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## INTRODUCTION TO

# Genesis

### CIRCUMSTANCES OF WRITING

Since pre-Christian times authorship of the Torah, the first five books of the Bible, has been attributed to Moses, an enormously influential Israelite leader from the second millennium BC with an aristocratic Egyptian background. Even though Genesis is technically anonymous, both the Old and New Testaments unanimously recognize Moses as the Torah's author (Jos 8:35; 2Ch 23:18; Neh 8:1; Mk 12:19,26; Lk 2:22; Rm 10:5; Heb 10:28). At the same time, evidence in Genesis suggests that minor editorial changes dating to ancient times have been inserted into the text. Examples include the mention of "Dan" (14:14), a city that was not named until the days of the judges (Jdg 18:29), and the use of a phrase that assumed the existence of Israelite kings (Gn 36:31).

The Torah (a Hebrew term for law) was seen as one unit until at least the second century BC. Sometime prior to the birth of Christ, the Torah was divided into five separate books, later referred to as the Pentateuch (lit "five vessels"). Genesis, the first book of the Torah, provides both the universal history of humankind and the patriarchal history of the nation of Israel. The first section (chaps. 1–11) is a general history commonly called the "primeval history," showing how all humanity descended from one couple and became sinners. The second section (chaps. 12–50) is a more specific history commonly referred to as the "patriarchal history," focusing on the covenant God made with Abraham and his descendants: Isaac, Jacob, and Jacob's twelve sons. Genesis unfolds God's plan to bless and redeem humanity through Abraham's descendants. The book concludes with the events that led to the Israelites being in the land of Egypt.

### CONTRIBUTION TO THE BIBLE

Genesis lays the groundwork for everything else we read and experience in Scripture. Through Genesis we understand where we came from, how we got in the fallen state we are in, and the beginnings of God's

gracious work on our behalf. Genesis unfolds God's original purpose for humanity.

Genesis provides the foundation from which we understand God's covenant with Israel that was established with the giving of the Law. For the Israelite community, the stories of the origins of humanity, sin, and the covenant relationship with God helped them understand why God gave them the Law.

### STRUCTURE

Genesis is chiefly a narrative. From a narrative standpoint, God is the only true hero of the Bible, and the book of Genesis has the distinct privilege of introducing him. God is the first subject of a verb in the book and is mentioned more frequently than any other character in the Bible. The content of the first eleven chapters is distinct from the patriarchal stories in chapters 12–50. The primary literary device is the catchphrase "these are the family records." The phrase is broader in meaning than simply "generation," and refers more to a narrative account. This was a common practice in ancient Near East writings. This phrase also serves as a link between the key person in the previous narrative and the one anticipated in the next section. Genesis could be described as historical genealogy, which ties together creation and human history in one continuum.

### SPURGEON ON GENESIS

"In the beginning." When that beginning was we cannot tell. It may have been long ages before God fitted up this world for the abode of man, but it was not self-existent. It was created by God; it sprang from the will and the word of the all-wise Creator. When God began to arrange this world in order, it was shrouded in darkness, and it had been reduced to what we call, for lack of a better name, chaos. This is just the condition of every soul of man when God begins to deal with him in his grace; it is formless and empty of all good things.

THE CREATION

**1** In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.<sup>a</sup>

<sup>2</sup> Now the earth was formless and empty, darkness covered the surface of the watery depths, and the Spirit of God was hovering over the surface of the waters. <sup>3</sup> Then God said, "Let there be light," and there was light. <sup>4</sup> God saw that the light was good, and God separated the light from the darkness. <sup>5</sup> God called the light "day," and the darkness he called "night." There was an evening, and there was a morning: one day.

<sup>6</sup> Then God said, "Let there be an expanse between the waters, separating water from water." <sup>7</sup> So God made the expanse and separated the water under the expanse from the water above the expanse. And it was so. <sup>8</sup> God called the expanse "sky."<sup>b</sup> Evening came and then morning: the second day.

<sup>9</sup> Then God said, "Let the water under the sky be gathered into one place, and let the dry land appear." And it was so. <sup>10</sup> God called the dry land "earth," and the gathering of the water he called "seas." And God saw that it was good. <sup>11</sup> Then God said, "Let the earth produce vegetation: seed-bearing plants and fruit trees on the earth bearing

*How there was light before there was any sun, for the sun was not created until the fourth day of the week, is not for us to say. But God is not dependent on his own creation. (He can make light without a sun. (He can spread the gospel without the aid of ministers; he can convert souls without any human or angelic method, for he does as he wills in the heavens above and on the earth beneath.*

QUOTE 1:3-4

fruit with seed in it according to their kinds." And it was so. <sup>12</sup> The earth produced vegetation: seed-bearing plants according to their kinds and trees bearing fruit with seed in it according to their kinds. And God

1:1 "In the beginning." When that beginning was we cannot tell. It may have been long ages before God fitted up this world for the abode of man, but it was not self-existent. It was created by God; it sprang from the will and the word of the all-wise Creator.

1:2 "Formless and empty." When God began to arrange this world in order, it was shrouded in darkness, and it had been reduced to what we call, for lack of a better name, chaos. This is just the condition of every soul of man when God begins to deal with him in his grace; it is formless and empty of all good things.

1:3-4 "Let there be light." God had but to speak the word, and the great wonder was accomplished. How there was light

before there was any sun, for the sun was not created until the fourth day of the week, is not for us to say. But God is not dependent on his own creation. He can make light without a sun. He can spread the gospel without the aid of ministers; he can convert souls without any human or angelic method, for he does as he wills in the heavens above and on the earth beneath.

1:5 "God called the light 'day.'" Darkness first and light afterwards. It is so with us spiritually—first darkness, then light. I suppose that until we get to heaven, there will be both darkness and light in us. And as to God's providential dealings, we must expect darkness as well as light. They will make up our first day and our last

day, till we get where there are no days but the Ancient of Days.

1:6-8 "Let there be an expanse." Note those four words, "and it was so." Whatever God ordains always comes. It is true of all his promises that whatever he has said will be fulfilled, and we will one day say of it all, "And it was so." It is equally certain concerning all his threats that what he has spoken will certainly be fulfilled, and the ungodly will have to say, "And it was so." These words are often repeated in this chapter. They convey to us the great lesson that the Word of God is sure to be followed by the deed of God. He speaks and it is done.

1:9-13 "Let the earth produce vegetation." What a strange place this world must have been with its plains and hills and rooks and vales without one single blade of grass, or a tree, or a shrub! So at once, before that day was over, God threw the mantle of verdure over the earth and clad its mountains and valleys with forests and plants and flowers, as if to show us that the fruitless is uncomely in God's sight, that the man who bears no fruit unto God is unendurable to him. There would be no beauty whatever in a Christian without any good works and with no graces.

<sup>a</sup>1:1 Or *created the universe*    <sup>b</sup>1:8 Or *"heavens."*

saw that it was good. <sup>13</sup> Evening came and then morning: the third day.

<sup>14</sup> Then God said, "Let there be lights in the expanse of the sky to separate the day from the night. They will serve as signs for seasons<sup>a</sup> and for days and years. <sup>15</sup> They will be lights in the expanse of the sky to provide light on the earth." And it was so. <sup>16</sup> God made the two great lights — the greater light to rule over the day and the lesser light to rule over the night — as well as the stars. <sup>17</sup> God placed them in the expanse of the sky to provide light on the earth, <sup>18</sup> to rule the day and the night, and to separate light from darkness. And God saw that it was good. <sup>19</sup> Evening came and then morning: the fourth day.

<sup>20</sup> Then God said, "Let the water swarm with<sup>b</sup> living creatures, and let birds fly above the earth across the expanse of the sky." <sup>21</sup> So God created the large sea-creatures<sup>c</sup> and every living creature that moves and swarms in the water, according to their kinds. He also created every winged creature according to its kind. And God saw that it was good. <sup>22</sup> God blessed them: "Be fruitful, multiply, and fill the waters of the seas, and let the birds multiply on the earth." <sup>23</sup> Evening came and then morning: the fifth day.

<sup>24</sup> Then God said, "Let the earth produce living creatures according to their kinds: livestock, creatures that crawl, and the wildlife of the earth according to their kinds." And it was so. <sup>25</sup> So God made the wildlife of the earth according to their

kinds, the livestock according to their kinds, and all the creatures that crawl on the ground according to their kinds. And God saw that it was good.

<sup>26</sup> Then God said, "Let us make man<sup>d</sup> in<sup>e</sup> our image, according to our likeness. They will rule the fish of the sea, the birds of the sky, the livestock, the whole earth,<sup>f</sup> and the creatures that crawl<sup>g</sup> on the earth."

<sup>27</sup> So God created man  
in his own image;  
he created him in<sup>h</sup> the image of God;  
he created them male and female.

<sup>28</sup> God blessed them, and God said to them, "Be fruitful, multiply, fill the earth, and subdue it. Rule the fish of the sea, the birds of the sky, and every creature that crawls<sup>i</sup> on the earth." <sup>29</sup> God also said, "Look, I have given you every seed-bearing plant on the surface of the entire earth and every tree whose fruit contains seed. This will be food for you, <sup>30</sup> for all the wildlife of the earth, for every bird of the sky, and for every creature that crawls on the earth — everything having the breath of life in it — I have given<sup>j</sup> every green plant for food." And it was so. <sup>31</sup> God saw all that he had made, and it was very good indeed. Evening came and then morning: the sixth day.

**2** So the heavens and the earth and everything in them were completed. <sup>2</sup> On the seventh<sup>k</sup> day God had completed his work that he had done, and he rested<sup>l</sup> on the seventh day from all his work that he had done. <sup>3</sup> God blessed the seventh day and declared it holy, for on it he rested from all his work of creation.<sup>m</sup>

1:24-25 "God saw that it was good." After each day's work, God looks on it; and it is well for us, every night, to review our day's work. Some people's work will not bear looking at and tomorrow becomes all the worse to them because today was not considered and its sin repented of by them. But if we mark the errors of today, a repetition of them may be avoided tomorrow. Only God can look on a day's work and say of it, as

a whole and in every part, that it is good. As for us, our best things need sprinkling with the blood of Christ, which we need not only on the lintels and side posts of our house but even on the altar and the mercy seat at which we worship God.

1:26-28 "Let us make man in our image." The earth is completed now that man has come upon it, and man is completed when the image of God is upon him, when Christ is formed in

him the hope of glory, but not till then. When we have received the power of God and have dominion over ourselves

and over all earthly things in the power of God's eternal Spirit, then are we where and what God intends us to be.

<sup>a</sup>1:14 Or for the appointed times <sup>b</sup>1:20 Lit with swarms of  
<sup>c</sup>1:21 Or created sea monsters <sup>d</sup>1:26 Or human beings; Hb  
'adam, also in v. 27 <sup>e</sup>1:26 Or as <sup>f</sup>1:26 Syr reads sky, and over  
every animal of the land <sup>g</sup>1:26 Or scurry <sup>h</sup>1:27 Or man as  
his own image; he created him as <sup>i</sup>1:28 Or and all scurrying  
animals <sup>j</sup>1:30 I have given added for clarity <sup>k</sup>2:2 Sam,  
LXX, Syr read sixth <sup>l</sup>2:2 Or ceased, also in v. 3 <sup>m</sup>2:3 Lit work  
that God created to make

Gen. 3. 15 The first promise.

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This is a most glorious promise, the first and only one until the time of Abraham, we will notice.

I. The occasion of its gift by making some remarks on the preceding verses.

II. The Characters mentioned. Jesus and his elect, the seed of the woman, all who believe on & partake the spirit of Jesus. Satan and the wicked who bear a likeness to him. Scorners. Sinners. Self righteous. Rejecters of the gospel. Between these two parties there is a conflict.

III. The bruising of the heel or the inferior nature.

1. In the temptation, suffering and death of Jesus.

2. In the persecution of God's people.

3. In the struggle of every Christian's heart.

"bruising the heel" is painful, difficult it makes the way, but it is not fatal - distress but not death.

IV. The bruising of the head of the serpent & his seed.

1. In the triumph of Jesus & Satan's confinement in Hell.

2. In the salvation of all the elect.

3. In the overthrow of hell's dominion in the world and the establishment of the Kingdom of righteousness.

1. We must look for trial.

2. And as surely as that comes will final triumph come.

82. 480.

# THE FIRST PROMISE

## GENESIS 3:15

*"And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel."*

This is a most glorious promise, the first and only one until the time of Abraham. We will notice:

### **I. THE OCCASION OF ITS GIFT BY MAKING SOME REMARKS ON THE PRECEDING VERSES.**

### **II. THE CHARACTERS MENTIONED.**

Jesus and his elect, the seed of the woman, all who believe on and partake [of] the spirit of Jesus, Satan and the wicked who bear a likeness to him, Scoffers, Sinners, Self righteous, Rejecters of the gospel. Between these two parties there is a conflict.

### **III. THE BRUISING OF THE HEEL OR THE INFERIOR NATURE.**

1. In the temptation, suffering, and death of Jesus.
2. In the persecution of God's people.
3. In the struggle of every Christian's heart. "Bruising the heel" is painful. Difficult it makes the way. But it is not fatal. Distress, but not death.

### **IV. THE BRUISING OF THE HEAD OF THE SERPENT AND HIS SEED.**

1. In the triumph of Jesus and Satan's confinement in the pit.
2. In the salvation of all the elect.
3. In the overthrow of hell's dominion in the world and the establishment of the kingdom of righteousness.

1. We must look for trial.
2. And as surely as that comes will final triumph come.

82. 480.

**MAN AND WOMAN IN THE GARDEN**

<sup>4</sup>These are the records of the heavens and the earth, concerning their creation. At the time<sup>a</sup> that the LORD God made the earth and the heavens, <sup>5</sup>no shrub of the field had yet grown on the land, <sup>6</sup>and no plant of the field had yet sprouted, for the LORD God had not made it rain on the land, and there was no man to work the ground. <sup>6</sup>But mist would come up from the earth and water all the ground. <sup>7</sup>Then the LORD God formed the man out of the dust from the ground and breathed the breath of life into his nostrils, and the man became a living being.

<sup>8</sup>The LORD God planted a garden in Eden, in the east, and there he placed the man he had formed. <sup>9</sup>The LORD God caused to grow out of the ground every tree pleasing in appearance and good for food, including the tree of life in the middle of the garden, as well as the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.

<sup>10</sup>A river went<sup>c</sup> out from Eden to water the garden. From there it divided and became the source of four rivers. <sup>11</sup>The name of the first is Pishon, which flows through the entire land of Havilah,<sup>e</sup> where there is gold. <sup>12</sup>Gold from that land is pure;<sup>f</sup> bdellium<sup>g</sup> and onyx<sup>h</sup> are also there. <sup>13</sup>The name of the second river is Gihon, which flows through the entire land of Cush. <sup>14</sup>The name of the third river is Tigris, which runs east of Assyria. And the fourth river is the Euphrates.

<sup>15</sup>The LORD God took the man and placed him in the garden of Eden to work it and watch over it. <sup>16</sup>And the LORD God commanded the man, "You are free to eat from any tree of the garden, <sup>17</sup>but you must not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, for on the day you eat from

it, you will certainly die." <sup>18</sup>Then the LORD God said, "It is not good for the man to be alone. I will make a helper corresponding to him." <sup>19</sup>The LORD God formed out of the ground every wild animal and every bird of the sky, and brought each to the man to see what he would call it. And whatever the man called a living creature, that was its name. <sup>20</sup>The man gave names to all the livestock, to the birds of the sky, and to every wild animal; but for the man<sup>i</sup> no helper was found corresponding to him. <sup>21</sup>So the LORD God caused a deep sleep to come over the man, and he slept. God took one of his ribs and closed the flesh at that place. <sup>22</sup>Then the LORD God made the rib he had taken from the man into a woman and brought her to the man. <sup>23</sup>And the man said:

This one, at last, is bone of my bone and flesh of my flesh; this one will be called "woman," for she was taken from man.

<sup>24</sup>This is why a man leaves his father and mother and bonds with his wife, and they become one flesh. <sup>25</sup>Both the man and his wife were naked, yet felt no shame.

**THE TEMPTATION AND THE FALL**

**3** Now the serpent was the most cunning of all the wild animals that the LORD God had made. He said to the woman, "Did God really say, 'You can't eat from any tree in the garden?'"

*The only way to repel Satan's subtlety is by acquiring true wisdom.*

QUOTE 3:1

3:1 "Now the serpent was the most cunning of all the wild animals." The only way to repel Satan's subtlety is by acquiring true wisdom. Again I repeat it: man has none of that in himself. What then? Herein is true wisdom. If we would

successfully wrestle with Satan, we must make the Holy Scriptures our daily resort. Out of this sacred book we must continually draw our armor and our ammunition. We must lay hold on the glorious doctrines of God's Word—make

them our daily meat and drink. So will we be strong to resist

the devil and joyful in discovering that he will flee.

<sup>a</sup>2:4 Lit creation on the day <sup>b</sup>2:5 Or earth <sup>c</sup>2:10 Or goes

<sup>d</sup>2:10 Lit became four heads <sup>e</sup>2:11 Or of the Havilah

<sup>f</sup>2:12 Lit good <sup>g</sup>2:12 A yellowish, transparent gum resin

<sup>h</sup>2:12 Identity of this precious stone uncertain <sup>i</sup>2:20 Or for Adam











