

# GENESIS STUDY GUIDE

## Chapters 1-25

### AUTHOR

The book doesn't mention its author, but Jewish tradition, church history, and the Scriptures themselves ascribe the book to Moses. Moses is the author of the first 5 books of the Bible, otherwise known as the Pentateuch.

Jesus Himself said in John 5:46, "If you believed Moses, you would believe Me, for he wrote about Me." In fact, there are numerous Old Testament and New Testament scriptures that testify to Moses' writing of the Pentateuch (Josh. 1:7; Dan. 9:11-13; Luke 16:29; John 7:19; Acts 26:22, etc.)

### DATE

There is no clear date of when Genesis was written. It is believed Moses, under the inspiration of God through the Holy Spirit, wrote the book during the time of the wilderness wanderings of Israel, or 1440-1400 BC. This date is established by 1 Kings 6:1 which states Solomon began building the temple 480 years after the children of Israel had come up out of the land of Egypt. Other sources give reason that Solomon started about 960 BC, therefore the Exodus would have been about 1400 BC. Genesis was then written after that date.

### LITERARY STRUCTURE

Genesis, which means "the origin, source, creation, or coming into being of something," is perfectly situated as the first book of the Bible. The book may be divided into four major parts:

1. The Creation & the Early Days of Humankind (Gen. 1:1-11:26)
2. The Story of Abraham & Isaac (Gen. 12:1-25:18)
3. The Story of Jacob & Esau (Gen. 25:19-36:43)
4. The Story of Joseph & His Brothers (Gen. ch. 35-51)

The first major section of the book holds 5 key events: 1) Creation & the Garden of Eden, 2) Adam & Eve in the Garden, 3) The Fall, 4) The Flood, and 5) Tower of Babel. Each of these events relate to the whole of humanity. However, the rest of Genesis narrows focus to the 4 main patriarchs of Israel: Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, & Joseph.

### BACKGROUND INFORMATION

In many ways, Genesis anticipates the New Testament: the very personal God, the Trinity, institution of marriage, seriousness of sin, divine judgment, and righteousness by faith. The Tree of Life, lost in Genesis, is restored in Revelation 22.

Genesis is also a book of firsts. The book records the first sacrifice (Gen. 3:21), first birth (Gen. 4:1), first death (Gen. 4:8), the first musical instruments (Gen. 4:21), and the first rainbow (Gen. 9:12-17).

The book focuses on God primarily in two areas:

1. He is the Creator of the universe
2. He is the One who initiates covenant with His people

Genesis ties creation & covenant together in a stunning manner: the God who initiates covenant is the same God who has created the entire universe. The eternal God & Almighty Creator enters into covenant with His people! In fact, in the 1<sup>st</sup> chapter of Genesis, God not only lets us know He is the fountain of all life & power and that His kingdom embraces all that is, but He lets us know He created us to share dominion with Him within His kingdom.

### GENEALOGIES

If you're like me, you may find yourself lost in genealogies. This is especially true with Abraham's family. Abraham traces his lineage thru Shem, and the genealogy of Shem (Gen. 11:10-26) serves to introduce the figure of Abraham, a native of the Mesopotamian city of Ur. God's redemptive plan now focuses on the family & descendants of the one individual. Abraham's role in Scripture is foundational to the rest of Scripture: all of God's subsequent redemptive dealings with humanity are related to the covenant God made with Abraham.

### OBSERVATION WORDS

You are encouraged to mark up your Bible by distinctively marking the following important words. Some people create symbols or use different colors to differentiate between the different words. Use whatever system works for you so you may easily spot themes, important information etc. As you read and mark these words, take note of what you learn about each word.

- **God** – Different ways He's referenced & what you learn about Him
- **Holy Spirit** – When He's named directly, what He does, note miracles, etc.
- **Jesus** – When & how is He present? What types/symbols represent Christ in the text?
- **God said/spoke** – What is He saying? What are the consequences?
- **Covenant** – What is the covenant about? What are the details of the covenant?
- **Bless/Blessed** – Who is blessed & who is doing the blessing?
- **Babel/Babylon** – What do you learn?
- **Abraham** – What do you learn about him?
- **Isaac** – What do you learn about him?
- **Jacob** – What do you learn about him?

