

GENESIS

Genesis chronicles the beginning of both secular and sacred history, and introduces key events and people God uses to shape those beginnings. It is the story of the one true God whose Word creates a world, and whose watchful care determines mankind's destiny. Roughly one-fifth of the book (chapters 1–11) traces primeval history from Creation to about 2000 B.C. The remaining four-fifths (chapters 12–50) details the family history of Abraham and covers about 350 years.

FOCUS	SIN				SALVATION			
DIVISIONS	Beginning of the Human Race	Beginning of Sin and Death	Judgment of the Flood	Judgment at the Tower of Babel	Abraham, Friend of God	Isaac, Servant of God	Jacob, Prince of God	Joseph, Exalted of God
	1	2 3	5 6	9 10 11	12	24 25	26 27	36 37 50
TOPICS	History of All Mankind				History of One Man's Descendants			
	Key Events				Key People			
PLACE	From Eden to Ur				From Canaan to Egypt			
TIME	Over 2,000 Years				About 350 Years			

BEGINNING OF THE HUMAN RACE

☐ GENESIS 1-2

♥ HEART OF THE PASSAGE: GENESIS 2:4-25

CHAPTER 1

Six Days of Creation
Summarized

Realm of Creation (Universe)

CHAPTER 2

Sixth Day of Creation
Scrutinized

Rulers of Creation (Man and Woman)

OVERVIEW The opening chapters of Genesis focus on God's creative activity in forming the universe. Chapter 1 provides a diary of the six days of God's work as He speaks into existence the universe and arranges its parts into a unified whole. The chapter closes with the creation of Adam and Eve, who are commanded to subdue the earth and rule it. Chapter 2 takes the brief account of their creation in 1:26-28 and enlarges it into a full-length portrait. The emphasis throughout is on God's unique relationship to Adam and Eve as the ones who bear His image and exercise dominion over the rest of His creation.

*THAT GOD
CREATED US
FROM DUST
IS NO
REASON
TO TREAT
ANOTHER
PERSON LIKE
DIRT.*

YOUR DAILY WALK What comes to mind when you hear the words, "And the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground" (2:7)? Does that reminder of your physical makeup encourage you or discourage you?

It should encourage you, provided you remember along with it that God has not forgotten the material He used to design your body. Because God created you, He knows exactly what you can handle physically and emotionally. The psalmist put it this way in Psalm 103:14: "For he [God] knoweth our frame; he remembereth that we are dust." God knows your abilities and your liabilities, and He has given all the time and strength you need to accomplish His will for you.

Take your daily calendar or weekly planner and notice the activities you have written down for the first week of the new year. Does the list look impossible? Write these words at the top of the page: "I have all the time I need to do all that God intends for me to do in 2002." Make it your New Year's resolution to use your time and strength to His glory!

INSIGHT Genesis: The Book of Beginnings

Genesis is the indispensable introduction to the entire Bible. The name *Genesis* is taken from the title given to it by the Greek version (Septuagint) and is derived from the heading of its 10 parts, *ho biblos geneleos*. In the Hebrew Bible the title is *beeresit* ("In the beginning").

BEGINNING OF SIN AND DEATH

GENESIS 3–5 □

HEART OF THE PASSAGE: GENESIS 3 ♥

CHAPTER 3		•	CHAPTER 4	•	CHAPTER 5
1	First Sin	7	8	First Judgment	24
Beginning of Sin			Spread of Sin		
				Heritage of Rebellion	Heritage of Hope

OVERVIEW Deception . . . disobedience . . . death . . . destruction. The beginning of sin and its shattering effects on the first human beings, their world, and all their offspring are charted in chapters 3 and 4. Sin gives birth to death in a continuous downward spiral as seen in the rebellious family tree of Cain and in the repeated refrain throughout the line of Seth, “. . . and he died.” But shining forth in the midst of this dismal picture is a ray of hope—the promise of the coming Head-Bruiser (3:15).

YOUR DAILY WALK An official-looking individual approaches you on the street and asks, “In your opinion, what are the five most common pressures of daily life in your city?” How would you respond?

Deadlines. Expectations. Workload. Grades. Productivity. Chores. Sales. Bills. They’re all synonyms for pressure.

Pressure can have many effects on you—some good, some bad. But if it remains strong enough long enough, pressure can weaken your resistance to temptation. It can even cause you to consider some “solutions” to the temptation problem that normally would be out of the question, such as: “Just once can’t hurt . . . Other Christians are doing it, so why can’t I? . . . There’s nothing wrong in just experimenting . . . How will I know what it’s like if I never try it? . . . If God loved me, He wouldn’t limit my freedom.”

The question, “Yea, hath God said?” (3:1) is the grandfather of all lies. The fire is worse than the frying pan. Where is your pressure point today? Once you’ve identified it, count on two things to be true: (1) Satan knows your weak point and will trip you up, if you let him; (2) God knows your weak point, and will fortify you against Satan’s attacks, if you’ll let Him.

INSIGHT Name That Tune

The oldest recorded song in the Bible is found in Genesis 4:23-24. Its composer, Lamech, has the distinction of being the “father of polygamy.” The lyrics boast of man’s lust for violence and his disregard for human life.

*WE EASILY
YIELD TO
THAT WHICH
IS ABOUT US.*

JUDGMENT OF THE FLOOD

☐ GENESIS 6–9

♥ HEART OF THE PASSAGE: GENESIS 6

CHAPTER 6	CHAPTER 7	CHAPTER 8	CHAPTER 9
Warning of Judgment	Execution of Judgment	Ending of Judgment	Promise After Judgment
Rain Clouds in the Sky		Rainbow in the Sky	

OVERVIEW The sinfulness of human beings has become so great that God prepares to sweep away the human race in a judgment of water. He selects Noah, a righteous man with an unwavering faith in God, and commands him to build a ship in which he and his family will escape the Flood. Obediently, Noah begins the 100-year task of constructing the ark. When the Flood arrives on schedule, Noah and his family are preserved, while the rest of the human race perishes in its unbelief. Once again, humankind enjoys a fresh start on the earth.

GOD WILL NOT SEND US WHERE HE CANNOT SUSTAIN US.

YOUR DAILY WALK Doesn't it make you feel good when someone remembers you on a special occasion, or for no particular reason at all? It's a great encouragement to get a phone call or note from a friend that says, "I'm thinking about you today." Perhaps your only regret is that such warm reminders are too few and far between.

Genesis 8:1 makes a crucial observation concerning Noah. It says simply, "And God remembered Noah." That is significant because God's memory isn't like that of humans. He hadn't lost track of Noah in the midst of the Flood, or misplaced His timetable for Noah's rescue. God never forgot Noah, and "in the fullness of time" He ended the Flood and brought Noah safely to dry land. To say that God remembers is to say that He never forgets!

Just as God did not forget Noah in the Flood, so He has not brought you to this point in your life merely to abandon you in the midst of your circumstances. God remembers you. Read thoughtfully Psalm 139:7-10. Then with that confidence in mind, complete this phrase: "Because God remembers me, today I will remember Him by . . ."

INSIGHT Eight Souls Were Saved (Count Them)

Only the believing Noah and his family were saved from the Flood. Three times they are mentioned as a specific group (6:18; 7:13; 8:16) to show that not one faithful person is overlooked in God's provision of safety.

JUDGMENT AT THE TOWER OF BABEL

GENESIS 10–11 □

HEART OF THE PASSAGE: GENESIS 11:1-9, 27-32 ♥

CHAPTER 10

Sons of
Noah

A Family Tree

CHAPTER 11

Scattering of
the Nations

A Fateful Tower

OVERVIEW After the Flood, Noah's descendants multiply and begin to repopulate the earth. But in defiance of God's command to disperse throughout the world (9:1), they decide to settle in one central locality, Babel. God judges their rebellion by garbling their language and forcing them to scatter over the earth as He had originally commanded. Clearly the effects of sin have survived the purging waters of the Flood. From this point on, the narrative focuses on one man (Abram) and his descendants (the Hebrew people) through whom God would provide a Redeemer from mankind's sinful condition.

YOUR DAILY WALK So far in your reading of Genesis you have encountered three illustrations of the same factor at work in the relationship of men and women to God.

1. Adam and Eve were given the Garden of Eden to enjoy with but one prohibition, yet they sinned and lost their Paradise.
2. The generations that followed them continued in their rebellion and were swept away in the Flood.
3. Noah's descendants refused to spread out as God had commanded, and thus they suffered the confusion of their language.

Have you discovered the principle illustrated by these three "case studies in human stubbornness"? Obedience to God brings blessing; disobedience results in judgment. God is serious about His commands. They are not given simply to be studied or debated, copied or cataloged. Rather, they are in your Bible to be obeyed—instantly . . . completely . . . unquestioningly. Pick an area of your walk with God where you have been halfhearted or negligent in your obedience. Then tell God what you have learned from the examples of Adam, Noah, and Babel!

INSIGHT Those Confusing Lingua Francas

The effects of Babel are still being felt right up to the present time. The Chippewa Indians of North America have more than 6,000 different verb forms, while the Eskimo language uses 63 forms of the present tense alone!

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ABRAM'S CALLING AND LOT'S COMPROMISE

□ GENESIS 12-14

♥ HEART OF THE PASSAGE: GENESIS 12:1-9

CHAPTER 12			•	CHAPTER 13		•	CHAPTER 14		
1	Called in Ur	9	10	Compromising in Egypt	20		Choosing in Canaan	Conquering in the King's Valley	
Abram and God					•	Abram and Lot			

OVERVIEW The life of Abram is a study in walking by faith. Called to leave his home in Ur (near the Persian Gulf), Abram receives an exciting set of promises from God involving a new home, a great name, and a large family (12:1-3). Abram takes God at His word and begins the long journey to his new place of blessing. Along the way he experiences detours where his faith wavers, disputes with his worldly nephew Lot, and discouragements in his attempts to have a family. But through it all, Abram's faith shines brightly, showing that in him God has found a man truly deserving of the title, "The Friend of God" (James 2:23).

*WHAT IS
FAITH BUT
OBEDIENCE
TO THE
COMMANDS
OF GOD?*

YOUR DAILY WALK It has been well said, "Every great person has first learned how to obey, whom to obey, and when to obey." Abram was truly great, both by human and divine estimations (12:2-3). But his greatness as a servant of God began with God's command, "Get thee out of thy country" (12:1), and Abram's obedient response, "So Abram departed" (12:4). It was a call to forsake all and strike out on a venture of faith, with nothing to hold onto but the promises of God.

Consider what that meant to Abram. In Ur he left behind material wealth, an advanced civilization, good farming land, friends and family, and all that he had learned to call home. For what? A 1,000-mile journey through a hostile environment to an unknown land with nothing but a promise awaiting him at the end of the trip.

Abram exercised faith in God by moving; Noah did so by building a boat; Abel by offering a lamb. How about you? Read Hebrews 11:4-8 twice. In the margin write a step of obedience God is calling you to take today—and then by faith take it!

INSIGHT The True Test of Values

Lot's choice of the well-watered plains of Jordan was the beginning of his downfall, for it caused him to pitch his tent toward the wicked city of Sodom. By contrast, Abram built his life on the promises of God. Lot chose for himself (13:11); Abram allowed God to choose for him (13:14-15).

FAITH AND THE FAILURE OF ABRAM

GENESIS 15–17 □

HEART OF THE PASSAGE: GENESIS 15:1–16:6 ♥

CHAPTER 15	CHAPTER 16	CHAPTER 17
Ratifying God's Covenant	Running Ahead of God's Timing	Renewing God's Covenant
Faith of Abram	Failure of Abram	Fatherhood of Abraham

OVERVIEW God's promises to Abram are now reaffirmed in the covenant which God makes with His faithful servant. The provisions include the promise that Abram's own son would be his heir, even though he and Sarai are childless and beyond child-bearing years. Abram weakens under the pressure of passing time and yields to Sarai's suggestion. The result is the birth of Ishmael, a son whom God also promises to bless but who is clearly not the son of God's promise. Despite his act of presumption, Abram receives a new sign of God's faithfulness (circumcision) and a new name (Abraham, "father of a multitude").

YOUR DAILY WALK Obedience can take many forms. Sometimes it is the obedient thing to sit still, as when Christ told His disciples to wait in Jerusalem (Acts 1:4). More often, obedience demands action. Noah picked up a hammer and saw (Genesis 6:14, 22); Moses climbed a mountain to bring back God's words on two stone tablets (Exodus 24:12); Joshua led the nation on a seven-day hike around Jericho (Joshua 6:1-21), all in obedience to the word of the Lord.

The same was true in the life of Abraham. In chapter 15, he obediently arranges the pieces of the sacrifice by which God ratified His covenant; in chapter 17, he carries out the responsibility of circumcising his entire household according to God's command. While these acts of faith may not seem very spectacular, they become highly significant when performed in obedience to God's direction.

What is God calling upon you to do today? It may be something as simple as writing a letter or visiting a shut-in, sharing a kind word or preparing a favorite dessert. Be obedient in the ordinary details of life, for that is the path of blessing.

INSIGHT Abraham, the First "Hebrew" in the Bible (14:13) The origin of the word *Hebrew* is unclear. Perhaps it means "a descendant of Eber" or "one from the other side (of the river)." In Abram's case, it might refer to his migration from Mesopotamia.

*TO GOD,
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