

Genesis - The Introduction

Ge 1:1 In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth.

In Hebrew, the meaning of "In the beginning" is *bereshith* ("in [the] beginning"). Bereshith takes on its name from the first words of the Book, this is a pattern.

The Word, Bereshith, to my knowledge, is only found and used this one time in the Bible.

The English title, Genesis, is Greek in origin and comes from the word *geneseos*, which appears in the Greek translation (Septuagint) of 2:4; 5:1.

Depending on its context, the word can mean "birth," "genealogy," or "history of origin".

The Hebrew Torah, תּוֹרָה, is the Law of YeHoVaH as revealed to Moses and recorded in the first 5 Books of the Hebrew Scriptures.

The first time the word Torah/Law is used is in reference to Abraham.

Because that Abraham obeyed my voice, and kept my charge, my commandments, my statutes, and my laws. (Gen 26:5 KJV)

08451 תּוֹרָה towrah {to-raw'} or תִּרְה torah {to-raw'}

Meaning: 1) law, direction, instruction

The Greek Pentateuch simply means "five books".

In Greek, the **Pentateuch** (which Jews call the Torah) includes the Books of Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy.

Genesis is the first Book of the Torah.

The Greek word, Pentateuch, is a theological word and is never used in the Bible.

The major figures in Genesis are from Adam to Joseph, with special focus on Abraham. Geographically, the focus is Mesopotamia and Egypt.

The first 38 Chapters of Genesis reflects a lot of what is known from sources about ancient Mesopotamian life and culture.

The author appears to locate Eden, in or near Mesopotamia; the tower of Babel was built there; Abram was born there; Isaac took a wife from there; and Jacob lived there for 20 years and took two wives and two concubines that produced the 12 tribes of Israel. Although the Patriarchs settled in Canaan/Palestine/Israel, their original homeland was Mesopotamia.



Genesis opens with Creation and closes with the death of Joseph.

Chapters 39 – 50 focus on Egyptian culture and the life of Israel in Egypt as predicted by YeHoVaH to Abraham.

And he said unto Abram, Know of a surety that thy seed shall be a stranger in a land *that is* not theirs, and shall serve them; and they shall afflict them four hundred years; (Gen 15:13 KJV)

In this Introduction to Genesis, we will seek to answer the four “W” Questions.

- **Who** Wrote Genesis?
- To **Whom** Was it Written?
- **When** Was it Written?
- **Why** Was Genesis Written?

Who Wrote the Book?

The authorship of Genesis is ascribed to Moses.

When Was it Written?

The 40-year period of Israel's wanderings in the desert, which lasted from c. 1446 B.C.E. to c. 1406 B.C.E., would have been the most likely time for Moses to write the bulk of what is today known as the Torah/Pentateuch.

To Whom Was it Written?

YeHoVaH's plan for man is established in Genesis.

Genesis was written to ALL people interested in knowing who made us, where we all came from, how we got here, and why we are here on earth.

Genesis introduces us to the Creator YeHoVaH, gives us insight and understanding to the way in which God initiates and makes Covenants with His chosen people by pledging His love and faithfulness to us and calling us to promise ours to Him.

Genesis establishes sacrifice as the substitution of life for life in Chapter 22 when Abraham was tested to give up his son, Isaac.

Genesis gives us the first hint of YeHoVaH 's provision for redemption from the forces of evil in Chapter 3:15 and contains the oldest and most profound definition of faith in Chapter 15:6.

And he **believed** in the LORD; and he counted it to him for righteousness. (Gen 15:6 KJV)

Believed - 0539 אָמַן 'aman {aw-man'}

Meaning: 1) to support, confirm, **be faithful**

More than half of Heb 11--the NT roll of the faithful--refers to characters in Genesis.

Heb 11:4 By faith Abel

Heb 11:5 By faith Enoch

Heb 11:7 By faith Noah

Heb 11:8 By faith Abraham

Heb 11:11 Through faith also Sarah

Heb 11:17 By faith Abraham

Heb 11:20 By faith Isaac

Heb 11:21 By faith Jacob

Heb 11:22 By faith Joseph

Heb 11:23 By faith Moses

Heb 11:24 By faith Moses

Why Was it Written?

The Purpose it Was Written

The Book of Genesis is foundational to the understanding of the rest of the Bible.

Genesis gives an outline of the Biblical message as a whole.

Genesis is a book of relationships, highlighting those between God and nature, God and man, and man and man.

Genesis speaks of beginnings--of the heavens and the earth, of light and darkness, of seas and skies, of land and vegetation, of sun and moon and stars, of sea and air and land animals, of human beings (made in God's own image, the climax of His creative activity), of sin and redemption, of blessing and cursing, of society and civilization, of marriage and family, and of craft and industry.

In Genesis, YeHoVaH establishes His sovereignty and rulership as Creator of all things.

- Displays His Power
- Reveals a portion of His vast knowledge
- Manifests Himself as the Almighty Self-Existent One

The heart of YeHoVaH, His purpose and plan for men, is established in Genesis.