

ENDNOTES

1. See, e.g., *The Pentateuch* (Jerusalem: Magnes Press, 1967), xi.
2. For a discussion of the historical development of the Documentary Hypothesis, see
E. J. Revell and Bryan Reynolds, *Uncovering the Old Testament: A Christian Survey* (Grand
Rapids, 1999), 68.
3. *The Pentateuch*, ii. For a classic refutation, see U. Cassuto, *The Documentary
Hypothesis* (Jerusalem: Magnes Press, 1961), and D. Garrett, *Rethinking Genesis* (Grand
Rapids, 1991).
4. Eugene H. Merrill, Mark E. Rooker, and Michael A. Grisanti, *The World and the Word*
(Dallas: B&H, 2011), 1-9.

Chapter 6

GENESIS The Beginning

Genesis is the book of beginnings. It tells the story of the beginning of the human race in general and the beginning of the Hebrew race in particular. The Hebrew Bible titles the book *bereshith* ("in the beginning") after the first word in the Hebrew text. The pages of Genesis introduce the basics of the biblical message. God is introduced as an absolute personal being who cares about His creation and the human struggle of the fallen world. The pages of this incredible book describe the beginning of the cosmos (1:1), the natural world (1:2-25), the human race (1:26-28), marriage (2:22-24), sin (3:1-7), sacrifice (3:21), salvation (3:15), family (4:1-15), civilization (4:16-21), government (9:1-6), covenant (15:1-5), and faith (15:6).



This mountain in modern Turkey may be part of the mountains of Ararat where Noah's ark came to rest after the flood.

3. Records of Noah (6:9-9:29)
4. Records of the sons of Noah (10:1-11:9)
5. Records of Shem (11:10-26)
6. Records of Terah (11:27-25:11)
7. Records of Ishmael (25:12-18)
8. Records of Isaac (25:19-35:29)
9. Records of Esau (36:1-37:1)
10. Records of Jacob (37:2-50:26)

Thus, *toledoth* introduces a section rather than concludes it. *Toledoth* says this is what became of someone. Each *toledoth* starts out broadly and then narrows to a person, line, or a special group of interest within that given section.⁷

However, the outline followed here is a thematic one focusing on primeval (Gen 1-11:9) and patriarchal history (Gen 11:10-50:26) as the **two key divisions** in the book. These two sections can also be categorized as the beginning of the human race and the beginning of the Hebrew race. The four key events of primeval history include creation (chaps. 1-2), fall (chaps. 3-5), flood (chaps. 6-9), and dispersion of the nations (10:1-11:9). The four key people of patriarchal history include Abraham (11:10-25:11), Isaac (25:12-26:35), Jacob (chaps. 27-36), and Joseph (chaps. 37-50).

BACKGROUND

The book of Genesis involves **three basic settings**. Genesis 1-11 recounts the ancient history of the world from creation until the birth of Terah (c. 2296 BC) and takes place in the *Fertile Crescent*. Genesis 12-36 unfolds between the birth of Terah (2296 BC) and Joseph's arrival in Egypt (1899 BC) and takes place mostly in *Canaan*. Genesis 37-50 fits between Joseph's arrival in Egypt (1899 BC) and the death of Joseph (1806 BC) and takes place mostly in *Egypt*. Many conservative scholars date the patriarchs as follows:

PATRIARCH	DATE
Abraham	2166-1991 BC
Isaac	2066-1886 BC
Jacob	2006-1859 BC
Joseph	1916-1806 BC

A key structural marker used throughout the book is the **10 *toledoth***, which means, "the records of" (Gen 2:4; 5:1; 6:9; 10:1; 11:10; 25:12,19; 36:1,9; 37:2). This repetition yields the following literary outline after the introduction to the generations (1:1-2:3):

1. Records of the heavens and earth (2:4-4:26)
2. Records of descendants of Adam (5:1-6:8)

Outline⁸

- I. Primeval History (Genesis 1-11:9)
 - A. Creation (Genesis 1-2)
 - B. Fall (Genesis 3-5)
 - C. Flood (Genesis 6-9)
 - D. Nations (Genesis 10:1-11:9)
- II. Patriarchal History (Genesis 11:10-50:26)
 - A. Abraham (Genesis 11:10-25:11)
 - B. Isaac (Genesis 25:12-26:35)
 - C. Jacob (Genesis 27-36)
 - D. Joseph (Genesis 37-50)

MESSAGE

Genesis provided Israel with an explanation of her place in the history of the world. In Genesis, Moses explains how God's original plan for creation was marred by sin and how Israel was set aside for the special purpose of mediating God's redemptive blessings to the world. As a **divine history** of the world, Genesis covers more time than any other biblical book.

Genesis also emphasizes the importance of the Abrahamic covenant, which gave Israel a right to the land (Gen 12:1-3; 15:18-21). Because they would soon have to

take the land by fighting the Canaanites, Israel was in need of understanding that it was God's will for the nation to remove and exterminate them (Gen 9:25; 15:16). Thus, the book was intended to cause Moses' generation to trust God by better understanding their past heritage, present purpose, and future destiny as they anticipated entrance into the Promised Land.

1. Primeval History (Genesis 1-11:9)

The book's opening prologue (chaps. 1-11) explains to Israel her purpose by tracing God's redemptive program and messianic lineage from Eden to Abraham. This section explains the terrible progress of sin and the reason God's redemptive program was necessary. Thus, it is the foundation of the biblical worldview, and without this part the rest would be somewhat incomprehensible.



Eastern Wall of Doura Europa and the Euphrates River, which is one of the rivers mentioned in connection with the garden of Eden.

A. Creation (Genesis 1-2)

The first two chapters of Genesis describe God's original work of creation. From the opening verse, Gen 1:1 assumes the existence of God (*Elohim*) and the fact of creation. Knowledge of the original creation would also help the nation comprehend how sin negatively impacted the wonderful world God created. Knowledge of God's six days of work and one day of rest would help Israel understand the foundation of their workweek (Exod 20:8-11) and Sabbath rest as the sign of the Mosaic covenant.

Hebrew Highlight

Create. Hebrew *bara* (בָּרָא). The Hebrew word *bara*, both active and passive, always conveys the idea of "create." With God as its subject, it appears 48 times in the Hebrew Bible, 21 of which are found in Genesis. The subject of this verb is never man. It suggests creating something new (Jer 31:22). *Bara*, used in Gen 1:1, expresses initial creation. God is said to create sea creatures (Gen 1:21), heavenly bodies (Isa 40:26), wind (Amos 4:13), a clean heart (Ps 51:10), words of praise (Isa 57:19), and new heavens and a new earth (Isa 65:17). God alone is the One who creates, and He does so as an expression of His own sovereign will.

The fact that man is the pinnacle of God's creative work is evident from his designation as God's image bearer (Gen 1:26-27). Man and woman were given the role of theocratic administrators who would corule God's creation on His behalf (Gen 1:28; 2:8-20). Man's stewardship over this creation (2:15) as well as the presence of the tree of life, and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil (2:9,17) would remind Moses' audience that they too had the responsibility of obedience in order to experience God's blessings (Leviticus 26; Deuteronomy 28).

Chapter 1 summarizes the creation of the world, and chapter 2 scrutinized it in greater detail. Dutch scholar G. C. Aalders observes the creation is one of **absolute beginning** and not a transformation of a preexistent one. He states, "The words 'In the beginning' must be taken in their absolute sense . . . although the alternative interpretation is linguistically possible, it does not reflect common Hebrew usage."¹⁴ The biblical description of creation is *ex nihilo* (from nothing) by the power of God's spoken word ("then God said," 1:3,6,9,11,14,20,24,26,29), though 2:7 indicates that man was made from the dust of the ground. Thus, the original creation appears to be instantaneous, having an appearance of age and living things (plants and animals) reproducing "according to their kinds" (1:12,21,24,25). Reformed scholar O. T. Allis believes, "The account of creation is definitely theistic. . . . God is distinct from both man and nature. He is the Creator of both. All things owe their existence to His almighty fiat."¹⁵

The opening verses of Genesis clearly refute:

Atheism	There is no God.
Pantheism	All is God.
Polytheism	Many gods exist.
Materialism	Matter is eternal.
Humanism	Man is the measure.
Naturalism	Nature is ultimate.

The Genesis account of creation also contradicts **secular evolution**, which theorizes that all life, including humans, evolved over billions of years from lower life

that the reality of the curse would one day be done away with.⁹ In the meantime Genesis *reverses* the destiny of the godly line of Seth versus the ungodly line of Cain.

A reproduction of tablet 11 of the Gilgamesh Epic describing the Babylonian account of a great flood.

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to enlighten the human predicament.

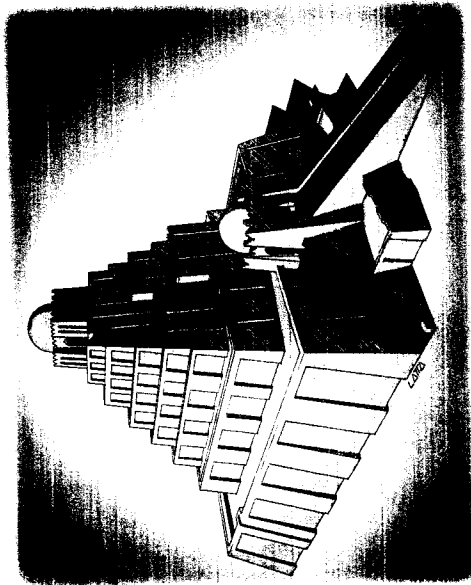
Most importantly, the *protoevangelium* (Gen 3:15) made clear that one day God would send one who would defeat God's enemy. This would eventually allow for the restoration of everything to God's original design and restore man's position as theocratic administrator.⁸ Thus, the information presented in Genesis 1-3 would help Israel understand why redemption was necessary. Putting this together with Gen 12:1-3 would help the reader understand why the nation was singled out for the special purpose of mediating God's redemptive blessings. Such blessings would ultimately be lost in the fall.

restore God's original intent in creation that was lost in the fall. The **genealogy from Adam to Noah** traces the line from which God's blessing (Gen 1:28) would eventually come (Gen 4:25–5:32) and contrasts it with the ungodly line of Cain (Gen 4:17–24). The repetition of death in Genesis 5 testifies to the reality of the curse (Gen 3:19). The fact that people still retained the image of God even in their fallen condition (Gen 5:1; 9:6) reveals humanity's dignity and why God wanted to restore His relationship with mankind after the curse. Moreover, Enoch's translation (Gen 5:24) as well as Lamech's description of Noah as the "comforter" (Gen 5:29 NIV) provided hope

C. Flood (Genesis 6-9)

The growing power of sin approached epic proportions as the human race became involved in perpetual wickedness (Gen 6:1-7), so God moved to destroy humanity through the flood. Because Noah was a righteous and blameless man who walked with God (6:9), God safely preserved him and his family in the ark while the world was flooded. The **global extent** of the flood is indicated by the fact that all of the high mountains were covered (7:19), all land living things perished (7:21), the flood lasted 371 days, and the ark was of great size (1-400,000 cubic feet). It is also evident from extrabiblical and New Testament testimony (1 Pet 3:3-7) and the use of unique terms for the deluge (Hb. *midbail*, and Gk. *kataklusmos*)¹⁰

God's intent to restore creation is seen in His provision of the **Noahic covenant** following the flood (Gen 8:20-9:17). The creation of human government with the power of capital punishment would serve as a deterrent preventing humanity from regressing back to the level of violence exhibited in the antediluvian world. God's desire to restore creation is also seen in His command to Noah to subdue creation and His promise, as signified by the rainbow, never to destroy the race again by a flood of water. However, despite God's provision of the Noahic covenant, man's sinful nature remained perverse even after the flood (Gen 8:21). This is illustrated in Noah's drunkenness, the sin of



A ziggurat dating to the Babylonian period (605-550 BC).

D. Nations (Genesis 10:1-11:9)

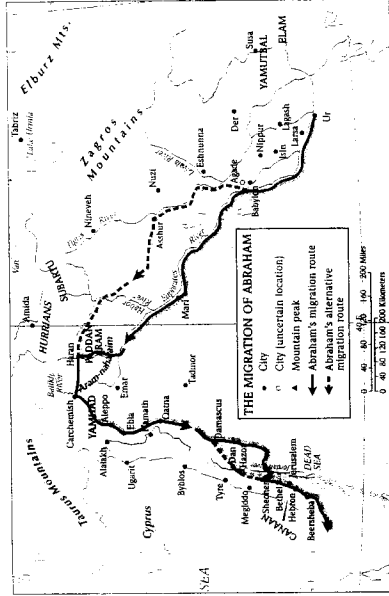
The subsequent **dispersion of the nations** at the tower of Babel (Gen 10:1-11:9) indicates that obedience results in blessing and disobedience results in scattering. Unfortunately, such scattering would recur many times throughout Israel's history (Leviticus 26; Deuteronomy 28). The confusion of languages that resulted continued unabated until the day of Pentecost in Acts 2. The scattering of the nations following the incident at Babel ("gate of God") set the stage for the calling and selection of Abraham.

II. Patriarchal History (Genesis 11:10-50:26)

The rest of the book of Genesis focuses the reader's attention on patriarchal history (Gen 11:10-50:26). Moses' goal in this section is to connect **God's redemptive purposes** in chaps. 1-11 to later generations in order to give the exodus generation an incentive to cooperate with God's covenant purposes. From this point onward, Genesis focuses on four great patriarchs: Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and Joseph, although Judah actually emerged as the ancestor of the messianic line.

A. Abraham (Genesis 11:10-25:11)

God's redemptive promises are now focused on one individual, Abraham. Initially called Abram ("great father"), Abraham would become the "father of a multitude," including Isaac, the son of promise. Thus, Moses is careful to trace the Hebrew line



from Noah's son Shem to Abram's father Terah (Gen 11:10-26). In Gen 12:2-3, the promises from Gen 3:15 are restated in the form of the **Abrahamic promises**. According to these promises, God would give land, seed, and blessing to Abram's descendants; and through these descendants the entire world would be blessed. The seed aspect of these blessings specifically amplifies the unconditional promise of a seed who would defeat the forces of evil in Gen 3:15.

Contrary to God's command to separate from his family (Gen 12:1), Abram instead took Lot (Gen 12:4) on the journey to Canaan and stopped in **Haran** in Padan-Aram (Syria) for some time. After finally moving to Canaan, Abram eventually went to Egypt (Gen 12:10), where he lied to Pharaoh about Sarai being his sister and was rebuked by the pagan king. The resulting plagues that came upon Pharaoh would remind Moses' readers of what happened in their time as well.

In Genesis 13, Abram separated from Lot and fulfilled God's original plan of complete separation of his father's household (Gen 12:1). Thus, the **land promises** were restated after this separation occurred. In Genesis 14, Abram refused to take tribute from the king of Sodom and maintained his independence from the wicked Sodomites (Gen 13:13; 14:21-24). Abram's blessing instead came from the king-priest Melchizedek who was a prototype of Christ (cf. Gen 14:18-20; Heb 7:22-28).

Genesis 15 formally confirmed the **Abrahamic covenant** as a formal covenant relationship with Abram. Thus, the initial expectation of hope in Gen 3:15 is now explained in the form of an official ancient Near Eastern treaty between God and Abram. Such a treaty normally called for both parties in agreement to pass through rows of severed animal pieces. This ritual signified that a similar fate suffered by these severed animals would fall upon the breaching party if he failed to meet his obligations under the treaty. However, the unconditional nature of this treaty was seen in the fact that Abram was asleep while God alone passed through the animal pieces (Gen 15:12,17). Thus, the fulfillment of the treaty was totally dependent on God rather than on the performance of Abram or his descendants. With total faith in God's promises, Abram "believed the LORD," and God credited him with righteousness (15:6; see Rom 4:3; 9:22; Gal 3:6; Jas 2:23).

Despite God's promise that Abraham would have a son from his "own body" (15:4), barren Sarai insisted that Hagar, their Egyptian slave, should serve as a surrogate mother (16:1-3). As a result, Hagar became the mother of Ishmael ("God hears"), the ancestor of the Arab peoples. Twice God showed His grace toward Ishmael by sparing his life (16:7-15; 21:14-21) and

promising to make him a "great nation." God's selection of Isaac by a miraculous birth to Abraham and Sarah in their old age was a deliberate reflection of His divine will (18:9-15). To reflect the great lineage that would come from this line, Abram's name was changed to Abraham ("father of multitudes") and Sarai's name was changed to Sarah ("princess").

The birth of Isaac ("laughter") caused Sarah to laugh with God, instead of laughing at Him (cf. 18:12-15; 21:6-7). Years later God tested Abraham's faith in this promise by telling him to sacrifice Isaac on Mount Moriah (22:1-16). Despite the command Abraham's faith was expressed by telling the servants "we'll come back to you" (22:5). At the most dramatic moment of the patriarchal narrative, "the Angel of the LORD" called Abraham to stop (22:11-12). "He had passed the test of faith, and God provided the ram instead. Therefore, Abraham named the place 'The LORD Will Provide'" (11b, *yahweh yir'eh*; Jehovah Jireh, KJV).

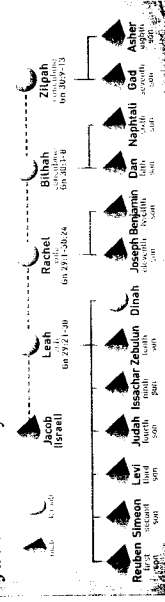
B. Isaac (Genesis 25:12-26:35)

Genesis 25:12-18 distinguishes Isaac's line from the line of Ishmael. Because the covenant was given to Isaac, Ishmael's descendants had no legitimate claim to the Promised Land. The rest of chap. 25 clarifies that the line would continue through Isaac's youngest son Jacob rather than through his oldest son Esau. The **divine election** of Jacob over Esau is evidenced through the prophecy that the older would serve the younger (Gen 25:23). Esau's character weakness is evident in his despising his birthright and selling it to Jacob (Gen 25:27-34) and his rebellious marriages to Hittite women (Gen 26:34-35). The Abrahamic covenant was reconfirmed to Isaac (Gen 26:1-5,23-25) with promises of personal blessing and protection (Gen 26:12-16).

C. Jacob (Genesis 27-36)

The theme of **deception** recurs throughout the story of Jacob's life. The patriarch Jacob moves to the forefront in Genesis 27-36. Despite the fact that Jacob deceived Isaac and cheated Esau out of the blessing of the firstborn (Gen 27:1-40), the Abrahamic covenant was reconfirmed to Jacob in the next chapter (Gen 28:10-17). This repetition of God's everlasting promises emphasizes the unconditional nature of the covenant. Jacob escaped from Esau's rage for stealing his blessing (Gen 27:41-45) by journeying north to his mother's ancestral home in Haran (28:10) where he eventually married

Jacob's Family



Reuben Simeon Levi Judah Issachar Zebulun Dinah Joseph Benjamin Dan Naphtali Gad Asher

Leah and Rachel, the daughters of Laban, his mother's brothers (29:1-29). In route to Haran, Jacob stopped at Luz where he encountered God in the dream of the angelic stairway. Believing it to be the "gate of heaven," he renamed it Bethel ("house of God"), and vowed that the Lord (*Yahweh*) would be his God (28:16-21).

Jacob's marriages to Leah and Rachel are carefully traced because through these marriages (and their maidservants) would come 12 sons who would become the 12 tribes of Israel (Gen 29-30:24). The 14 years Jacob served Laban in order to marry Rachel were necessary in order to mold Jacob's character. Only as Jacob the deceiver encountered the deception of Laban could this flaw in his character be rectified. Even though Jacob was deceived into marrying Leah, she would become the mother of Judah and perpetuate the messianic line of Christ (Matt 1:1-2).

After residing about 20 years in Haran, God told Jacob to leave and return to Bethel (35:1). This decision became the turning point of Jacob's life as he finally returned to the Promised Land. So dramatic was his desire to please the Lord that he insisted his family "get rid of the foreign gods" they had accumulated (35:2). Upon returning to Bethel, he called on the "God of Bethel" (*el bethel*), indicating his full intention to serve the Lord. As a result, God changed his name from Jacob to Israel (35:10), setting the stage for the rest of the story.



The Tiber River

D. Joseph (Genesis 37:1-50:26)

Genesis 37-50 focuses on Joseph as the human instrument God would use to relocate the nation in Egypt. God's selection of the younger brother to accomplish His will

reveals a pattern (Isaac over Ishmael, Jacob over Esau, Judah and Joseph over Reuben, Ephraim over Manasseh) throughout the book, indicating that God is not limited by human preferences or traditional customs. God revealed His purpose for Joseph in a dream. When he shared the dream with his brothers, they became envious and sold him as a slave into Egypt (Genesis 37), setting the stage for their own descendants' future enslavement in Egypt.

Despite his brother's evil intentions and subsequent deception of their father Jacob, Genesis 39-41 records the circumstances by which Joseph was promoted to second in command over all of Egypt as a grand vizier to Pharaoh (probably Sesostris III).¹⁷ Joseph's exaltation is attributed to his faithfulness to God in both Potiphar's household and in prison (Gen 39:2-5:21-23; 40:8; 41:16). In Gen 42:1-47:26, Jacob's descendants finally settled in Egypt. Judah's willingness to become a substitute for Benjamin erases the hostility between Joseph and his brothers and resulted in all the brothers being reunited (Genesis 45) and bringing their father Jacob to Egypt (Genesis 46). The family eventually settled in Goshen in the delta region, where they maintained their distinctiveness as God's special nation (Genesis 47).

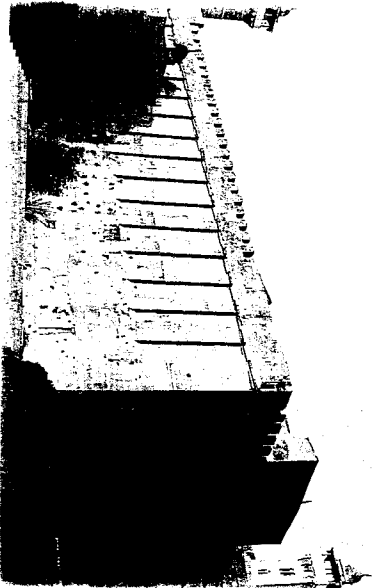
Genesis 48-50 concludes with Jacob blessing Joseph's sons (Gen 48:8-22), Jacob's prophetic blessings pronounced upon the tribes (Gen 49:1-28), Jacob's burial in Canaan (Gen 50:1-14), Joseph's prediction that the nation would return to Canaan (Gen 50:24), and the oath by the sons of Israel that they would bury Joseph's bones in Canaan (Gen 50:25). Of particular significance regarding the guarantee of future covenant blessing was the prediction that the Messiah would come from Judah (Gen 49:10; Matt 1:2:6). Genesis 49:10 is messianic in that it teaches that the ruler's staff would remain in Judah "until the one comes to whom it belongs" (the meaning of



The step pyramid of King Djosser (Djoser) of the Third Dynasty located at Saqqara.

Shiloh).¹³ While Judah received the messianic promise, Joseph was given a double blessing through the adoption of his sons, Ephraim and Manasseh, as "sons of Israel," each becoming future tribes of Israel.

In Genesis God set in motion His **redemptive program** that would bring forth the Messiah who would one day restore God's original design for creation (Gen 3:15). To accomplish this goal, God created and preserved an elect nation that would one day bring forth the long-awaited Messiah from the tribe of Judah (Gen 49:10). The foundation of this new nation was the Abrahamic covenant. This covenant, which is described (Genesis 15) and traced throughout the book of Genesis, would later be confirmed to the exodus generation (Exod 6:2-8). Thus, the author sets the stage for the story of the exodus that follows.



The mosque of the patriarchs at Hebron built over the traditional site of the Cave of Machpelah.

THEOLOGICAL SIGNIFICANCE

Genesis begins with the act of creation and ends with the words, "In a coffin in Egypt" (50:26). In between the author lays the **foundation** of all biblical theology. The opening verse of the Bible assumes, rather than attempting to prove, the existence of God and the fact of creation by His sovereign will and spoken word (Genesis 1). Genesis defines human beings as a unique and distinct creation made in the image of God (1:26) and given a mandate to rule God's creation (1:28). However, Adam's sin brought death and disorder to the creation and often resulted in divine judgment

(1:24; 6:5-7; 11:8). As the world turned away from God, He turned to one man, calling Abraham to believe, trust, and follow Him (Gen 12:1-3), promising to make of his descendants a "great nation" through which He would bless all peoples. The election of Israel was confirmed by the Abrahamic covenant (15:1-6) and reaffirmed to his descendant Isaac, Jacob, and Jacob's 12 sons—the forefathers of the nation of Israel. Paul House observes, "Genesis acts a foundational prelude to Israel's greatest defining moment (Sinai) and Israel's immediate future (the conquest of Canaan)."¹⁴

For Further Reading

- Arnold, Bill. *Genesis*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2009.
 Davis, John J. *Paradise to Prison: Studies in Genesis*. Grand Rapids: Baker, 1975.
 Hamilton, Victor. *Genesis*. 2 vols. NICOT. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1990, 1995.
 Matthews, Kenneth. *Genesis 1:1-11:26 and Genesis 11:27-50:26*. NAC 1A. 1B. Nashville: B&H, 1996, 2005.
 Morris, Henry M. *The Genesis Record: A Scientific and Devotional Commentary on the Book of Beginnings*. Grand Rapids: Baker, 1976.
 Ross, Allen. *Creation and Blessing: A Guide to the Study and Exposition of Genesis*. Grand Rapids: Baker, 1996.

Study Questions

1. In what way are human beings uniquely created by God?
2. How does the fallen nature of humanity affect our relationship to God?
3. How does the biblical description of the flood (Genesis 6-9) indicate its extent?
4. In what way is Abraham's faith an example to us today?
5. What can we learn about the importance of character and personal integrity from the contrasting stories of Jacob and Joseph?

ENDNOTES

1. See the extensive discussion and references in E. H. Merrill, M. Kooker, and M. A. Grisanti, *The World and the Word: An Introduction to the Old Testament* (Nashville: B&H Academic, 2011), 136-73. They view Moses as the substantial and predominant author, with minor editorial insertions such as the reference to Dan in Gen 14:14. Others, like W. S. LaSor, D. A. Hubbard, and F. W. Bush (*Old Testament Survey: The Message, Form, and Background of the Old Testament* [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1996]), 8-13, view the book as being shaped by "inspired authors, editors, and tradition bearers of God's chosen people."
2. Allen Ross, *Creation and Blessing: A Guide to the Study and Exposition of Genesis* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1996), 72-73.

3. The outline follows Bruce Wilkinson and Kenneth Boa, *Talk thru the Bible* (Nashville: B&H, 2002), 5-7.
4. G. C. Aalders, *Genesis*, Bible Student's Commentary (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1981), 1:51.
5. O. T. Allis, *God Spoke by Moses* (Philadelphia: P&R, 1977), 12.
6. John MacArthur, *The Battle for the Beginning* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 2001), 15.
7. Aalders, *Genesis*, 108.
8. Some hold that Eve's mistaken belief that she had begotten the Messiah (4:1) and Lamech's belief that Noah would ameliorate the curse (3:17; 5:29) indicate that they understood Gen 3:15 in messianic terms. Arnold Fruchtenbaum, *Messianic Christology* (Tustin, CA: Ariel, 1998), 14-17.
9. Allen Ross, *Creation and Blessing: A Guide to the Study and Exposition of Genesis* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1996), 174.
10. See John Whitcomb and Henry Morris, *The Genesis Flood* (Philadelphia: P&R, 1961); Henry Morris, *The Genesis Record* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1976), 163-244.
11. "The Angel of the Lord" is a theophany (appearance of God in human form) and is most likely a preincarnate appearance of Christ in the Old Testament (Gen 18:1; 22:11; Josh 5:13-15; Judg 6:11-16; 13:3). See James Borland, *Christ in the Old Testament* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1978).
12. On the conservative view of the chronology, see John J. Davis, *Paradise to Prison: Studies in Genesis* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1975), 266-67.
13. Ross, *Creation and Blessing*, 703. Judah was selected for this honor because Reuben, Simeon, and Levi were disqualified.
14. Paul R. House, *Old Testament Theology* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP, 1998), 58; cf. also E. Merrill, "A Theology of the Pentateuch," in *A Biblical Theology of the Old Testament*, ed. Roy Zuck (Chicago: Moody Press, 1991), 30.

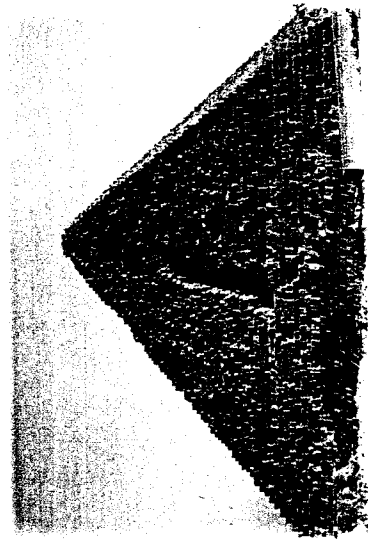
Chapter 7

EXODUS

Exit from Egypt

The book of Exodus tells a dramatic tale of faith, hope, and love. It is also a story of betrayal, slavery, emancipation, and liberation. Its images are so powerful they are quoted more than 120 times in the Hebrew Bible. Exodus is the story of the Israelites' exit from bondage in Egypt. It is a narrative account of the history of the descendants of Jacob (Israel) from the death of Joseph in c. 1806 BC (Exod 1:1-7) until the construction of the tabernacle in the wilderness in 1446 BC (Exod 40:17). The account includes the years of Israel's bondage and servitude in Egypt, the call of Moses, the confrontation with Pharaoh, the dramatic events of the exodus, and Israel's arrival at Mount Sinai to receive the law from Jehovah (Yahweh) God.

Exodus is also the story of God's love for His people. Yahweh is not an aloof, inactive, functionless deity. He sees, hears, observes, and cares about the struggles



The smallest of the three pyramids at Giza, built by Mycerinus (Menkaure).

have also included a feature we have not found in other surveys: "Hebrew Highlights." This is designed for non-Hebrew readers to acquaint them with the look, sound, and meaning of the original language.

In teaching Old Testament in the college and seminary settings for the past 12 years, I (Gary) have come to realize that students even from Christian backgrounds are increasingly unfamiliar with the basic message and stories of the Old Testament. We are hoping this survey will provide a good general overview of the entire Old Testament that will help students to see how the individual parts fit together as a whole. Students today are also confused as to how the Old Testament relates to the New Testament and to their Christian faith, so we have provided an explanation of the theological message of each Old Testament book as it relates to the whole canon of Scripture. I especially would like to thank the members of the Old Testament faculty at Dallas Theological Seminary who played a significant role in training me for my current ministry, particularly Drs. Robert Chisholm Jr. and Eugene Merrill and Prof. Donald Glenn.

I (Ed) want to express my gratitude to former professors who taught, mentored, and guided me along my own academic journey. I took my first undergraduate Old Testament surveys from Eugene Merrill and Norman Geisler. At the graduate level, I studied under such renowned evangelical scholars as Gleason Archer, Walter Kaiser, Kenneth Bunker Young, John Whitcomb, and John Davis. Each one prepared me for the teaching career that I have enjoyed these many years. At the same time, they more than adequately prepared me for more critical challenges that I would face later in my studies abroad.

We also want to thank Dr. Gary Smith of Union University who served as the external editor for B&H and Michael Herbert, B.S. of Liberty, who served as the managing editor of the electronic file. There will always be new insights to gain, new views to analyze, and new criticisms to consider. But the basic message of the Old Testament will remain forever the same. It is a story of God's love for the world. His provision for His people, and His promises for their future. It is the essence of that story that we have endeavored to tell in the pages that follow. To God be the glory.

Ed Hindson and Gary Yates
Liberty University in Virginia

Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

The Essence of the Old Testament

The Old Testament is a collection of 39 books that tell God's story. It is the story of His love for His people, not only the chosen people of Israel but all people worldwide. In the pages of these amazing books, one encounters a **plethora of humanity**: patri-archs, kings, queens, priests, merchants, farmers, warriors, women, children, prosti-tutes, saints and sinners, the godly and the ungodly. They are all there, each playing a significant role in God's story. Alec Motyer says they are "larger than life and yet intensely human, belonging to the distant past and yet portrayed with such vividness and relevance" that their stories come alive, just like people today.¹

What is amazing about the Old Testament is the **stark reality** of these stories. This is not a collection of sanctified mythology that glosses over the faults of its heroes. Instead, the men and women of the Old Testament are portrayed as they really were, no holds barred. Philip Yancey observes, "In its pages you will find passionate stories of love and hate, blood-chilling stories of rape and dismemberment, matter-of-fact accounts of trafficking in slaves, honest tales of the high honor and cruel treachery of war."²

If you are unfamiliar with the contents of these 39 books, get prepared for some of the most exciting, challenging, and disturbing reading of your entire life. The **human drama** that encompasses the greater story of God's love will challenge your faith, blow your mind, and bless your soul. The personal narratives, national histories, pas-sionate poetry, and predictive prophecies combine to weave the tapestry of the Old Testament. Jean-Pierre Léboucq notes that the principle thesis of the Hebrew Bible is the story of people who "were led, admonished, and ultimately saved by the power of one God, the creator of the universe, a Being passionately devoted to moral and social justice."³

THE CHARACTER OF GOD

The acts of God in the Hebrew Scriptures reveal the character of God. They por-tray Him not as an impersonal force but as a **personal Being** who sees each person's problems, hears their cries, is concerned about this sinful world, and, therefore, "comes down" to intervene in humanity's darkest hours. He walks in the garden, like a parent, calling: "Adam, where are you?" (Gen 3:9, author's translation). He appears to Moses

25:23-26). He will not be a son of just any of Jacob's sons, but He must be a son of Judah (Gen 49:10). He will not descend from Jesse's older sons but from David, the youngest son (1 Sam 16:6-12). This process of elimination was designed ultimately to qualify only one person to fulfill the messianic prophetic destiny. It was not necessarily meant to represent rejection of the others as much as it was meant to reflect the sovereignty of God's divine selection.

Jesus believed He was the fulfillment of the Old Testament promises. Speaking to two of His own disciples, Jesus began "with Moses and all the Prophets" and "interpreted for them the things concerning Himself in all the Scriptures" (Luke 24:27). Jesus was so confident in the divine authority of the Old Testament that He quoted it to define Himself and His mission and to settle controversies with His critics (see Matt 22:15-45). He rebuked Satan by quoting from the book of Deuteronomy (see Matt 4:1-11). He even went so far as to affirm some of the most controversial passages in the Old Testament. He referred to Noah's flood as though He believed it actually occurred (Matt 24:37-39). He affirmed Moses, Daniel, and Isaiah as the authors of their own material (Matt 24:15). He talked about the miracles of Elijah and Elisha as though He really believed they happened (Luke 4:25-27). He even referred to Jonah's experience in the fish as a type of His own resurrection (Matt 2:39-41; 16:4).

On the cross Jesus quoted Ps 22:1, "My God, my God, why have You forsaken Me?" (Matt 27:46). In the face of His impending death, Jesus told Peter that "the Scriptures [must] be fulfilled that say it must happen this way" (Matt 26:54). In regard to His own future, Jesus said, "But I tell you, in the future you will see the Son of Man seated at the right hand of the Power and coming on the clouds of heaven," quoting Dan 7:13-14 (Matt 26:64). While He challenged the many misinterpretations of the Hebrew Scriptures prevalent in His day (e.g., Matt 5:21-22), nevertheless, Jesus affirmed the teachings of Scripture when rightly understood. Thus, He said, "Don't assume that I came to destroy the Law or the Prophets. I did not come to destroy but to fulfill. For I assure you: Until heaven and earth pass away, not the smallest letter or one stroke of a letter [not a title, KJV] will pass from the law until all things are accomplished" (Matt 5:17-18).

THE BIBLICAL MESSAGE

One cannot adequately understand the New Testament without the Old Testament. This is because the Hebrew Scriptures were the Bible of the earliest Christians. As God moved upon the authors of the Gospels, the Acts, the Letters, and the Revelation, they wrote assuming their readers were familiar with the Old Testament. Concepts and terms that appear throughout the New Testament Scriptures find their antecedents in the writings of the ancient Israelites. Terms like *covenant*, *law*, *grace*, *baptism*, *prophet*, *priest*, and *king* find their roots in the Old Testament. Concepts like justice, forgiveness, redemption, salvation, and sanctification were born in the Hebrew mind long before the days of the New Testament. Philip Yancey writes, "Our roots go deep in the Old Testament thinking in many ways—human rights, government, the treatment of neighbors, our understanding of God—we are already speaking and thinking Old Testament."⁴

in the burning bush, telling him that He is concerned about the Israelites' suffering; therefore, He has come down to rescue them (Exod 3:7-8). He stands at the foot of the bed of the boy Samuel, calling him by name, commissioning him to be His prophet (1 Sam 3:10). He requires those who claim His name to "act justly, to love faithfulness, and to walk humbly" with Him (Mic 6:8). He grieves over sin and condemns evil (Gen 6:6-8). Yet He extends grace and favor (Hb, *hen*) and shows loving-kindness (*chesed*) beyond anything that can be earned, merited, or deserved.

To the casual reader God's love seems to be extended to men like Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and David. It also seems, at first glance, that His love is only for the people of Israel and no one else. But one need only read deeper into the pages of this incredible love story to discover that His love impacts the lives of the **women and foreigners** who intersect its pages. In these stories one will encounter Tamar, the Canaanite mother of Judah's sons (Gen 38:6); Asenath, Joseph's Egyptian wife, the mother of Ephraim and Manasseh (Gen 41:45-52); Jeftro, the priest of Midian and his daughter Zipporah, Moses' Midianite wife (Exod 3:16-21); Rahab, the Canaanite harlot, who married into the messianic line (Josh 2:1, 5:25; Matt 1:5); as did the godly Moabite named Ruth, the great-grandmother of King David (Ruth 4:13-22); Bathsheba, David's mistress, then his wife and mother of Solomon (2 Sam 11:3-4; 27:12:24); Hiram, the king of Tyre, who supplied the materials to build the temple (1 Kgs 5:1-12); and Ebed-melech, an African Cushite who saved the prophet Jeremiah's life (Jer 38:7-13).

From the opening pages of the Old Testament in the book of Genesis to the last verse of Malachi, men and women, Israelites and foreigners are **encountering God**. His existence is assumed to be a self-evident reality. No attempt is made at an apologetic defense. The biblical text simply announces: "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth" (Gen 1:1). He speaks creation into existence by fiat and pronounces it "good" (1:31). He creates human beings in His own image (Hb, *tselam*) and likeness (*demuth*) to have a relationship with Him and to rule the creation on His behalf (Gen 1:26-31).

THE PROMISE OF HOPE

But with the entrance of sin came spiritual and physical death, the corruption of the human race, and the long, difficult history of fallen humanity (Genesis 3). At every turn of the drama that follows in the ancient Hebrew text, God shows up. He makes the first sacrifice, sheds the first blood, and gives Eve the first prophetic promise of the Bible—the seed of the woman would ultimately crush the head of the serpent, Satan (Gen 3:15). No details were given, only a **word of hope for the distant future**. The fact that Eve assumed her firstborn son was probably that "seed" indicates she expected a literal human being to fulfill the promise.

But that was only the beginning. As the years rolled by and the reader turns the pages of the Old Testament Scriptures, the attentive person soon discovers that God is narrowing the field so that ultimately only **one Person** will fulfill this promise. He will not be any human being but a son of Abraham (Gen 12:1-3). He will not be a son of Ishmael but of Isaac (Gen 17:18-19). He will not be a son of Esau but of Jacob (Gen

Jesus Himself is often described by **Old Testament images**. Lamb of God, Lion of Judah, promised Messiah, Immanuel, King of the Jews, Son of Man, and the good shepherd. The pages of the New Testament are filled with Old Testament names and terms:

Abraham	Matt 1:1	Israel	Matt 2:20
Ark of the Covenant	Rev 11:19	Jericho	Luke 19:1
Babylon	Rev 14:8	Jerusalem	Matt 2:1
Bethlehem	Matt 2:1	Jerzebel	Rev 2:20
Canaanite	Matt 15:21	Joppa	Acts 9:43
Damascus	Acts 9:3	Lot's Wife	Luke 17:32
David	Matt 1:1	Malchizedek	Heb 5:6
Egypt	Matt 2:14	Moses	John 7:19
Elijah	Matt 11:14	Nineveh	Matt 12:41
Enoch	Heb 11:5	Passover	Mark 14:1
Euphrates	Rev 9:14	Pentecost	Acts 2:1
Gentiles	Luke 2:32	Sabbath	Matt 12:2
High Priest	Heb 3:1	Samaritans	Matt 10:5
Isaiah	Matt 3:3	Sodom	Matt 10:15

Even more important than the names and terms of the Old Testament is its **theology**, which is the foundation of New Testament doctrine. Concepts like sin, salvation, blood atonement, redemption, sacrifice, justification, and sanctification are all grounded in the theology of the Hebrew canon. Any person who examines the books of the Old Testament will discover a story of God's love for the world. It is a story that is as old as time itself. It opens with the words "in the beginning" (Gen 1:1) and carries us down the tunnel of time, through the halls of history, into the canyon of eternity.

In these pages God is at work calling people by name: Adam, Abraham, Moses, and Samual. His love, patience, anger, judgment, and forgiveness are evident again and again. As patriarchs, prophets, priests, and kings stumble on the path of life, God is there to rebuke, correct, and redeem a fallen world—all because of His great love.

Come with us on this incredible encounter with the Divine as we survey the essence of the books of the Old Testament one at a time.

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