



# GENESIS

# TITLE

- The English title “Genesis” comes from the Greek translation of the Pentateuch and means “origin,” a very apt title because Genesis is all about origins—of the world, of the human race, of sin, and of the Jewish people.
- The Hebrew title is translated “In the Beginning,” using the first phrase in the book.



# COMPOSITION

- The first five books of the Bible are called by the Jews “the Law,” and by Christians “the Pentateuch” or “the Five Books of Moses.”
- The overall theme of the Pentateuch is God’s covenant with Israel through Moses, which established Israel as a theocracy (a nation where God’s directives rule the civil, social, and religious spheres) for the sake of the whole world.



# COMPOSITION

- Genesis divides into two major sections: (1) the primeval history of the world before Abraham (chs. 1–11); (2) the history of the patriarchs (chs. 12–50).
- The proportions of the two sections are significant: essentially chapters 1–11 are setting the stage for the main drama, namely, God’s dealings with Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and his sons—the subject of chapters 12–50.



# LITERARY ANALYSIS

- The book of Genesis is primarily a collection of what may be called hero stories—episodic tales focused on a central character with whom the reader is to sympathize—with interspersed genealogies.
- The first three chapters belong to a genre known as the story of origins.
- Genesis also has affinities with the epic genre because the story is one of universal history (chs. 1–11) and the origins of the nation of Israel (chs. 12–50).



# LITERARY ANALYSIS

Unifying literary motifs include:

- (1) The characterization of God and the story of his dealings with people.
- (2) The sinfulness of the human race and individuals within it.
- (3) The story of the unfolding plan of God to redeem a people for himself despite human waywardness.
- (4) The “hero story” as the nearly constant genre.
- (5) Characters, characters, characters: as one reads Genesis, one is continually drawn into encounters with unforgettable characters and their stories, and lessons about wisdom and folly that can be learned from them.



# MAIN CHARACTERS

Genesis can be charted as the story of 6 main characters:

- Adam (1-5)
- Noah (6-11)
- Abraham (12-23)
- Isaac (24-26)
- Jacob (27-36)
- Joseph (37-50)





# MAIN THEME

- The theme of Genesis is **creation, sin, and re-creation.**
- It tells how God created the world as very good, but that it was destroyed in the flood as a result of man's disobedience.
- The new world after the flood was also spoiled by human sin (ch. 11).
- The call of Abraham, through whom all the nations would be blessed, gives hope that God's purpose will eventually be realized through Abraham's descendants (ch. 49).