



# The Bible's Big Story

## Genesis 1–11

Genesis is the first book of the Bible in the Hebrew, Greek, and English arrangements of the canon. Not only do the events it records precede others chronologically, but it is foundational to all subsequent revelation.

### Title, Author & Date

The Hebrew name for Genesis comes from its opening words, בְּרֵאשִׁית (*ber-sheet*), meaning “In the beginning.” The English name “Genesis” comes from the Greek translation γενεσεως (*geneseos*), which is derived from the Hebrew תולדות (*toledoth*; generations) in Genesis 2:4.

**Authorship:** Genesis has traditionally been attributed to Moses. Since Scripture clearly identifies Moses as the author of the other four books of the Pentateuch, it is reasonable to assume his authorship of Genesis, which serves as a foundation and prologue for the rest.

**Dating:** Given that Moses is the author, we can date the book to within his lifetime, almost certainly sometime after the Exodus from Egypt—the mid-15th century BC.

### Theme & Purpose

The two main themes of Genesis are:

1. **God's sovereignty** as Creator, Judge, and Redeemer
2. **God's faithfulness** to His covenant promises

These themes correspond to the two main sections. Chapters 1–11 especially emphasize God's sovereignty. In chapters 12–50, the focus shifts to God's election of Abraham and his faithfulness in keeping His covenant promises.

**In short:** *God is the sovereign Creator who judges sin and rules over all. Despite mankind's sin and faithlessness, He remains faithful to His covenant promises.*

**Primary Purpose:** The book of Genesis lays the foundation for the grand narrative of redemption that follows. This foundation includes:

- **God** — as sovereign Creator and Lord
- **Man** — as His image-bearers, though that image is marred and they have been separated from Him by their sin
- **The Promise** — of God's purpose to redeem mankind through the seed of the woman
- **Covenant** — God's special working through Abraham and his family to accomplish His redemptive plan

### Structure

Genesis is clearly divided into two primary sections:

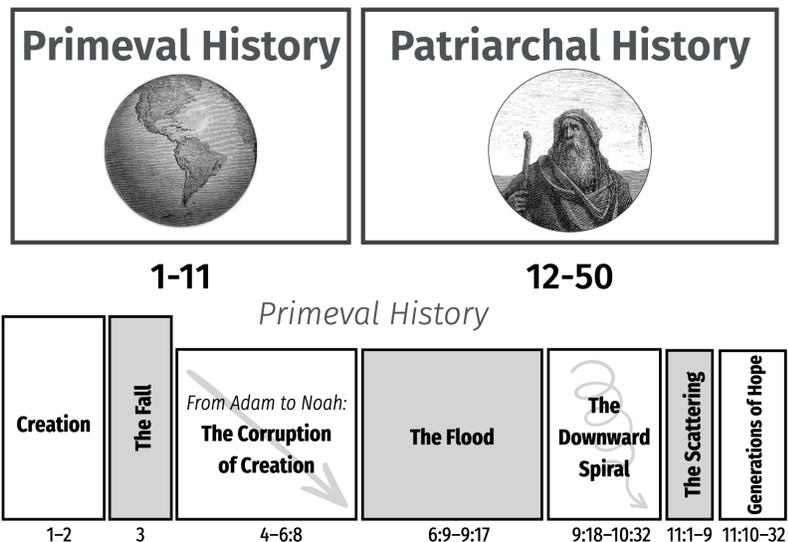
**Primeval History (Chapters 1–11)** — Recounts the creation of the world, mankind's fall, and the corrupting effects of sin on humanity and all of creation.

**Patriarchal History (Chapters 12–50)** — Narrows from a worldwide perspective to focus on one man—Abraham—and his family through whom God promises to bring about redemption.

In this lesson, we focus on the first section—Primeval History—which I've divided into seven thematic sections:

1. Creation — *God's creation of the cosmos and His special purpose for humanity.*
2. The Fall — *Mankind's fall into sin and God's responses of judgment, mercy, and grace.*
3. From Adam to Noah: The Corruption of Creation — *The generations following the expulsion from the garden display the corrupting effects of sin.*
4. The Flood — *God washes the earth clean in judgment; only righteous Noah and his family are spared.*
5. The Downward Spiral — *Sin's influence continues in Noah and his offspring.*
6. The Scattering — *Man's rebellion reaches a new level at Babel, and God scatters the peoples in judgment.*
7. The Generations of Hope — *Primeval history ends by tracing the generations pointing to hope and a bridge to the next section.*

## Structure of Genesis



**Notes:**

**Outline of the Summary Overview**

**I. In the Beginning**

- A. The Creation of the World
- B. The Creation of Humanity
- C. Fellowship With God In the Garden

**II. The Fall**

- A. Sin And Judgement
- B. Mercy and Grace
- C. Excursus: The Promise

**III. From Adam to Noah: The Corruption of Creation and the Flood**

- A. Two Offspring
- B. The Flood: The Earth Remade by Water

**IV. From Noah to Babel: The Downward Spiral and the Scattering**

- A. Continuing Corruption
- B. The Scattering at Babel
- C. Generations of Hope

**Questions for Reflection and Discussion:**

1. How does understanding Genesis 1–11 as historical narrative rather than myth or allegory affect your view of God's character and His relationship with humanity?
2. Genesis 3:15 is often called the \*protoevangelium\* (first gospel). How does this promise in the garden connect to the rest of Scripture's storyline? How does recognizing this promise shape your understanding of God's plan from the very beginning?
3. Throughout Genesis 1–11, we see a pattern of judgment intertwined with mercy and promise. What does this pattern reveal about God's character? How should this affect how you respond to God's judgment on sin in your own life?
4. The repeated downward spiral of humanity (from Adam to Noah, then from Noah to Babel) demonstrates the pervasiveness of sin. How does this reality inform your understanding of human nature and our need for a Savior?
5. The concept of being created in God's image is foundational to understanding who we are. What are the practical implications of bearing God's image for how you view yourself, how you treat others, and how you approach your daily responsibilities?