

GENESIS

Introduction

As its name implies, Genesis is about beginnings. Genesis tells us that God created everything that exists. It shows that God is both the Creator and the Ruler of all creation. But it also tells of humanity's tragic fall into sin and death, and of God's unfolding plan of redemption through his covenant with Abraham and his descendants. Genesis includes some of the most memorable stories in the Bible, beginning with Adam and Eve (chs. 1–4), continuing through Noah, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and ending with the life of Joseph (chs. 37–50), who died before 1600 B.C. Traditionally, Jews and Christians have recognized Moses as the author, writing after the Exodus from Egypt, commonly dated around 1440 B.C. though some prefer a date around 1260 B.C.

The Creation of the World

In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth. ²The 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.

³And God said, "Let there be light," and there was light. ⁴And God saw that the light was good. And God separated the light from the darkness. ⁵God called the light Day, and the darkness he called Night. And there was evening and there was morning, the first day.

⁶And God said, "Let there be an expanse¹ in the midst of the waters, and let it separate the waters from the waters." ⁷And God made² the expanse and separated the waters that were under the expanse from the waters that were above the expanse. And it was so. ⁸And God called the expanse Heaven.³ And there was evening and there was morning, the second day.

⁹And God said, "Let the waters under the

heavens be gathered together into one place, and let the dry land appear." And it was so. ¹⁰God called the dry land Earth,⁴ and the waters that were gathered together he called Seas. And God saw that it was good.

¹¹And God said, "Let the earth sprout vegetation, plants⁵ yielding seed, and fruit trees bearing fruit in which is their seed, each according to its kind, on the earth." And it was so. ¹²The earth brought forth vegetation, plants yielding seed according to their own kinds, and trees bearing fruit in which is their seed, each according to its kind. And God saw that it was good. ¹³And there was evening and there was morning, the third day.

¹⁴And God said, "Let there be lights in the expanse of the heavens to separate the day from the night. And let them be for signs and for seasons,⁶ and for days and years, ¹⁵and let them be lights in the expanse of the heavens to give light upon the earth." And it was so. ¹⁶And God made the two great lights—the greater light to

¹ Or a canopy; also verses 7, 8, 14, 15, 17, 20 ² Or fashioned; also verse 16 ³ Or Sky; also verses 9, 14, 15, 17, 20, 26, 28, 30; 2:1 ⁴ Or Land; also verses 11, 12, 22, 24, 25, 26, 28, 30; 2:1 ⁵ Or small plants; also verses 12, 29 ⁶ Or appointed times

rule the day and the lesser light to rule the night—and the stars. ¹⁷And God set them in the expanse of the heavens to give light on the earth, ¹⁸to rule over the day and over the night, and to separate the light from the darkness. And God saw that it was good. ¹⁹And there was evening and there was morning, the fourth day.

²⁰And God said, “Let the waters swarm with swarms of living creatures, and let birds¹ fly above the earth across the expanse of the heavens.” ²¹So God created the great sea creatures and every living creature that moves, with which the waters swarm, according to their kinds, and every winged bird according to its kind. And God saw that it was good. ²²And God blessed them, saying, “Be fruitful and multiply and fill the waters in the seas, and let birds multiply on the earth.” ²³And there was evening and there was morning, the fifth day.

²⁴And God said, “Let the earth bring forth living creatures according to their kinds—livestock and creeping things and beasts of the earth according to their kinds.” And it was so. ²⁵And God made the beasts of the earth according to their kinds and the livestock according to their kinds, and everything that creeps on the ground according to its kind. And God saw that it was good.

²⁶Then God said, “Let us make man² 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.”

²⁷ So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them.

²⁸And God blessed them. And God said to them, “Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and subdue it and have dominion

over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over every living thing that moves on the earth.” ²⁹And God said, “Behold, I have given you every plant yielding seed that is on the face of all the earth, and every tree with seed in its fruit. You shall have them for food. ³⁰And to every beast of the earth and to every bird of the heavens and to everything that creeps on the earth, everything that has the breath of life, I have given every green plant for food.” And it was so. ³¹And God saw everything that he had made, and behold, it was very good. And there was evening and there was morning, the sixth day.

The Seventh Day, God Rests

2 Thus the heavens and the earth were finished, and all the host of them. ²And on the seventh day God finished his work that he had done, and he rested on the seventh day from all his work that he had done. ³So God blessed the seventh day and made it holy, because on it God rested from all his work that he had done in creation.

The Creation of Man and Woman

4 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.

⁵When no bush of the field³ was yet in the land⁴ and no small plant of the field had yet sprung up—for the LORD God had not caused it to rain on the land, and there was no man to work the ground, ⁶and a mist⁵ was going up from the land and was watering the whole face of the ground— ⁷then the LORD God formed the man of dust from the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man became a living creature. ⁸And the LORD God planted a garden in Eden, in the east, and there he put the man whom he had formed. ⁹And out of

¹ Or flying things; see Leviticus 11:19-20 ² The Hebrew word for man (*adam*) is the generic term for mankind and becomes the proper name Adam ³ Or open country ⁴ Or earth; also verse 6 ⁵ Or spring

the ground the LORD God made to spring up every tree that is pleasant to the sight and good for food. The tree of life was in the midst of the garden, and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.

10A river flowed out of Eden to water the garden, and there it divided and became four rivers. **11**The name of the first is the Pishon. It is the one that flowed around the whole land of Havilah, where there is gold. **12**And the gold of that land is good; bdellium and onyx stone are there. **13**The name of the second river is the Gihon. It is the one that flowed around the whole land of Cush. **14**And the name of the third river is the Tigris, which flows east of Assyria. And the fourth river is the Euphrates.

15The LORD God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to work it and keep it. **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 eat¹ of it you shall surely die.”

18Then the LORD God said, “It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him a helper fit for² him.” **19**Now out of the ground the LORD God had formed³ every beast of the field and every bird of the heavens and brought them to the man to see what he would call them. And whatever the man called every living creature, that was its name. **20**The man gave names to all livestock and to the birds of the heavens and to every beast of the field. But for Adam⁴ there was not found a helper fit for him. **21**So the LORD God caused a deep sleep to fall upon the man, and while he slept took one of his ribs and closed up its place with flesh. **22**And the rib that the LORD God had taken from the man he made⁵ into a woman and brought her to the man. **23**Then the man said,

“This at last is bone of my bones
and flesh of my flesh;
she shall be called Woman,
because she was taken out of Man.”⁶

24Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife, and they shall become one flesh. **25**And the man and his wife were both naked and were not ashamed.

The Fall

3 Now the serpent was more crafty than any other beast of the field that the LORD God had made.

He said to the woman, “Did God actually say, ‘You⁷ shall not eat of any tree in the garden?’” **2**And the woman said to the serpent, “We may eat of the fruit of the trees in the garden, **3**but God said, ‘You shall not eat of the fruit of the tree that is in the midst of the garden, neither shall you touch it, lest you die.’” **4**But the serpent said to the woman, “You will not surely die. **5**For God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil.” **6**So when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was to be desired to make one wise,⁸ she took of its fruit and ate, and she also gave some to her husband who was with her, and he ate. **7**Then the eyes of both were opened, and they knew that they were naked. And they sewed fig leaves together and made themselves loincloths.

8And they heard the sound of the LORD God walking in the garden in the cool⁹ of the day, and the man and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the LORD God among the trees of the garden. **9**But the LORD God called to the man and said to him, “Where are you?”¹⁰ **10**And he said, “I heard the sound of you in the garden, and I

¹ Or when you eat ² Or corresponding to; also verse 20 ³ Or And out of the ground the LORD God formed ⁴ Or the man ⁵ Hebrew built ⁶ The Hebrew words for woman (*ishshah*) and man (*ish*) sound alike ⁷ In Hebrew you is plural in verses 1-5 ⁸ Or to give insight ⁹ Hebrew wind ¹⁰ In Hebrew you is singular in verses 9 and 11

was afraid, because I was naked, and I hid myself.” ¹¹ He said, “Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten of the tree of which I commanded you not to eat?” ¹² The man said, “The woman whom you gave to be with me, she gave me fruit of the tree, and I ate.” ¹³ Then the LORD God said to the woman, “What is this that you have done?” The woman said, “The serpent deceived me, and I ate.”

¹⁴ The LORD God said to the serpent,

“Because you have done this,
 cursed are you above all livestock
 and above all beasts of the field;
 on your belly you shall go,
 and dust you shall eat
 all the days of your life.

¹⁵ I will put enmity between you and the woman,
 and between your offspring¹ and her offspring;
 he shall bruise your head,
 and you shall bruise his heel.”

¹⁶ To the woman he said,

“I will surely multiply your pain in child-bearing;
 in pain you shall bring forth children.
 Your desire shall be for² your husband,
 and he shall rule over you.”

¹⁷ And to Adam he said,

“Because you have listened to the voice of your wife
 and have eaten of the tree of which I commanded you,
 ‘You shall not eat of it,’
 cursed is the ground because of you;
 in pain you shall eat of it all the days of your life;

¹⁸ thorns and thistles it shall bring forth for you;

and you shall eat the plants of the field.

¹⁹ By the sweat of your face you shall eat bread,
 till you return to the ground,
 for out of it you were taken;
 for you are dust,
 and to dust you shall return.”

²⁰ The man called his wife’s name Eve, because she was the mother of all living.³

²¹ And the LORD God made for Adam and for his wife garments of skins and clothed them.

²² Then the LORD God said, “Behold, the man has become like one of us in knowing good and evil. Now, lest he reach out his hand and take also of the tree of life and eat, and live forever—” ²³ therefore the LORD God sent him out from the garden of Eden to work the ground from which he was taken. ²⁴ He drove out the man, and at the east of the garden of Eden he placed the cherubim and a flaming sword that turned every way to guard the way to the tree of life.

Cain and Abel

4 Now Adam knew Eve his wife, and she conceived and bore Cain, saying, “I have gotten⁴ a man with the help of the LORD.” ² And again, she bore his brother Abel. Now Abel was a keeper of sheep, and Cain a worker of the ground. ³ In the course of time Cain brought to the LORD an offering of the fruit of the ground, ⁴ and Abel also brought of the firstborn of his flock and of their fat portions. And the LORD had regard for Abel and his offering, ⁵ but for Cain and his offering he had no regard. So Cain was very angry, and his face fell. ⁶ The LORD said to Cain, “Why are you angry, and why has your face fallen? ⁷ If you do well, will you not be accepted?⁵ And if you do not do well, sin is crouching at the door. Its desire is for⁶ you, but you must rule over it.”

¹ Hebrew *seed*; so throughout Genesis ² Or *against* ³ *Eve* sounds like the Hebrew for *life-giver* and resembles the word for *living* ⁴ *Cain* sounds like the Hebrew for *gotten* ⁵ Hebrew *will there not be a lifting up [of your face]?* ⁶ Or *against*