

GENESIS

Creation

Noah
undated

Abram
born
2166 B.C.
(2000 B.C.)

Abram
enters
Canaan
2091
(1925)

Isaac
born
2066
(1900)

VITAL STATISTICS

PURPOSE:

To record God's creation of the world and his desire to have a people set apart to worship him

AUTHOR:

Moses

TO WHOM WRITTEN:

The people of Israel

DATE WRITTEN:

1450–1410 B.C.

SETTING:

The region presently known as the Middle East

KEY VERSES:

“So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them.” (1:27) “I will make you into a great nation and I will bless you; I will make your name great, and you will be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you, and whoever curses you I will curse; and all peoples on earth will be blessed through you.” (12:2, 3).

KEY PEOPLE:

Adam, Eve, Noah, Abraham, Sarah, Isaac, Rebekah, Jacob, Joseph



BEGIN . . . start . . . commence . . . open . . .

There's something refreshing and optimistic about these words, whether they refer to the dawn of a new day, the birth of a child, the prelude of a symphony, or the first miles of a family vacation. Free of problems and full of promise, beginnings stir hope and imaginative visions of the future. Genesis means “beginnings” or “origin,” and it unfolds the record of the beginning of the world, of human history, of family, of civilization, of salvation. It is the story of God's purpose and plan

for his creation. As the book of beginnings, Genesis sets the stage for the entire Bible. It reveals the person and nature of God (Creator, Sustainer, Judge, Redeemer); the value and dignity of human beings (made in God's image, saved by grace, used by God in the world); the tragedy and consequences of sin (the fall, separation from God, judgment); and the promise and assurance of salvation (covenant, forgiveness, promised Messiah).

God. That's where Genesis begins. All at once we see him creating the world in a majestic display of power and purpose, culminating with a man and woman made like himself (1:26, 27). But before long sin entered the world, and Satan was unmasked. Bathed in innocence, creation was shattered by the fall (the willful disobedience of Adam and Eve). Fellowship with God was broken, and evil began weaving its destructive web. In rapid succession, we read how Adam and Even were expelled from the beautiful garden, their first son turned murderer, and evil bred evil until God finally destroyed everyone on earth except a small family led by Noah, the only godly person left.

As we come to the Abraham on the plains of Canaan, we discover the beginning of God's covenant people and the broad strokes of his salvation plan: salvation comes by faith, Abraham's descendants will be God's people, and the Savior of the world will come through this chosen nation. The stories of Isaac, Jacob, and Joseph which follow are more than interesting biographies. They emphasize the promises of God and the proof that he is faithful. The people we meet in Genesis are simple, ordinary people, yet through them, God did great things. These are vivid pictures of how God can and does use all kinds of people to accomplish his good purposes . . . even people like you and me.

Read Genesis and be encouraged. There is hope! No matter how dark the world situation seems, God has a plan. No matter how insignificant or useless you feel, God loves you and wants to use you in his plan. No matter how sinful and separated from God you are, his salvation is available. Read Genesis . . . and hope!

and saw that the surface of the ground was dry. ¹⁴By the twenty-seventh day of the second month the earth was completely dry.

¹⁵Then God said to Noah, ¹⁶“Come out of the ark, you and your wife and your sons and their wives. ¹⁷Bring out every kind of living creature that is with you—the birds, the animals, and all the creatures that move along the ground—so they can multiply on the earth and be fruitful and increase in number upon it.”^k

¹⁸So Noah came out, together with his sons and his wife and his sons’ wives. ¹⁹All the animals and all the creatures that move along the ground and all the birds—everything that moves on the earth—came out of the ark, one kind after another.

²⁰Then Noah built an altar to the LORD^l and, taking some of all the clean animals and clean birds, he sacrificed burnt offerings^m on it. ²¹The LORD smelled the pleasing aromaⁿ and said in his heart: “Never again will I curse the ground^o because of man, even though^m every inclination of his heart is evil from childhood. And never again will I destroy all living creatures,^p as I have done.

²²“As long as the earth endures,
seedtime and harvest,
cold and heat,
summer and winter,

^m21 Or *man, for*

8:17

^kGen 1:22

8:20

^lGe 12:7-8

^mGe 22:2, 13;

Ex10:25

8:21

ⁿLev 1:9, 13;

^oCo 2:15

^pGe 3:17

^qGe 9:11, 15;

Isa 54:9

NOAH

The story of Noah’s life involves not one, but two great and tragic floods. The world in Noah’s day was flooded with evil. The number of those who remembered the God of creation, perfection, and love had dwindled to one. Of God’s people, only Noah was left. God’s response to the severe situation was a 120-year-long last chance during which he had Noah build a graphic illustration of the message of his life. Nothing like a huge boat on dry land to make a point! For Noah, obedience meant a long-term commitment to a project.

Many of us have trouble sticking to any project, whether or not it is directed by God. It is interesting that the length of Noah’s obedience was greater than the lifespan of people today. The only comparable long-term project is our very lives. But perhaps this is one great challenge Noah’s life gives us—to live, in acceptance of God’s grace, an entire lifetime of obedience and gratitude.

Strengths and accomplishments:

- Only follower of God left in his generation
- Second father of the human race
- Man of patience, consistency, and obedience
- First major shipbuilder

Weakness and mistake:

- Got drunk and embarrassed himself in front of his sons

Lessons from his life:

- God is faithful to those who obey him
- God does not always protect us from trouble, but cares for us in spite of trouble
- Obedience is a long-term commitment
- A man may be faithful, but his sinful nature always travels with him

Vital statistics:

- Where: We’re not told how far from the Garden of Eden people had settled
- Occupation: Farmer, shipbuilder, preacher
- Relatives: Grandfather: Methuselah. Father: Lamech. Sons: Ham, Shem, and Japheth

Key Verse:

“Noah did everything just as God commanded him” (Genesis 6:22).

Noah’s story is told in Genesis 5:29—10:32. He is also mentioned in 1 Chronicles 1:3, 4; Isaiah 54:9; Ezekiel 14:14, 20; Matthew 24:37, 38; Luke 3:36; 17:26, 27; Hebrews 11:7; 1 Peter 3:20; 2 Peter 2:5.

8:21, 22 Countless times throughout the Bible we see God showing his love and patience toward men and women in order to save them. Although he realizes that their hearts are evil, he continues to try to reach them. When we sin or fall away from God we surely

deserve to be destroyed by his judgment. But God has promised never again to destroy everything on earth until the judgment day when Christ returns to destroy evil forever. Now every change of season is a reminder of his promise.

³³His disciples answered, “Where could we get enough bread in this remote place to feed such a crowd?”

³⁴“How many loaves do you have?” Jesus asked.

“Seven,” they replied, “and a few small fish.”

³⁵He told the crowd to sit down on the ground. ³⁶Then he took the seven loaves and the fish, and when he had given thanks, he broke them^s and gave them to the disciples, and they in turn to the people. ³⁷They all ate and were satisfied. Afterward the disciples picked up seven basketfuls of broken pieces that were left over.^t ³⁸The number of those who ate was four thousand, besides women and children. ³⁹ After Jesus had sent the crowd away, he got into the boat and went to the vicinity of Magadan.

15:36
^sMt 14:19

15:37
^tMt 16:10

Religious Leaders Ask for a Sign in the Sky
(106/Mark 8:11–13)

16 The Pharisees and Sadducees came to Jesus and tested him by asking him to show them a sign from heaven.^u

16:1
^uMt 12:38

²He replied,ⁱ “When evening comes, you say, ‘It will be fair weather, for the sky is red,’³ and in the morning, ‘Today it will be stormy, for the sky is red and overcast.’ You know how to interpret the appearance of the sky, but you cannot interpret the signs of the times.^v ⁴A wicked and adulterous generation looks for a miraculous sign, but none will be given it except the sign of Jonah.”^w Jesus then left them and went away.

16:3
^vLk 12:54-56

16:4
^wMt 12:39

Jesus Warns against Wrong Teaching
(107/Mark 8:14–21)

⁵When they went across the lake, the disciples forgot to take bread. ⁶“Be careful,” Jesus said to them. “Be on your guard against the yeast of the Pharisees and Sadducees.”^x

16:6
^xLk 12:1

⁷They discussed this among themselves and said, “It is because we didn’t bring any bread.”

⁸Aware of their discussion, Jesus asked, “You of little faith,^y why are you talking among yourselves about having no bread? ⁹Do you still not understand? Don’t you remember the five loaves for the five thousand, and how many basketfuls you gathered?^z ¹⁰Or the seven loaves for the four thousand, and how many basketfuls you gathered?^a ¹¹How is it you don’t understand that I was not talking to you about bread? But be on your guard against the yeast of the Pharisees and Sadducees.”

16:8
^yMt 6:30

16:9
^zMt 14:17-21

16:10
^aMt 15:34-38

ⁱ²Some early manuscripts do not have the rest of verse 2 and all of verse 3.

15:33 Jesus had already fed more than 5,000 people with five loaves and two fish. Here, in a similar situation, the disciples were again perplexed. How easily we throw up our hands in despair when faced with difficult situations. Like the disciples, we often forget that if God has cared for us in the past, he will do the same now. When facing a difficult situation, remember how God cared for you and trust him to work faithfully again.

15:39 Magadan was located on the west shore of the Sea of Galilee. Also known as Dalmanutha (Mark 8:10), this was Mary Magdalene’s hometown.

16:1 The Pharisees and Sadducees were Jewish religious leaders of two different parties, and their views were diametrically opposed on many issues. The Pharisees carefully followed their religious rules and traditions, believing that this was the way to God. They also believed in the authority of all Scripture and in the resurrection of the dead. The Sadducees accepted only the books of Moses as Scripture and did not believe in life after death. In Jesus, however, these two groups had a common enemy, and they joined forces to try to kill him. For more information on the Pharisees and Sadducees, see the charts in chapter 3 and Mark 2.

16:1 The Pharisees and Sadducees demanded a sign from heaven. They tried to explain away Jesus’ other miracles as sleight

of hand, coincidence, or use of evil power, but they believed that only God could do a sign in the sky. This they were sure, would be a feat beyond Jesus’ power. Although Jesus could have easily impressed them, he refused. He knew that even a miracle in the sky would not convince them he was the Messiah because they had already decided not to believe in him.

16:4 By using the sign of Jonah, who was inside a great fish for three days, Jesus was predicting his death and resurrections (see also 12:38–42).

16:4 Many people, like these Jewish leaders, say they want to see a miracle so that they can believe. But Jesus knew that miracles never convince the skeptical. Jesus had been healing, raising people from the dead, and feeding thousands, and still people wanted him to prove himself. Do you doubt Christ because you haven’t seen a miracle? Do you expect God to prove himself to you personally before you believe? Jesus says, “Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed” (John 20:29). We have all the miracles recorded in the Old and New Testaments, 2,000 years of church history, and the witness of thousands. With all this evidence, those who won’t believe are either too proud or too stubborn. If you simply step forward in faith and believe, then you will begin to see the miracles that God can do with your life!