

Approaching Genesis Through Hebraic Eyes

- **Form/Essence**

Hebrew - Essence - primary concern is the **essence** of things

Greek - Form - primary emphasis is placed upon how things are **experienced** by the human eye

- **Time**

Hebrew - viewed human history as going **somewhere**

Greek - viewed human history as a never-ending **cycle** of aimless repetition

- **The extraordinary Hebrew God**

The Greeks saw laws of **Nature**, the Hebrews saw laws over **nature**.

The natural has come to mean "the normal operation of a **self-governing** system," while the supernatural refers to "the interference of **God** in that system."

This concept is **unbiblical**. (Colossians 1:16-17)

While creation normally functions under ordained laws of physics which God maintains, this does not limit the Lord from choosing at times to supersede His own laws, and do things differently. When He does, we call it a "**miracle**," such as when water was turned to wine, or Lazarus was raised from the dead.

We must not make the false assumption that God is present in the **miracle** but stands on the sidelines during the ordinary times.

- **Reason/Revelation**

The Hebrews based their culture upon the assumption that divine revelation was the only sufficient starting point for truth, values and morality.

The Greeks based their culture upon the assumption that human reason was a sufficient starting point for determining truth, measuring values, and molding morality. (Proverbs 3:5)

- **Let Freedom Ring**

Freedom, in a world of transcendent law and orderliness, is the **recognition** of those laws and living in **harmony** with them.

To be free, then, means to **submit** oneself to the prescribed order of things, and function responsibly and creatively within the **boundaries** God has lovingly provided for our good and wellbeing.

Human freedom is found in **submission** to the **will** of God. (John 15:10-11)

- **Philosophy**

Hebrew religion pursued wisdom by the light of divine **revelation**, looking to precepts already provided.

Greek philosophy involved the pursuit of wisdom by the light of **human** reason, looking to provide its own precepts.

The Hebrews did not spend time questioning His existence. Their questions had to do with what He required of their existence.

The Hebrew asks "What must I do?" and the Greek asked "Why must I do it?"

The Book of Genesis

- Torah/Pentateuch**

Book	Key Idea	The Nation	The People	God's Character	God's Role	God's Command
Genesis	Beginnings	Chosen	Prepared	Powerful Sovereign	Creator	"Let there be!"
Exodus	Redemption	Delivered	Redeemed	Merciful	Deliverer	"Let My people go!"
Leviticus	Worship	Set Apart	Taught	Holy	Sanctifier	"Be Holy!"
Numbers	Wandering	Directed	Tested	Just	Sustainer	"Go in!"
Deuteronomy	Renewed Covenant	Made Ready	Retaught	Loving Lord	Rewarder	"Obey!"

- Title**

Genesis is the Greek word meaning "origin, source, generation, or beginnings."

- Literary structure**

Introduced by generations

- 1:1-2:3 Introduction to the Generations
- 2:4-4:26 Heaven and Earth
- 5:1-6:8 Adam
- 6:9-9:29 Noah
- 10:1-11:9 Sons of Noah
- 11:10-26 Shem
- 11:27-25:11 Terah
- 25:12-18 Ishmael
- 25:19-35:29 Isaac
- 36:1-37:1 Esau
- 37:2-50:26 Jacob

- Author**

Although Genesis does not directly name its author, and although Genesis ends some three centuries before Moses was born, the whole of Scripture and church history are unified in their adherence to the Mosaic authorship of the Pentateuch.

OT

- Exodus 17:14
- Leviticus 1:1-2
- Joshua 1:7
- Ezra 6:18
- Daniel 9:11-13

NT

- Matthew 8:4
- Mark 12:26
- Luke 16:29
- John 7:19
- Acts 26:22
- Romans 10:19
- 1 Corinthians 9:9
- 2 Corinthians 3:15

- Time and Place**

2000 or more years, 4000-2090 B.C. (1-11)

1. Creation, 4000 B.C. or earlier (1:1)
2. Death of Terah, 2090 B.C. (11:32)

193 years, 2090-1897 B.C. (12-36)

1. Death of Terah, 2090 B.C. (11:32)
2. Joseph to Egypt, 1897 B.C. (37:2)

93 years, 1897-1804 B.C. (37-50)

1. Joseph to Egypt, 1897 B.C. (37:2)
2. Death of Joseph, 1804 B.C. (50:26)

1. The Fertile Crescent (1-11)
2. Israel (12-36)
3. Egypt (37-50)

- **Theme and Purpose**

The theme of Genesis is God's choice of a **nation** through whom He would bless all nations.

It concentrates on the course of God's **redemptive** work and is not a complete or universal history.

Genesis was written to present the **beginning** of everything except God:

- 1:1 The universe
- 1:27 Man
- 2:2-3 The Sabbath
- 2:22-24 Marriage
- 3:1-7 Sin
- 3:15, 21 Sacrifice and Salvation
- 4:1-15 The Family
- 4:16-21 Civilization
- 9:1-6 Government
- 11 Nations
- 12: 1-3 Israel

- **Key Word:** **Beginnings**

- **Key Verses:** 3:15; 12:3

- **Key Chapter:** 15

- **Christ in Genesis**

Genesis moves from the general to the specific in its messianic predictions:

Christ is the Seed of the **woman** (3:15),
from the line of **Seth** (4:25),
the son of **Shem** (9:27),
the descendant of **Abraham** (12:3),
of **Isaac** (21:12),
of **Jacob** (25:23),
and of the tribe of **Judah** (49:10).

Christ is also seen in people and events that serve as types.

(A type is a **historical** fact that illustrates a **spiritual** truth.)

Adam is "a type of Him who was to come" (Romans 5:14).

Both entered the world through a special act of God as **sinless** men. Adam is the head of the **old** creation; Christ is the Head of the **new** creation.

Abel's acceptable offering of a blood sacrifice points to Christ, and there is a parallel in his murder by **Cain**.

Melchizedek ("righteous king") is "made like the Son of God" (Hebrews 7:3).

He is the king of Salem ("**peace**") who brings forth bread and wine and is the **priest** of the Most High God.

Joseph is also a type of Christ.

Joseph and Christ are both objects of special **love** by their fathers, both are **hated** by their brethren, both are **rejected** as rulers over their brethren, both are conspired against and **sold** for silver, both are **condemned** though innocent, and both are raised from humiliation to glory by the power of God.

- **Place in the Bible**

Genesis provides a **historical** perspective for the rest of the Bible by covering more time than all the other biblical books combined.

This sweeping scope from Eden to Ur to Haran to Canaan to Egypt makes it the introduction not only to the Pentateuch but also to the **Scriptures** as a whole.

Genesis gives the foundation for all the great **doctrines** of the Bible.

It shows how God overcomes man's failure under different conditions. Genesis is especially crucial to an understanding of Revelation, because the first and last three chapters of the Bible are so intimately related.

- **Survey of Genesis**

Four Great Events

1. **Creation**: God is the sovereign Creator of matter, energy, space and time. Man is the pinnacle of the Creation. (Chapters 1-11)

2. **Fall**: Creation is followed by corruption. In the first sin man is separated from God (Adam from God), and in the second sin, man is separated from man (Cain and Abel). In spite of the devastating curse of the Fall, God promises hope of redemption through the seed of the woman (3:15).

3. **Flood**: As man multiplies, sin also multiplies until God is compelled to destroy humanity with the exception of Noah and his family.

4. **Nations**: Genesis teaches the unity of the human race: we are all children of Adam through Noah, but because of rebellion at the Tower of Babel, God fragments the single culture and language of the post-Flood world and scatters people over the face of the earth.

Four Great People

1. **Abraham**: The calling of Abraham (12) is the pivotal point of the book. The three covenant promises God makes to Abraham (land, descendants, and blessing) are foundational to His program of bringing salvation upon the earth.

2. **Isaac**: God establishes His covenant with Isaac as the spiritual link with Abraham.

3. **Jacob**: God transforms this man from selfishness to servanthood and changes his name to Israel, the father of the twelve tribes.

4. **Joseph**: Jacob's favorite son suffers at the hands of his brothers and becomes a slave in Egypt. After his dramatic rise to the rulership of Egypt, Joseph delivers his family from famine and brings them out of Canaan to Goshen.

Genesis ends on a note of impending **bondage** with the death of Joseph. There is a great need for the **redemption** that is to follow in the Book of Exodus.