



The Book of Genesis

THE WORLD ACCORDING TO GOD

Until about a century ago, most persons living within Western culture found their answer to the question of cosmogony in the first words of the Bible: "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth." But today their descendants turn more and more to encyclopedias or other books on universal knowledge. There, both in text and in picture, an entirely different origin is presented. In place of God they find a cloud of gas, and in place of a well-organized universe they find a blob of mud. Instead of beginning with the Spirit of God, the new story begins with inanimate matter which, through some blind force inherent in the material substance, brought the world to its present state during the course of billions of years. This substitution of matter for spirit accounts for the death of Western civilization as known about a century ago. Why has the new generation turned from the theologian to the scientist for the answer to his nagging question about the origin of the universe? The switch came about because of an attack on the first chapter of Genesis... —Bruce Waltke

WHY IS GENESIS SO IMPORTANT?

1. It forms the foundation of the entire biblical story.
Creation – Fall – Redemption – Restoration
2. It introduces us to the character of God.
3. It explains who we are and why we are here.
4. It gives us the framework for understanding life, sex, sexuality, marriage, the family, work, rest, and government.
5. It explains what has gone wrong with us and our world.
6. It describes the devastating consequences of sin on our bodies, our minds, our relationships, and our planet.
7. It details the beginning of ethnicities, languages, and nations.
8. It reveals the redemptive purpose, plan, and promises of God in the Abrahamic Covenant (land, seed, blessing).
9. It gives us encouragement as we see God's love and faithfulness working even through the dysfunction of His people.
10. It gives us hope as we see glimpses of God's grace to be fully revealed in the person of Jesus Christ.

What you do with the Bible depends on what you do with the first sentence of Genesis.

—M. R. DeHaan

All Scripture is in Genesis. Here we have in germ all that is later developed. The roots of all subsequent revelation are planted deep in Genesis, and whoever would truly comprehend that revelation must begin here. —J. Sidlow Baxter

The first subject of Genesis and the Bible is God. —Otto Procksch

For the scientist who has lived by his faith in the power of reason, the story ends like a bad dream. He has scaled the mountains of ignorance, he is about to conquer the highest peak; as he pulls himself over the final rock, he is greeted by a band of theologians who have been sitting there for centuries. —Robert Jastrow

An honest man, armed with all the knowledge available to us now, could only state that in some sense the origin of life appears to be almost a miracle. —Francis Crick

ABRAHAM: THE STORY OF GOD'S FAITHFULNESS

- A Introduction to Abram's Life (11:27-32)
- B **Abram's Obedience to God's Word (12:1-9)**
 - C Abram's Lie: Sarai & Pharaoh (12:10-20)
 - D Abram's Rescue of Lot (13:1-14:17)
 - E Melchizedek's Blessing of Abram (14:18-24)
 - F Cutting of the Abrahamic Covenant (15)
 - G **Abram's Failure: Hagar & Ishmael (16)**
 - F Sign of the Abrahamic Covenant (17)
 - E God's Visit to Abraham (18)
 - D God's Rescue of Lot (19)
 - C Abraham's Lie: Sarah & Abimelech (20)
- B **Abraham's Obedience to God's Word (21:1-22:24)**
- A Epilogue to Abraham's Life (23:1-25:11)

ISAAC & JACOB: THE STORY OF GOD'S GRACE

- A Rebekah struggles in childbirth—Jacob named (25:19-34)
- B *Interlude: Danger in a foreign place (26:1-35)*
- C Jacob's conflict with Esau intensified (27:1-28:9)
 - D **Jacob encounters Yahweh and His angels (28:10-22)**
 - E Jacob's arrival in Haran (29:1-30)
 - F Jacob's children are multiplied (29:31-30:24)
 - G **God remembers Rachel—Joseph's birth (30:25-26)**
 - F Jacob's flocks are multiplied (30:27-43)
 - E Jacob's departure from Haran (31:1-55)
 - D **Jacob encounters Yahweh and His angels (32:1-32)**
 - C Jacob's conflict with Esau reconciled (33:1-20)
- B *Interlude: Danger in a foreign place (34:1-31)*
- A Rachel struggles in childbirth—Jacob renamed (35:1-29)

JOSEPH: THE STORY OF GOD'S PROVIDENCE

- A **The brother's envy and hatred toward Joseph (37:1-28)**
- B Jacob mourns the "death" of Joseph (37:29-36)
- C *Interlude: The birth of Judah's sons (38:1-30)*
- D Unexpected reversal: righteous Joseph in prison (39:1-23)
 - E Joseph: the savior of Egypt (40:1-41:57)
 - F Journey of the brothers to Egypt (42:1-43:34)
 - G Joseph tests his brothers (44:1-34)
 - H **Joseph reveals his identity (45:1-15)**
 - G Joseph provides for his brothers (45:16-28)
 - F Journey of the family to Egypt (46:1-27)
 - E Joseph: the savior of Israel (46:28-47:21)
- D Unexpected reversal: younger blessed over older (48:1-22)
- C *Interlude: The blessing of Jacob's sons (49:1-28)*
- B Joseph mourns the death of Jacob (49:29-50:14)
- A **Joseph's forgiveness and grace toward his brothers (50:15-26)**

The transition between Genesis 11 and 12 is the Continental Divide of Scripture... In the first eleven chapters of the Bible, God dealt with the world en masse; but in Genesis 12, He launched a far-reaching plan of redemption by choosing a man whose descendants would become a mighty nation. From that nation would come the Messiah...

—Robert J. Morgan

A proper understanding of the Abrahamic Covenant is key to understanding God's purpose for Israel and the Nations, as well as His way of dealing with human-kind in general—as this covenant is also the basis for the development of other covenants.

—Olivier J. Melnick

It is beneficial for us to hear of the weaknesses of the saints, for these examples of weakness are more necessary for us and bring more consolation than the examples of that heroic and very great fortitude and other virtues. Thus, the fact that David killed Goliath, a bear, a lion, etc., does not edify me much. For I cannot imitate such things, since they surpass my strength and all my thinking... But when examples of weakness, sins, trepidation, and trials are set forth in the saints... they buoy me up in a wonderful manner and give great consolation. For I see how they, fearful and terrified as they were, did not perish but buoyed themselves up with the promises of God; and from this I conclude that there is no need for me to despair either...

—Martin Luther (1483-1546)

A firm faith in the universal providence of God is the solution of all earthly troubles. —B. B. Warfield