

The Book of Beginnings

IMPORTANCE

Henry Morris once said, "The book of Genesis is probably the most important book ever written... If the Bible were somehow expurgated of the book of Genesis (as many people today would prefer), the rest of the Bible would be incomprehensible. It would be like a building without a ground floor, or a bridge with no support."¹

NAME - GENESIS

The Hebrew Bible gives this book the title: **בְּרֵאשִׁית** (*bereshith*), which also means "beginning, origin, start".

The five books of Moses are variously known as the Law, the Torah (Hebrew for Law), the Law of Moses... and the Pentateuch. The word "Pentateuch" is derived from the Greek words *penta* (five) and *teuchos* (scroll or book).²

Focus	Four Events				Four People							
	1:1	11:9			11:10		50:26					
Divisions	Creation	Fall	Flood	Nations	Abraham	Isaac	Jacob	Joseph				
	1:1 2:25	3:1 5:32	6:1 9:29	10:1 11:9					11:10 25:8	25:19 26:35	27:1 36:43	37:1 50:26
Topics	Beginning of the Human Race				Beginning of the Hebrew Race							
	Historical				Biographical							
Place	Fertile Crescent (Eden-Haran)				Canaan (Haran-Canaan)						Egypt (Canaan-Egypt)	
Time	c 2000 + Years (c. 4004–2090 B.C.)				193 Years (2090–1897 B.C.)						93 Years (1897–1804 B.C.)	

Chart Source: Bruce Wilkinson and Kenneth Boa

"Genesis tells about the beginning of the universe, time, life, man, marriage, evil, suffering, languages, government, religion and the chosen people of God."³ One writer states, "Indeed, all the foundational doctrines and morality of the Christian faith can be found in Genesis, at least in embryonic form."⁴

Genesis "provides the foundation for the entire Bible in its history and theology. Its first eleven chapters give a sweeping survey of primeval events: God's work of creation, the fall of man, the judgment of the Flood, and the spread of the nations. There is a sudden shift in chapter 12 as God singles out one man through whom He would

¹ As quoted in Jeff Lasseigne, *Highway 66: A Unique Journey Through the 66 Books of the Bible* (Santa Ana, CA: Calvary Chapel Publishing, 2004), 3.

² Bruce Wilkinson and Kenneth Boa, *Talk Thru the Bible* (Nashville: T. Nelson, 1983), 3.

³ Bob Russell, *Risky Creation: Genesis 1-11* (Standard Publishing, 2007), 1.

⁴ Jonathan Sarfati, *The Genesis Account: A Theological, Historical, and Scientific Commentary on Genesis 1-11* (Powder Springs, GA: Creation Book Publishers, 2015), 8.

bring salvation and bless all nations. The remainder of Genesis traces the story of Abraham and his descendants Isaac, Jacob, and Joseph."⁵

AUTHOR - MOSES

John 5:46-47 – "For if you believed Moses, you would believe me; for he wrote of me. But if you do not believe his writings, how will you believe my words?" (see also Matthew 8:4; 19:7-8; Mark 7:10; 12:26; Luke 24:27, 44; John 7:19). Exodus 17:14; 24:4; 34:27; Numbers 33:2; Deuteronomy 31:9, 22, 24 – All internally affirm Moses as the author.

Anne Graham Lotz writes, "On November 8, 1981, the *New York Times* reported results of a data analysis by a computer at the Technion, Israel's institute of technology in Haifa. Scholars fed the computer information related to the Pentateuch, the first five books of the Bible - Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy - including facts, style of writing, and vocabulary. After analyzing the data, the computer concluded that a single author wrote all five books. According to Jewish tradition and biblical testimony, Moses was the single author of the first five books of the Bible, also known as the Law of Moses, written in approximately 1450BC. **Scholars believe he compiled historical family records into an accurate account of the years that preceded his time.** The family records on which Genesis 1-11 are based are each indicated by the phrase, "This is the account of ..." (*Gen. 2:4, 5:1, 6:9, 10:1, 11:10, 27*). This means that Genesis is essentially an eyewitness account of man's earliest years!"⁶

Deuteronomy 34:5-8 recounts Moses' death. Did Moses write this? It is likely that Joshua added this to the end of the five books of Moses, again, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit.

DATE AND SETTING

Moses wrote around 1450 BC while in the desert wilderness. Genesis divides neatly into three geographical settings: **(1) the Fertile Crescent (1–11); (2) Israel (12–36); (3) Egypt (37–50).** Utilizing the same threefold division noted above, the following dates can be assigned:

2000 or more years, 4000–2090 B.C. (1–11)

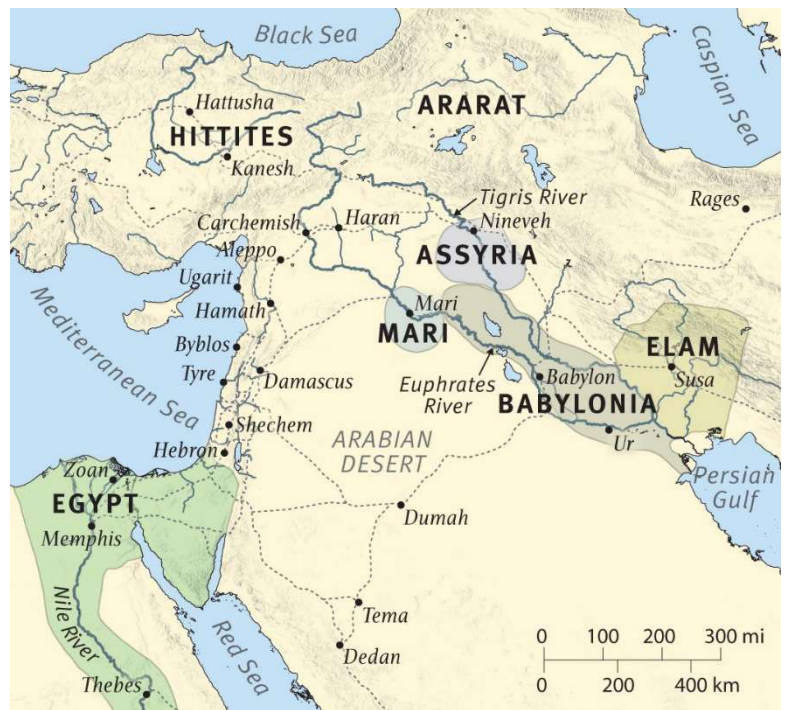
- Creation, 4000 B.C. or earlier (*1:1*)
- Death of Terah, 2090 B.C. (*11:32*)

193 years, 2090–1897 B.C. (12–36)

- Death of Terah, 2090 B.C. (*11:32*)
- Joseph to Egypt, c. 1897 B.C. (*37:2*)

93 years, 1897–1804 B.C. (37–50)

- Joseph to Egypt, c. 1897 B.C. (*37:2*)
- Death of Joseph, 1804 B.C. (*50:26*)⁷



PURPOSE:

To record God's creation of the world and his desire to have a people set apart to worship him.⁸

KEY VERSES:

"So God created man in His own image; in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them" (*1:27*). "I will make you a great nation; I will bless you And make your name great; And you shall be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you, And I will curse him who curses you; And in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed" (*12:2-3*).

⁵ Wilkinson and Boa, 3–4.

⁶ Anne Graham Lotz, *God's Story: Finding Meaning for Your Life through Knowing God* (Nashville, TN: Word Publishing, 1999), xii.

⁷ Wilkinson and Boa, 6-7.

⁸ *Life Application Bible Notes* (Carol Stream, Illinois; Tyndale, 2007), 2.