

APPLICATION

Get to know your small group. Check in with each other and challenge each other to do each lesson of this study and to read Genesis as we go. Make a commitment to one another by signing here:

- How do you think the world and all that is in it came about?
- Discuss what you remember from the Creation account.
- What are you most excited about learning from this study? Or what questions do you have? (Try to journal these questions)
- Why do you think Genesis is an important place to start?
- How do the themes of Genesis play out in the rest of the Bible?

Inductive Bible Study Prep Work

- Open your Bibles and mark the three major sections: The Intro Creation Account/Poem (1:1-2:3), The Primeval History of God and Humans (2:4-11:39) and The Patriarchal History of God establishing a covenantal family. (12:1-50:26)
- Now that you have the three main sections marked, find the 10 *toladots*. "This is the account of..." and box these headers.
*Hint #1 Genesis 2:4, #2 Genesis 5:1, #3 Genesis 6:9 etc.
We won't get to all the *toladots* or stories of Genesis in this study but having these marked will help you as you read later.

For Parents:

We hope that as we go through Genesis you can have some conversations with your children about it. This section is for you. Each week there will be a question or conversation topic to discuss on the car ride home or over the dinner table or while sitting on the couch. Sometimes these conversations can be hard, but don't worry, we will guide you every step of the way.



Intro to Genesis • Session 1

Genesis – what a great place to start! For millennia Jews and Christians have started to read their Bibles right here. The very first pages of our Bibles have such tremendous ideas packed in a small space; like an acorn which holds the blueprint for a whole Oak tree. The ancient stories which we will see in Genesis come with profound implications, which makes these opening chapters of the Bible a battleground for both scholars and parishioners alike.

In these stories of *Creation* (Ch.1-2), *Cursing* (Ch.3-11) and *Covenant* (Ch.9 and 12), we are introduced, for the first time, to God's majesty and mystery, and above everything else, his saving nature.

Genesis is the very beginning of all this! It's the beginning of the story of God. The beginning of the existence and conduct of humans. And it's the very beginning of the Gospel! In other words, the first twelve chapters of Genesis are the foundation of all that is to come, so we need to be sure we cross this minefield with great care.

As we dive into the profound truths of Genesis, let's remember that this is a revelation of God and his faithfulness in the midst of human failure and sin. The stories we are going to see in the weeks to come are all about God's grace over, and over, and over again.

Genesis does not read like a physics or biology textbook, nor does it speak in modern scientific terms. And it is for good reason; it is because this book is setting the foundation and safeguarding the unsearchable mystery and majesty of God! The goal of Genesis is to lift our minds to contemplate God as the source and sustainer of life.

MAIN IDEA: Although Christians may disagree on some aspects of the creation story, we all agree that God created this world. He did it by himself, for his own reasons, and called it good, then he gifted it to us to be stewarded and enjoyed.

I. Genesis's Background and History and Literature Structure

Much of the internal semiotics and external archeological paleography points to a date compiled near the late 15th century B.C. right around the time of the Exodus. This gives us a good reason to think Moses, instructed by the Spirit, composed Genesis.

Genesis is a collection of events and revelations given to us in story format. This means that Genesis is not a random selection of material, neither is it arranged haphazardly. In fact, Genesis as a whole is organized in three parts, with ten sections called by the Hebrew term *toledot*; meaning (generations of/histories of/ "the account of"). We will see some of these over the next few weeks.

What this means is that the material in Genesis, as in all biblical historical books, is a composite of interpreted history that has settings, characters, plots, dialogues, and narrators. These aspects help us understand the point of each story and help us personally connect to the narrative. Much of Genesis has a rhythm and pattern to it. Take the stories of the Fall, Cain and Able, the Flood, and the Tower of Babel. All these major stories follow the same pattern.

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| a. Sin | Sin is described or committed | example 3:6 |
| b. Speech | God speaks and announces a penalty | example 3:14-19 |
| c. Grace | God shows grace to ease the misery | example 3:21 |
| d. Punishment | God curses and punishes sin | example 3:22-24 |

II. Genesis is Ancient Cosmology

Right after the Exodus, as the newly freed Hebrew people began exploring who they are, who God is, and what this whole new world is they have just entered, they likely began retelling the story along with the stories of their fathers, and of this Holy God who is unlike/beyond any of the other gods and origin stories of their local contemporaries.

This means that while Genesis was written *for* us and for all mankind, it was not written *to* us or *by* us. Genesis certainly is to be considered as inspired by God and trustworthy in all that it affirms, but if we view Genesis through our own cultural and modern perspective, we will miss a lot of what God wants us to know, and worse we may come away with wrong ideas. Genesis is written by ancient Hebrew people for ancient thinkers. It is written with-in their cultural and time and context. This does not mean it is outdated or that it is an inaccurate description of our origins.

In Genesis we find the truths of God's majestic power, the significance of human life, and the grave seriousness of human sin set alongside God's wrath and grace. We see the world the way these ancient people did. By its very nature *cosmology*, modern or ancient, seeks to explain how the world works and why it came to work that way. God spoke to the people in that time and place and in the customs of their day. He communicates in terms they would understand. He did not think it important to revise their thinking on the universe, science, physics, biology, geography, or any other realm of human understanding. Surely, he does this intentionally because the topics he does focus their attention on are what he desires them to build their life's-foundation on. We may reason that while these other categories of human intrigue are at play in the stories of Genesis, they are are not the purpose of Genesis.

Genesis, and the rest of Scripture, will not give us an exhaustive view of all that is happening at the start but it does give us an interpreted, theological history so we can understand God's plan to establish his rule and love over all creation through the very beings he created. Genesis does this by starting with the universal picture of creation given to us in a fabulous poem (1:1-2:3), but it will soon narrow to an intimate retelling of mankind (2:4-2:25) and then to the chaos and sin mankind falls into (3:1-11:9), to finally God's choice of a man, whom he will work out his plan of redemption through. (12:1)

MAJOR PRINCIPAL: The general purpose of Genesis is to provide an accurate record of the history of God's sovereign establishment of his covenant of blessing with his people.