a) His brothers (37:1-36)
      - (i) Jealousy of Joseph's brothers (37:1-11)
      - (ii) Plot against Joseph (37:12-22)
      - (iii) Selling of Joseph (37:23-28)
      - (iv) Brothers deceive Jacob (37:29-36)
    - (b) Judah and Tamar (38:1-30)
      - (i) Sin of Judah (38:1-5)
      - (ii) Widowhood of Tamar (38:6-11)
      - (iii) Tamar deceives Judah (38:12-23)
      - (iv) Tamar's disclosure (38:24-26)
      - (v) Tamar's children (38:27-30)
  - (B) Joseph's trials and promotion in Egypt (Gen 39:1—41:57)
    - (a) Joseph's faithfulness in Potiphar's house (39:1-18)
      - (i) Prosperity in Potiphar's house (39:1-6)
      - (ii) Temptation and accusation by Potiphar's wife (39:7-18)
    - (b) Joseph's faithfulness in prison (Gen 39:19—41:36)
      - (i) Prosperity in prison (39:19-23)
      - (ii) Interpreting dreams (40:1—41:36)
        - (a) Prisoners' dreams (40:1-23)
          - (i) Dreams (40:1-8)
          - (ii) Interpretations (40:9-19)

- (iii) Fulfillment (40:20-23)
  - (b) Pharaoh's dreams (41:1-36)
    - (i) Pharaoh's dreams (41:1-8)
    - (ii) Joseph recommended (41:9-13)
    - (iii) Joseph's interpretation (41:14-32)
    - (iv) Joseph's advice (41:33-36)
  - (c) Joseph's promotion (41:37-57)
    - (i) Joseph's promotion (41:37-45)
    - (ii) Joseph's administration (41:46-57)
      - (a) Joseph's stewardship (41:46-49)
      - (b) Joseph's children (41:50-52)
      - (c) World comes to Egypt (41:53-57)
- (C) Jacob and Joseph's brothers go to Egypt (Gen 42:1—47:26)
  - (a) Brothers' first trip to Egypt (42:1-38)
    - (i) Trip to Egypt (42:1-24)
      - (a) Need for trip (42:1-5)
      - (b) Initial contact with Joseph (42:6-17)
      - (c) Joseph's orders (42:18-24)
    - (ii) Return to Canaan (42:25-38)
      - (a) Discovery of the provision (42:25-28)
      - (b) Explanation to Jacob (42:29-35)
      - (c) Jacob's grief (42:36-38)
  - (b) Brothers' second trip to Egypt (Gen 43:1—45:28)
    - (i) Return to Egypt (43:1-34)
      - (a) Decision to return (43:1-14)
      - (b) Contact with Joseph's steward (43:15-25)
      - (c) Contact with Joseph (43:26-34)
    - (ii) Joseph tests his brothers (44:1-34)
      - (a) Planting of the cup (44:1-5)
      - (b) Discovery of the cup (44:6-13)
      - (c) Meeting with Joseph (44:14-17)
      - (d) Judah intercedes for Benjamin (44:18-34)
    - (iii) Joseph discloses his identity (45:1-28)
      - (a) Joseph's revelation (45:1-15)
      - (b) Pharaoh's instructions (45:16-20)
      - (c) Joseph's provision (45:21-24)
      - (d) Explanation to Jacob (45:25-28)
  - (c) Jacob's trip to Egypt (46:1-27)

- (i) Departure for Egypt (46:1-7)
- (ii) Names of Jacob's descendants brought to Egypt (46:8-27)
- (d) Jacob's descendants dwell in Egypt (Gen 46:28—47:28)
  - (i) Jacob and Joseph reunited (46:28-34)
  - (ii) Interviews with pharaoh (47:1-10)
    - (a) With Joseph's brothers (47:1-6)
    - (b) With Jacob (47:7-10)
  - (iii) The settling of the family (47:11-12)
  - (iv) Joseph's administration in the midst of famine (47:13-26)
    - (a) Buying of livestock (47:13-17)
    - (b) Buying of land (47:18-26)
- (D) Guarantee of future covenant preservation (Gen 47:27—50:26)
  - (a) Joseph's vow to Jacob (47:27-31)
  - (b) Jacob blesses Joseph's sons (48:1-22)
    - (i) Review of God's promises (48:1-7)
    - (ii) Blessing of Joseph's sons Ephraim and Manasseh (48:8-16)
    - (iii) Reaffirmation of the order of God's blessing (48:17-22)
  - (c) Jacob's final prophetic utterances to the tribes (49:1-28)
    - (i) Reuben (49:1-4)
    - (ii) Simeon and Levi (49:5-7)
    - (iii) Judah (49:8-12)
    - (iv) Zebulun (49:13)
    - (v) Issachar (49:14-15)
    - (vi) Dan (49:16-18)
    - (vii) Gad (49:19)
    - (viii) Asher (49:20)
    - (ix) Naphtali (49:21)
    - (x) Joseph (49:22-26)
    - (xi) Benjamin (49:27-28)
  - (d) Jacob's death and burial (Gen 49:29—50:14)
    - (i) Death (49:29-33)
    - (ii) Burial in Canaan (50:1-14)
  - (e) Joseph's reassurances to his brothers (50:15-21)
  - (f) Joseph's death (50:22-26)

## Introduction & Background

Genesis is not a Jewish title; when the Hebrews named books, especially the first five books of the Bible, they simply used the first word of the book as its title. The first Hebrew

word was *bereshith*. Later came the LXX, the Greek translation of the OT, finished ~200 years before Christ. They looked at Gen 5:1, which says "This is the generations of Adam..." so they came up with a word that matched "generations," which was *geneses*. The Latin Vulgate, 400 years after Christ, came along and added *liber* (book) and called it *liber geneseos*, then English simply called it the Book of Genesis.

- Hebrew: *bereshith*, "In the beginning" – the names of Torah books typically used the first word of the book as its name
- LXX: *geneses*
- Vulgate: *liber geneseos*
- English: Book of Genesis

The word "Genesis" comes from the idea of "generations." The Jews called it "In the beginning" but we call it Genesis.

## Author

If you can figure out which human author wrote it, you know approximate date of authorship and who it was written to. Up until the 18th century, everyone believed Moses wrote Genesis. That was until folks in Europe, mainly in Germany, started a movement of higher criticism, where people thought they were smarter than God. They looked at Genesis and the other of the first five books of the Bible, and said that Moses couldn't have written it. Thus, they came up with the Documentary Hypothesis (see [Genesis 01\\_ Introduction - Part 1](#) for details).

## Dates & Recipients

- (1) Date of the Exodus = 1446 BC (1 Kings 6:1)
- (2) Scope of Moses' life - 1525-1405 BC
- (3) Purpose: to prepare Israel for entry/obedience to the Mosaic Covenant and the conquest
- (4) Date of writing: 1445-1405 BC

See [Genesis 02\\_ Introduction - Part 2](#) for details on calculating dates, including Creation, the patriarchs, the Exodus, etc.

## Setting

Gen 1-11: Mesopotamia  
Gen 12-36: Canaan  
Gen 37-50: Egypt

## Message of Genesis

Genesis outlines Israel's role of mediating God's redemptive blessings to the fallen world.

This message is explained through:

- a description of the world's fallen condition (Gen 1-11)
- Israel's birth through the Abrahamic Covenant (Gen 12-36)
- and the preservation of Israel in furtherance of the covenant (Gen 37-50)

Israel was specially chosen by God as a nation, to mediate God's blessings to the entire world. In Deut 7:7, God says that He did not choose Israel because they were many, but they were the fewest. This is why Israel is always referred to as the "elect" nation of God.

Gen 12:3: And I will bless those who bless you,

And the one who curses you I will curse.

**And in you all the families of the earth will be blessed."**

### **Purposes of Genesis**

- (1) A nation that does not know where its been does not know where its going
- (2) To explain that Israel has a right to the land (Gen 15:18-21) and that the Canaanites are under a curse (Gen 9:25; 15:16). The deeds of the Canaanites are detailed in Lev 18; 20.
- (3) Obedience leads to blessings (Gen 22:18)

### **Message & Purpose**

At the time of the Exodus, God reveals to Israel through Moses her divinely ordained role to mediate His redemptive purposes to a fallen world. This exalted position is communicated through the revelation of Israel's unconditional covenant and God's miraculous preservation of the nation in furtherance of this covenant. Moses reveals this information so that Israel, who had been brainwashed in Egypt for 400 years, would press into her intended design during the conquest and beyond.

### **Why Study the Book of Genesis?**

It is the Book of Beginnings (Law of First Mention):

Creation • Man • Woman • Sabbath • Marriage • Home • Childhood • Sin • Murder •  
Sacrifice • Grace • Trade • Agriculture • City life • Races • Languages • Chosen people • ...  
etc.

### **Genesis anticipates all false philosophies:**

- Atheism (Genesis says the world was created by God)
- Pantheism (Genesis says God is transcendent and distinguishable)
- Polytheism (Genesis says there is One God)

- Materialism (Genesis says that matter had a beginning)
- Humanism (Genesis says that God, not man, is the ultimate reality)
- Evolutionism (Genesis says "God created")
- Uniformism (Genesis says God intervenes in His creation)

### **Major Doctrines With Roots in Genesis**

Genesis is the foundation upon which the entire Bible rests. The truths and doctrines that begin in Genesis are developed throughout the rest of Scripture: Sovereign election • Salvation • Justification by faith • Believer's Security • Separation • Disciplinary chastisement • Divine Incarnation • Rapture of the Church • Death and Resurrection • Priesthoods (Aaronic and Melchizedek) • The Antichrist • Palestinian Covenant

Genesis is the precedent for believing the rest of Scripture (Heb 11:3; John 3:12)

### **Genesis vs. Revelation**

<u>Genesis</u>	<u>Revelation</u>
Earth Created (1:1) (21:1)	Earth Passed away
Sun, moon, stars (1:14-16)	(4:12; 8:12)
Earth's government (37)	Earth's judgment (16:8)
Sun to govern Day (1:16)	No need of sun (21:23)
Darkness called night (1:5)	No night there (22:5)
Waters He called seas (1:10)	No more sea (21:1)
A river for earth's blessing (2:10-14) 2)	A river for New Earth (22:1-2)
Man in God's Image (1:26)	Man Headed by
Satan's Image (13)	
Entrance of sin - (3)	End of sin (21-22)
Curse pronounced (3:14-17)	No more curse (22:3)
Death entered (3:19)	No more death (21:4)
Cherubim first mentioned (3:24)	Cherubim final mention (19:4)
Man driven out of Eden (3:24)	Man restored (22)
Tree of life guarded (3:24) (22:14)	Access to Tree of life
Sorrow & suffering enter (3:17)	No more sorrow (22:4)
Religion, art, and science separated from God (4)	judged, destroyed (18)
Nimrod founds Babylon (10:8-10)	Babylon falls (17-18)

God's Flood to Destroy evil generation (6-9) generation (12)	Satan's flood to destroy elect
A bow: God's promise (9:13) (4:3; 10:1)	A bow for remembrance
Sodom & Egypt: Corruption, judgment (13; 19) (11:8)	"Sodom & Egypt" (Jerusalem)
A confederation vs. Abraham's people (14)	Abraham's Seed (12)
A bride for Abraham's son (24) (19)	A bride for Abraham's Seed
Marriage of 1st Adam (2:18-23) (19)	Marriage of Last Adam
Promised Seed: Possess gate of enemies (29:8)	Promised Seed possessing (19)
Man's dominion ceased and Satan's begun (3:24)	Satan's domain ended and man's
restored (22)	restored (22)

### **Foundation of the World**

- God existed before the foundation (Gen 1:1; Ps 90:2; Is 40:21)
- Christ existed before the foundation (Is 48:16; Micah 5:2; John 1:1; 17:5,24)
- Christ was loved by the Father before the foundation (John 17:24)
- Wisdom was established before the foundation (Prov 8:23)
- Believers were predestined for salvation before the foundation (Eph 1:4; 2 Tim 1:9)
- Church Age believer's names were written in the Lamb's Book of Life before the foundation (Rev 13:8)
- God promised eternal life before time began (Titus 1:2)
- Christ was foreordained as Redeemer before the foundation (1 Peter 1:20; Rev 13:8)
- Unrevealed secrets of God (the Kingdom) existed before the foundation (Matt 25:34)
- The blood of all the prophets was shed from the foundation (Luke 11:50)