

GENESIS



The Reason for Genesis

Genesis is a book of the Bible that followers of Christ are sometimes afraid of discussing because the story presented in the early chapters of Genesis is different than what the world believes. But learn about Genesis, and talk about Genesis, we must, for it is the foundation from which the rest of Scripture springs.

Genesis explains the beginning of our world and tells our story as those who are made in God's image. Without the first eleven chapters of Genesis, we wouldn't know where we came from and why it matters. That is why we've created this resource for you to use as we study Genesis together as a church. We know you may have a lot of questions, and we aim to answer them here in an orderly manner. Please feel free to download this PDF and keep it to refer to over the next several weeks as we dive into the book of Genesis.

Genesis: The Beginning

The literal meaning of Genesis is "origin." Here in this first book of the Bible, we find the origin of the universe, of order and complexity, the solar system, the atmosphere and hydrosphere, life, man, marriage, evil, language, government, culture, nations, religion, and the Chosen People.

In this book, we also find the worldview upon which the rest of Scripture is based. This is:

1. An articulation of **who God is** and **what he has done**;
2. **The establishment and place** of "nature" and the natural order of things;
3. The **development** of ethical choices (good and evil) as it relates to humans;
4. **The position of humanity** in creation.

In addition, we also find the origin of the themes that encompass the rest of Scripture.

Overarching themes of the Bible

There are four main themes that begin in Genesis and continue throughout the rest of the Bible: **Creation**, the **Fall**, **Redemption**, and **Restoration**.

1. Creation

Genesis 1:1 says, "In the beginning, God created..." The rest of the story is about his creation and how he interacts with and guides it.

2. Fall

The first two chapters of Genesis are about how the world and everything in it were created, and "it was very good" (Genesis 1:31). But in chapter three, something happened. Sin entered the Garden in the form of Satan acting as a deceptive snake. The man and woman, Adam and Eve, fell for the lie they were told. They chose their own knowledge and glory over a relationship with God, corrupting God's perfect creation in the process.

3. Redemption

But there was hope! Beginning in chapter three, God began to reveal his plan to redeem his creation. In the rest of Genesis, we hear about the promised land, the promised people, and the promised covenant, With the fulfillment of these promises coming a few thousand years later in the form of Jesus Christ.

4. Restoration

Because of the events of Genesis 1-3, the world is broken. This earth is in decay (see Romans 8:20-23) and is going to die. The heavens are going to die. But Christ, through his death on the cross, has given us the opportunity for our relationship with God to be restored. And one day, as we see in Revelation, all of creation will be restored, and there will be a new heaven and a new earth (see Revelation 21).

The modern problem with Genesis

Genesis is divided into two sections:

1. Primeval, or Pre-History: Genesis 1-11

The first part of Genesis includes events that are difficult to date, including creation, the fall, and the Tower of Babel. Therefore, they are considered “pre-history” – because there is no historical timeline assigned to them.

2. Patriarchal, or Historical: Genesis 12–50

This section begins with the account of Abram (Abraham), Sarai (Sarah) and Isaac and includes such characters as Rachel, Jacob, and Joseph, as well as the beginning of the Hebrew peoples' sojourn in Egypt. These are all events and people that can be given an approximate historical placement due to other references within Scripture and extra-biblical works.

In general, the historical facts of Genesis 12-50 are accepted by most people. What is questioned, even by some Christians, is Genesis 1–11 because it conflicts greatly with the beliefs about the world's origins that are popular today.

The Creation timeline according to Genesis 1 in contrast with Evolution

According to Genesis, the world was created in six distinct days in which God changed nothingness into everything merely by speaking. Each day, he declared his creation to be good, and after the sixth day, he rested.

Before the beginning there was only God. Then, he spoke.

Day 1: God created light and separated it from the darkness (Genesis 1:3-5)

Day 2: God separated the waters and the sky (Genesis 1:6-8)

Day 3: God created dry ground and vegetation (Genesis 1:9-13)

Day 4: God created the sun, moon, and stars and used them to define time, seasons, and days. (Genesis 1:14-19)

Day 5: God created fish and birds (Genesis 1:20-23)

Day 6: God created animals and humans (Genesis 1:24-31)

In contrast, the Theory of Evolution hypothesizes that billions of years ago, there was a Big Bang. This Big Bang started the formation of the universe, which took place over billions of years and has continued through the present day.

Why are the Theory of Evolution and the Genesis Creation Story incompatible?

The Theory of Evolution and the Genesis Creation Story are two completely different ways of looking at the world. In the table below, you will find a short comparison of the major differences between the two.

The Genesis Creation Story vs. Theory of Evolution

Genesis	Evolution
Time, space, and matter were created by God, who is eternal.	All matter is eternal. It always existed.
God created the earth, the heavens, life, and everything therein.	The universe began with a "Big Bang."
The universe began in peace, with God speaking it into existence, and he called it "good" (Genesis 1–2).	The universe began in chaos and continued in chaos for billions of years.
Death and Sin entered the world through the actions of a historical Adam and Eve.	Death is part of the evolutionary process – "Survival of the fittest."
The Creation Story is based on peace (Shalom) and relationship between God and humanity (Personal).	Evolutionary theory is based on chaos and destruction and on impersonal matter evolving itself into higher forms.

In Evolution, humans have evolved themselves to the top of the food chain. They are ruler of all. In contrast, Genesis states that God has created human beings to bear his image, to be his representatives here on earth, and to have relationships with him, each other, and nature.

If we believe in Evolution, we have no reason to bow down to God because WE are the ultimate authority. But if we believe Genesis is true, then we know only God is the ultimate authority. He has created us to be dependent on him, but also have independent thought. He has imbued us with a purpose, with dignity, moral understanding, love, goodness, justice, righteousness, humility, meekness, and kindness. As Henry Morris said in his book, *The Genesis Record*, "Being made in the image of God confers on us dignity, entrusts us with responsibility, and implants in us a certain potential, namely, the capacity to mirror our Creator.

As Christians, our redemption has greatly enhanced this capacity and, in the process, has made us more sensitive to the responsibility we have and the dignity shared by all humankind... We can do no greater damage to humanity than to rob it of its purposeful existence. There is no dignity in being at the top of the evolutionary ladder."¹

Genesis: literally true, or figurative?

As we've seen, there is a huge difference between the Theory of Evolution and Genesis Creation Story. But what about the Creation Story itself? Is it actually true? Many Christians subscribe to the Genesis Creation Story, but even those who do may question whether the account written in Genesis 1–11 is literally true, or merely poetic.

The question before us is: Is Genesis a compilation of myths and allegorical or figurative stories of a historical beginning, or literally true? Here at Boca Raton Community Church, we argue that the Creation Story as stated in Genesis is literally true. Here are a few of the reasons why:

1. If Genesis 1–11 is not true, or merely "myth," then the authority of the prophets, the Apostles, and Jesus himself comes into question. In the Old Testament (OT), Adam is mentioned by name in Deuteronomy, Job and I Chronicles. Noah is mentioned in I Chronicles, Isaiah, and Ezekiel. Abraham is mentioned in 15 books in the OT, and 11 in the New Testament (NT). Jacob is named in 20 OT books and 17 NT books. In the NT, Genesis is referenced 165 times with 35 further allusions to stories and events. Chapters 1–11 are alluded to in the NT with over 100 quotations or direct references. Jesus himself referred to chapters 1–11 on multiple occasions. Check out Psalm 8, Revelation 4:11, 1 Timothy 2:13–14 and 1 Corinthians 15:22 for some examples. If Genesis 1–11 is not true, then we have to question whether everything else in the Bible is true too.

2. Taking out Genesis 1–11 removes the point for which Christ came.

The Genesis Story leads to the establishment of responsibility of sin, evil, and fractured relationship with God. If you take out Adam, Eve, the Garden of Eden, the serpent, the first sin, and God's judgement, then there is no need for redemption or restoration. There is no need for Christ to have sacrificed himself. There doesn't need to a new Adam (Christ), because there wasn't an old Adam (1 Cor. 15:22; 45).

3. The People of Israel believed the Creation Account to be literally true.

In the Genesis Record, Henry Morris argues that we have let our culture and current scientific thought dictate and influence how we understand Genesis 1. Since the Israelites would not have seen the text the way we do, we must look at it as they would've, as literally true. The proof of this literal understanding is listed throughout Scripture in places such as Romans 5:12–14, 2 Cor. 11:3, and Deuteronomy 4:32–35, 39. As Morris states, "It is methodologically dangerous to construe a text in such a way as to affirm our beliefs in the clearest possible terms. We must accept the text on its own terms."²

4. If Genesis 1:1 is true, it refutes every other belief system, including:

Atheism, because the universe was created by God.

Pantheism, which says the universe itself is God, because God is *transcendent (different)* to that which He created.

Polytheism, the belief in more than one God, for *one* God created all things.

Materialism, the doctrine that says nothing exists except matter and its movements and modifications, for matter had a *beginning*.

Dualism, the idea that good and evil are two equal, eternal powers, because God was *alone* when He created everything...

Humanism, because God, *not man*, is the ultimate reality.

Evolution, because God *created* all things.

The ultimate question

As we study Genesis and ask ourselves what we truly believe about what it says, we must ask ourselves these questions: Could God speak the world into existence? Could he say, "Universe, come forth"? Could he say, "Solar system, come forth"? Could he say, "Red Sea, divide"? Could he say, "Heal _____'s heart"? Could he say, "Heal that marriage"? Could he say, "Heal that fracture"? Could he say, "Restore that relationship"? We at Boca Raton Community Church believe the answer to all these questions is yes. Because the God of the Universe, his love, endures forever, from the beginning of the world to today and into the future.

We hope this resource is useful to you as we study Genesis together. Please don't hesitate to contact us if you have any questions or would like any more information.

¹ Henry M. Morris. *The Genesis Record: A Scientific and Devotional Commentary on the Book of Beginnings*. (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 1976).

² Morris, *The Genesis Record*.

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470 NW 4th Ave. | Boca Raton, FL 33432 | 561.395.2400 | bocacommunity.org