

Genesis (Introduction) Gen 1:1-2:3 (Part #1) (Lesson #1)



The book of Genesis is one of the **most important books ever written**.

The book of Genesis not only serves as the introduction to the Old Testament, but the introduction to the entire Bible itself. It has been said that if you can believe Genesis 1:1, you will have no problems with the rest of the Bible, this of course is true, although you might still reject that Jesus is the very God who created in Genesis 1.

Title, Author, and Arrangement

Title: The English title “**Genesis**” comes from the Greek translation of the Pentateuch and means “origin,” or “beginnings.” This is an appropriate title, for it is the book of Genesis that describes to us the origins of a number of different things. I have created a list of ten of those things (**Ten Origins in Genesis**) where God explains the origins of different things. I uploaded the document to our website under **Miscellaneous Documents**. Here I will mention two of the ten:

1) **The genesis of death** (Chapter 3)

“16 And the LORD God commanded the man, saying, “You may surely eat of every tree of the garden, 17 but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die.”” (Ge 2:16-17 ESV)

- a. Death is the universal enemy and everyone and indeed every living thing dies. But why? Do things have to die? Are there biological necessities that demand that things die?
- b. Genesis provides the answer for why there is death.
- c. Secular science can explain the process, but not answer the compelling question... WHY?

2) **The genesis of the nation of Israel** (Chapter 12)

“1 Now the LORD said to Abram, “Go from your country and your kindred and your father’s house to the land that I will show you. 2 And I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless you and make your name great, so that you will be a blessing. 3 I will bless those who bless you, and him who dishonors you I will curse, and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed.”” (Ge 12:1-3 ESV)

- a. First, God’s interest in the Hebrew slaves in Exodus 1 only makes sense because of Genesis.
- b. It all started with God calling a pagan named Abram.
- c. We will see Abraham will beget Isaac, who will beget Esau, who will beget Jacob, who will beget the 12 tribal leaders.

Of course, there are many more than 10 examples of origins that we find in the book of Genesis including, our atmosphere, clothing, nations, government, culture, religion, and worship (just to name a few more).

Author: Like all of the sacred canon, the book of Genesis was written by men under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit:

“20 knowing this first of all, that no prophecy of Scripture comes from someone’s own interpretation. 21 For no prophecy was ever produced by the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit.” (2Pe 1:20-21 ESV)

Although a human wrote it, it was God Himself who worked through that human author to write it. He did so with an endgame in mind:

“16 All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, 17 that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work.” (2Ti 3:16-17 ESV)

Traditionally Genesis, like the rest of the Pentateuch (first *five books* of the Old Testament) has been ascribed to Moses. The other four books of the Pentateuch relate to Moses' life and his role in bringing Israel to the borders of Canaan. The phrase the "Lord Spoke to Moses" is used 104 times in the Pentateuch, while the phrase "Moses wrote" is used four times (Ex 24:4; Num 33:2; Deu 31:9, 31:22). Genesis is clearly an introduction to the books that follow, so it is natural to assume that if Moses was responsible for their composition, he must also have been the author of Genesis.

But it is more than "natural" to believe this. This seems to be what Christ believed based on what he said to the two travelers on the road to Emmaus:

"And beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, he interpreted to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning himself." (Lu 24:27 ESV)

"Then he said to them, "These are my words that I spoke to you while I was still with you, that everything written about me in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms must be fulfilled." (Lu 24:44 ESV)

So, if Moses wrote Genesis, and we have every reason to believe he did. **Where did he get the information?** There are three major theories.

First The Three Main Theories:

- 1) Moses received it through direct revelation from God.
- 2) He received it passed down from generation to generation through oral tradition.
- 3) Moses took actual written records that had been written, collected, and passed down, with the Holy Spirit of God guiding the production of the final product.

a. It is the most logical. If I were venturing a guess, this is what I would guess.

b. We see this in the Old Testament where a writer is using various documents to produce the final product that we are reading. Remember our study in I Kings, two examples:

"Now the rest of the acts of Solomon, and all that he did, and his wisdom, are they not written in the Book of the Acts of Solomon?" (1Ki 11:41 ESV)

"Now the rest of the acts of Jeroboam, how he warred and how he reigned, behold, they are written in the Book of the Chronicles of the Kings of Israel." (1Ki 14:19 ESV)

c. It seems, contained within Genesis we have a hint that this is what happened. It is likely that the English phrase **"these are the generations of..."** or **"this is the genealogy of..."** are the indicators. The word translated generations or genealogy is the Hebrew word **תולדה** (toledoth). The first use is Genesis 2:4.

It means the history of, or the record of the history of. It seems to follow the history that it is talking about, almost like ok, this was the history of x. It seems to represent a subscript or a closing statement. When looked at this way, it tells us what event or people are being talked about and likely points to who compiled the writing.

If we approach it that way, we find **9 clear divisions and a couple of subsections**. I will just touch upon this, but if you are interested in this, please jump on our website and download the document (**The Genesis of Genesis**) which is uploaded under the **Miscellaneous documents** section.

I will show you the first two:

"These are the generations of the heavens and the earth when they were created, in the day that the LORD God made the earth and the heavens." (Ge 2:4 ESV) (Covering 1:1-2:4) These details had to be conveyed from God to Adam or Moses.

“This is the book of the generations of Adam. When God created man, he made him in the likeness of God.” (Ge 5:1 ESV) (Covering 2:4b-5:1) The sections is about Adam and all that happened in the temptation, the fall, Cain and Abel.

If this is true, keep in mind we do not have what was handed down, but rather the finished compilation of ancient history as written by Moses, under divine inspiration, regardless of how he obtained the data.

Arrangement of the Book: The simplest arrangement finds two major sections: (1) the primeval history of the world before Abraham (chs. 1–11); (2) the history of the patriarchs (chs. 12–50).

If we use the marker “these are the generations of…” we find **9 major divisions** with a couple of minor subsections on Ishmael and Esau.

A Quick Memory Aid Might Be Helpful

If the history in the Old Testament is taken literally, and we are not missing any generations.

- The creation is approximately 4000 years before Christ
- Abraham is approximately 2000 years before Christ
- So, Genesis 1-11 covers 2000 years of human history!
- The rest of the Old Testament covers approximately 2000 years.

Location

The book of Genesis takes place in the ancient Near East and describes the beginnings of man, nations, and the nation of Israel.

So That You Know

Today, liberal scholars and some Christians have come to doubt the historicity of Genesis 1-11. They treat the chapters as legend, myths, or what they might call “spiritual truth.” This of course is to say that they are not literal history, but teach moral lessons. I believe the Bible will not support this position. Jesus and the apostles treated the events of Genesis 1-11 as true history. Just a few examples should suffice:

Jesus is chiding the Israelites for their unbelief says:

“so that on you may come all the righteous blood shed on earth, from the blood of righteous Abel to the blood of Zechariah the son of Barachiah, whom you murdered between the sanctuary and the altar.” (Mt 23:35 ESV)

This generation is going to be held responsible for the righteous blood of Abel. This makes absolutely no sense, and is indeed nonsense, if Able was not a real person as described in Genesis chapter 4.

In referring to His return Jesus said this:

“Just as it was in the days of Noah, so will it be in the days of the Son of Man.” (Lu 17:26 ESV)

For the time (when Jesus will return) to be like the days of Noah as outlined in Genesis 5, is only possible if Noah is a real person who lived at a real time.

So clearly Jesus believed Noah was a real person. He goes on...

“They were eating and drinking and marrying and being given in marriage, until the day when Noah entered the ark, and the flood came and destroyed them all.” (Lu 17:27 ESV)

Jesus refers to the global catastrophe of the flood as described in Genesis 7 and 8, as a real event. Believing that Genesis 1-11 is not real history makes Jesus a liar or an idiot. Both are untrue and unacceptable!

Genesis is quoted 60 times in 17 books of the New Testament with over 200 allusions from Genesis! Over 100 of the allusions come from chapters 1-11. The chapters that many modern thinkers reject as actual history.

Names of God

Another feature about the book of Genesis is that we find many names or titles for God. Many of these are unique, fascinating, inspiring, and in some cases even mysterious.

If you are interested in this topic, please take a look at the document entitled (**Ten Names of God in Genesis**). That has been uploaded to **Miscellaneous Documents**. I will touch upon two for now:

- 1) The first name, in Genesis for God is אֱלֹהִים (elohiyim). It is of course a noun, what you may not know is that it is the plural form of אֱלֹהִי ('eloahh).
 - a. It is often used with a verb that is **single**, thus causing the translators to translate God (single) although the **noun itself is plural**.
 - b. From the jump, with God, we have a mystery wrapped in an enigma!
 - c. The one God whose name is a plural.
- 2) Another name we see for God is used in Gen 16:13 and it is used by Hagar, where she refers to God as אֵל ('el) רֹאֵי (ro'iy).
 - a. Literally "**the God who sees.**"
 - b. This is the name that Hagar used to describe God, and what a beautiful God.

There are of course other names that God gives Himself in Genesis, but this hopefully highlights an important point. Beginning in the first book of the Bible, right from the jump, **what we find is a God who is revealing Himself, over time, to men and women who would otherwise not know him.**

The Genealogies of Genesis

Genesis covers a span of almost **2400 years**. To be precise from the creation to the birth of Joseph is **2199** years. If this interest you, I have uploaded a document (**The Genealogies in Genesis**) to our webpage.

Genesis is not only actual history, but where Genesis speaks about science or scientific matters, we should take it as presented. We should not assume that modern science knows more than God, about the formation of space and time, the origin of the species, or the ancestry of man.

Ten Anticipations of Eternity in Genesis

Genesis is not only history of the origin of the universe, but it is also a prophecy of man's final future. Paradise is lost in Genesis and the entire cosmos is plunged into sin. Paradise is regained in the Revelation and we see the amazing contrast to the world after the Fall (in Genesis) to the world after our Lord's final redemption (in the Revelation).

If this interest you, I have uploaded a document entitled (**Ten Anticipations of Eternity in Genesis**) to our webpage. I will provide two examples below:

Cursed World

Death becomes a reality (3:19)
Ground is cursed (3:17)

Eternal World

Death is eliminated (21:4)
No more curse (22:3)

There are of course many more, but again, my goal is to get us thinking and considering as we launch off on this amazing study in Genesis.

To get us started today I will read all of chapter 1 and the first three verses of chapter 2.

“1 ¶ In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth. 2 The earth was without form and void, and darkness was over the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters. 3 ¶ And God said, “Let there be light,” and there was light. 4 And God saw that the light was good. And God separated the light from the darkness. 5 God called the light Day, and the darkness he called Night. And there was evening and there was morning, the first day

Vs 1a Here we have what many see as the **grand declaration of Scriptures**, the **overarching proclamation of the Scriptures**. It is of course that, but I believe we are already being told what God created on day one. You will see this as we develop the text.

This is the **beginning of time**, this is the beginning of **matter, energy, time**, and possibly even the beginning of **space**. This is the **beginning of man**, the beginning of **our cosmos**, the **beginning our story** and **our history**.

This is **not God’s beginning**; **God has no beginning**. He is the one who **has always been and will always be**. Before there was **ever a beginning** for this **massive cosmos** or **for man**, there was God.

Elohim is the name of God that stresses his majesty and omnipotence. It is used throughout the first chapter of Genesis 1. **The *im* ending in the Hebrew is a plural ending**.

The Hebrew word אֱלֹהִים (*‘elohiym*), will be used an additional **35 times** here in Genesis 1:1-2:3, the **plural for God**, but it is used with a **singular verb**.

Thus, it is here, in the **very first verse of the Bible** we find an **enigma** wrapped in a **mystery** that will not be fully explained (revealed) for **thousands of years**. Namely the single God, has a triune nature. This is a “mystery” that will not be fully revealed until the New Testament. Here we have a hint!

But here we see a God who is one, yet more than one. Henry Morris calls it a “uni-plurality.”

Did you know Moses wrote a Psalm? As far as we can tell he only wrote one. **Anyone care to venture a guess how it begins?**

“1 « A Prayer of Moses, the man of God. » Lord, you have been our dwelling place in all generations. 2 Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever you had formed the earth and the world, from everlasting to everlasting you are God.” (Ps 90:1-2 ESV)

Moses in this prayer is recognizing that God has always existed, but there was a time when he supernaturally created. There was a time when he formed the earth and he brought forth the mountains. Now I am not sure how the Israelite handled that Adonay is the one who did all this. Especially when you consider:

“« A Psalm of David. » The LORD says to my Lord: “Sit at my right hand, until I make your enemies your footstool.”” (Ps 110:1 ESV)

The word translated **created** is the Hebrew word בָּרָא (*bara’*). It means to **shape** or **form**, it has the idea of God calling something into existence **from nothing**. He spoke and matter and energy were created.

Theology Break:

Now, as we think about God creating, as we think about God speaking things into existence, we must bring in the New Testament to provide greater clarity, that we might miss without it.

“1 ¶ In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. 2 He was in the beginning with God. 3 All things were made through him, and without him was not any thing made that was made.” (Joh 1:1-3 ESV)

“13 He has delivered us from the domain of darkness and transferred us to the kingdom of his beloved Son, 14 in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins. 15 He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation. 16 For by him all things were created, in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities — all things were created through him and for him. 17 And he is before all things, and in him all things hold together.” (Col 1:13-17 ESV)

So that I do not bury the lede, we will see this later here in Genesis chapter 1, but I want you to see it now, this happens during day 6:

“Then God said, “Let us make man in our image, after our likeness. And let them have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over the livestock and over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth.”” (Ge 1:26 ESV)

So, we now know and understand (so far) that **God the Father** and **God the Son** were there at creation: **The Father willed it. The Son created it.**

The declaration of Scriptures, in the beginning God the Son created the **heavens and the earth!**

Does he mean the heavens around the planet as we will see in verse 8 or does he means the heavens in the sense of the place that contains all of the stars and galaxies (like we see in verse 14)?

The word translated **heavens** is **שָׁמַיִם (shamayim)**. It can mean heaven or heavens. It is a plural noun that is here used with a plural verb, thus translated heavens. It is here that God the Son, created from absolutely nothing, no raw materials, the heaven around our planet and possibly the heavens that exist outside our planet (space). We will discuss this in greater detail in verse 8.

If he means the **heavens around the planet, as you will see, they are formed, but not yet finished.** If he means the **heavens (including) where the stars will live**, in either case, that is **formed**, but not **finished or filled**.

God the Son created matter, energy, time, and possibly space from nothing. **He called them into existence.**

Vs 2 - The earth was **תְּהוֹ (tohuw)** and **בְּהוֹ (bohuw)**. The earth was **unformed** and **unfilled**. It was **incomplete** and **had no life**. It was **unfinished** and **unfurnished**...

Now there are some who make much of this phrase to imply it means a judgement fell upon an early earth and this is like a restart.

This is complete speculation. You do not get this idea from Genesis, or the Bible for that matter, nor do you get this idea from these two Hebrew words.

What I believe Moses is explaining, is that when God the Son, created the earth (out of nothing) it was **תְּהוֹ (tohuw)** and **בְּהוֹ (bohuw)**. The earth was **unformed** and **unfilled**. The earth was **unframed** and **empty**.

Then Moses goes on to explain that is exactly what he means. So the earth was **without form** and it was **totally uninhabited** and **darkness was over the face of the deep**.

The deep – The same word used when at the flood the fountains of the great deep were broken up (Gen 7:11, 8:2). The deep that covered Pharaoh’s army (Ex 15:5, 15:8). The Psalmist says that God cleft the rock in the wilderness and gave them water to drink out of the deep (Ps 78:15).

Waters were upon the face of the entire planet! The earth was a water covered sphere (that was **unformed and unfilled**), a water covered planet spinning in the **darkness of space**. **Imagine a sphere covered in water in the dark!**

AND... the spirit of God, the third person of the Godhead was **hovering**, (brooding) (fluttering) was **moving** over the face of the waters!

Here we are told a piece of information we suspected, but the Word of God bears out. **Namely, God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit were there when the heavens and the earth were created out of nothing!** This is all tucked away in the first verses of Genesis!

The Holy Spirit, brooding over God's as yet unfinished and unfilled planet. Picture this in your mind. The radiant glory of God, hovering over the waters of this newly created planet spinning in the darkness. God's Spirit is brooding over this unshapen reality in eager anticipation for what the earth will become!

Now why is the Bible telling us this, what is the point? I cannot be sure, but I cannot help but wonder if we are being told that the Spirit of God, fluttering over this formless and unfished earth activated or energized it.

If so, then same Spirit that energized Jesus and raised him from the dead is the Spirit that originally energized our creation!

Vs 3 - It is there, as the Spirit of God, is hovering, fluttering, vibrating, over the face of the waters, that God speaks **"let there be light"** and there in the **darkness, instantly**, there is this amazing creation, **light**.

Keep in mind, God has not created the light givers (stars) yet, but he has created light!

He will not create the main light giver, our sun, until day four. Before the sun is created, before the stars are created, **light is created. That is the Biblical record!**

It is important to note that all that has happened here on **day one**, all happened at the **command of the word of God**. God created this planet and then God spoke and **created light!**

We cannot even imagine what this might have looked like. **A spinning unformed, water-covered planet and then there is light!**

Now for some of us, this may be shocking to our senses. I would remind you what John says:

"22 And I saw no temple in the city, for its temple is the Lord God the Almighty and the Lamb. 23 And the city has no need of sun or moon to shine on it, for the glory of God gives it light, and its lamp is the Lamb. 24 By its light will the nations walk, and the kings of the earth will bring their glory into it, 25 and its gates will never be shut by day — and there will be no night there." (Re 21:22-25 ESV)

This is surprising, but quite possibly harkens back to day one, **light prior to the light givers**. God Himself, the glory of God is the initial light that is lighting the planet. As you consider that, I would remind you of John 1:

"1 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. 2 He was in the beginning with God. 3 All things were made through him, and without him was not any thing made that was made. 4 In him was life, and the life was the light of men. 5 ¶ The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it." (Joh 1:1-5 ESV)

Vs 4 - This is hard to fully understand, but we must accept, that light was created in the **midst of darkness** and God saw that light and he declared that it was **“good.”**

You will see this repeated again in vs 10 (when dry land was formed), vs 12 (end of day 3), vs 18 (end of day 4), vs 21 (end of day 5), vs 25 (after land animals created on day 6), vs 31 end of day six and it was all **“very” or exceedingly good.**

**** Some believe the sun was created here, but it was shrouded out and would not become visible until the forth day. This is possible, but I hold to the fact that God created light, before the sun. ****

God separated light from darkness.

God called the light (day) and the darkness he called night. So this creation of light had to do with the creation of day and night although the sun, which would provide the light for the day, was as of this moment, not yet created. **There was evening and there was morning, the first day.**

Here it is clear, for a few reasons that we will discuss, the 24-hour cycle is created, day and night are created, and God’s work, during the first day of the beginning of time is completed. **This is day one.**

Before we go any further in the creation week, I want to discuss the days of creation.

Specifically, were these **six literal days** (roughly 24 hour days) or were they six long periods of time. Maybe each day a thousand years, each day a million years, or each day an unspecified period of time.

Day or night or the passage of a day, is only relevant if you are here on earth. A day is a measurement of time, only relevant to us. It is the revolution of the earth as measured from a given location on the earth. If we were on some other planet, however we might measure a day, it would likely be different than our day.

Now there are some who do not believe this was a literal day, but instead some undisclosed long period of time. But I believe this to be an untenable position. Let’s talk about the Hebrew word translated day.

The Hebrew word is **יוֹם yowm**. This word is used 2301 times in the Hebrew Bible. The normal use of this word is a literal (24 hour) day. When it is used with a number it always means a literal day. When it is used with evening or morning it always means a literal day. When it is used with night it always means a literal day. But it is clearer:

“8 Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy. 9 Six days you shall labor, and do all your work, 10 but the seventh day is a Sabbath to the LORD your God. On it you shall not do any work, you, or your son, or your daughter, your male servant, or your female servant, or your livestock, or the sojourner who is within your gates. 11 For in six days the LORD made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that is in them, and rested on the seventh day. Therefore the LORD blessed the Sabbath day and made it holy.” (Ex 20:8-11 ESV)

Thus, as we come to the end of the first day, we have a water covered planet, that was created out of nothing by the second person of the Godhead. This planet appears to be spinning and it being energized by the Spirit of God and is basking in the light of God.

I would remind us:

“22 And I saw no temple in the city, for its temple is the Lord God the Almighty and the Lamb. 23 And the city has no need of sun or moon to shine on it, for the glory of God gives it light, and its lamp is the Lamb. 24 By its light will the nations walk, and the kings of the earth will bring their glory into it, 25 and its gates will never be shut by day — and there will be no night there.” (Re 21:22-25 ESV)