

# GENESIS

## Introduction

The name *Genesis* means “origin.” The book tells about the creation of the universe, the origin of human beings, the beginning of sin and suffering in the world, and about God's way of dealing with people. Genesis can be divided into two main parts:

1) *Chapters 1—11* The creation of the world and the early history of the human race. Here are the accounts of Adam and Eve, Cain and Abel, Noah and the flood, and the Tower of Babylon.

2) *Chapters 12—50* The history of the early ancestors of the Israelites. The first is Abraham, who was notable for his faith and his obedience to God. Then follow the stories of his son Isaac, and grandson Jacob (also called Israel), and of Jacob's twelve sons, the founders of the twelve tribes of Israel. Special attention is given to one of the sons, Joseph, and the events that brought Jacob and his other sons with their families to live in Egypt.

While this book tells stories about people, it is first and foremost an account of what God has done. It begins with the affirmation that God created the universe, and it ends with a promise that God will continue to show his concern for his people. Throughout the book the main character is God, who judges and punishes those who do wrong, leads and helps his people, and shapes their history. This ancient book was written to record the story of a people's faith and to help keep that faith alive.

## Outline of Contents

Creation of the universe and of human beings (1.1–2.25)

The beginning of sin and suffering (3.1–24)

From Adam to Noah (4.1–5.32)

### The Story of Creation

**1** In the beginning, when God created the universe,<sup>2</sup> the earth was formless and desolate. The raging ocean that covered everything was engulfed in total darkness, and the Spirit of God was moving over the water.<sup>3</sup> Then God commanded, “Let there be light”—and light appeared.<sup>4</sup> God was pleased with what he saw. Then he separated the light from the darkness,<sup>5</sup> and he named the light “Day” and the darkness “Night.” Evening passed and morning came—that was the first day.

<sup>6-7</sup> Then God commanded, “Let there be a dome to divide the water and to keep it in two separate places”—and it was done. So God made a dome, and it separated the water under it from the water above it.

<sup>8</sup> He named the dome “Sky.” Evening passed and morning came—that was the second day.

<sup>9</sup> Then God commanded, “Let the water below the sky come together in one place, so that the land will appear”—and it was done.<sup>10</sup> He named the land “Earth,” and the water which had come together he named “Sea.” And God was pleased with what he saw.<sup>11</sup> Then he commanded, “Let the earth produce all kinds of plants, those that bear grain and those that bear fruit”—and it was done.<sup>12</sup> So the earth produced all kinds of plants, and God was pleased with what he saw.<sup>13</sup> Evening passed and morning came—that was the third day.

<sup>14</sup> Then God commanded, “Let lights appear in the sky to separate day from night and to show the time when

days, years, and religious festivals begin;<sup>15</sup> they will shine in the sky to give light to the earth”—and it was done.<sup>16</sup> So God made the two larger lights, the sun to rule over the day and the moon to rule over the night; he also made the stars.<sup>17</sup> He placed the lights in the sky to shine on the earth,<sup>18</sup> to rule over the day and the night, and to separate light from darkness. And God was pleased with what he saw.<sup>19</sup> Evening passed and morning came—that was the fourth day.

<sup>20</sup> Then God commanded, “Let the water be filled with many kinds of living beings, and let the air be filled with birds.”<sup>21</sup> So God created the great sea monsters, all kinds of creatures that live in the water, and all kinds of birds. And God was pleased with what he saw.<sup>22</sup> He blessed them all and told the creatures that live in the water to reproduce and to fill the sea, and he told the birds to increase in number.<sup>23</sup> Evening passed and morning came—that was the fifth day.

<sup>24</sup> Then God commanded, “Let the earth produce all kinds of animal life: domestic and wild, large and small”—and it was done.<sup>25</sup> So God made them all, and he was pleased with what he saw.

<sup>26</sup> Then God said, “And now we will make human beings; they will be like us and resemble us. They will have power over the fish, the birds, and all animals, domestic and wild, large and small.”<sup>27</sup> So God created human beings, making them to be like himself. He created them male and female,<sup>28</sup> blessed them, and said, “Have many children, so that your

descendants will live all over the earth and bring it under their control. I am putting you in charge of the fish, the birds, and all the wild animals. <sup>29</sup> I have provided all kinds of grain and all kinds of fruit for you to eat; <sup>30</sup> but for all the wild animals and for all the birds I have provided grass and leafy plants for food”—and it was done. <sup>31</sup> God looked at everything he had made, and he was very pleased. Evening passed and morning came—that was the sixth day.

**2** And so the whole universe was completed. <sup>2</sup> By the seventh day God finished what he had been doing and stopped working. <sup>3</sup> He blessed the seventh day and set it apart as a special day, because by that day he had completed his creation and stopped working.

<sup>4</sup> And that is how the universe was created.

### The Garden of Eden

When the Lord God made the universe, <sup>5</sup> there were no plants on the earth and no seeds had sprouted, because he had not sent any rain, and there was no one to cultivate the land; <sup>6</sup> but water would come up from beneath the surface and water the ground.

<sup>7</sup> Then the Lord God took some soil from the ground and formed a man out of it; he breathed life-giving breath into his nostrils and the man began to live.

<sup>8</sup> Then the Lord God planted a garden in Eden, in the East, and there he put the man he had formed. <sup>9</sup> He made all kinds of beautiful trees grow there and produce good fruit. In the middle of the garden stood the tree that gives life and the tree that gives knowledge of what is good and what is bad.

<sup>10</sup> A stream flowed in Eden and watered the garden; beyond Eden it divided into four rivers. <sup>11</sup> The first river is the Pishon; it flows around the country of Havilah. ( <sup>12</sup> Pure gold is found there and also rare

perfume and precious stones.) <sup>13</sup> The second river is the Gihon; it flows around the country of Cush. <sup>14</sup> The third river is the Tigris, which flows east of Assyria, and the fourth river is the Euphrates.

<sup>15</sup> Then the Lord God placed the man in the Garden of Eden to cultivate it and guard it. <sup>16</sup> He told him, “You may eat the fruit of any tree in the garden, <sup>17</sup> except the tree that gives knowledge of what is good and what is bad. You must not eat the fruit of that tree; if you do, you will die the same day.”

<sup>18</sup> Then the Lord God said, “It is not good for the man to live alone. I will make a suitable companion to help him.” <sup>19</sup> So he took some soil from the ground and formed all the animals and all the birds. Then he brought them to the man to see what he would name them; and that is how they all got their names. <sup>20</sup> So the man named all the birds and all the animals; but not one of them was a suitable companion to help him.

<sup>21</sup> Then the Lord God made the man fall into a deep sleep, and while he was sleeping, he took out one of the man's ribs and closed up the flesh. <sup>22</sup> He formed a woman out of the rib and brought her to him. <sup>23</sup> Then the man said,

“At last, here is one of my own kind—  
Bone taken from my bone, and flesh from my  
flesh.

‘Woman’ is her name because she was taken out of  
man.”

<sup>24</sup> That is why a man leaves his father and mother and is united with his wife, and they become one.

<sup>25</sup> The man and the woman were both naked, but they were not embarrassed.