

Genesis PART 1

The word “Genesis” means “beginning.” In the pages of Genesis, we find the stories of how a number of significant things began. Based on what you already know of stories in Genesis, make a list below of things whose beginnings are described in the book. Feel free to skim through the book to find these. Check your list against the one in the answer key.

① _____

Genesis is the first of five books that are called the Pentateuch. The “penta” in “Pentateuch” is the same as the “penta” in “pentagon” and means “five.” Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy make up the Pentateuch. These books are also called “the books of Moses,” since Moses was their human author. Moses wrote these books for the people of Israel after they had come out of slavery in Egypt, and before they entered the Promised Land. He wanted them to know why they stood in a special relationship with God that no other nation had. The book of Genesis would explain to the Israelites the origin of that special relationship, called a covenant. It would also make clear why a covenant was needed, and how the nation of Israel itself began.

Before you begin to look at specific highlights of Genesis, notice the way the book is divided into sections. Genesis 1:1–2:3 is a kind of introduction, giving us the basic account of creation. Ten sections follow, some long, some short. Look at Genesis 2:4, where the first of these ten sections begins. The ESV translation says, “These are the generations of the heavens and the earth. . . .” If you are using a different translation, the wording may be different, but, whatever the opening words of this section are in your translation, you will find those words repeated nine times in the book. We see where each of these ten sections begins because each section begins with the same words. Skim through the book of Genesis, looking for these repeated words, to see where the different sections begin. Below, there is a list of the topics covered in each section. Fill in the reference where each new section begins.

- ② _____ Stories of the beginnings of heaven and earth, with special focus on the beginning of humans
- ③ _____ Stories of Adam and his descendants, with special focus on Seth
- ④ _____ Stories of Noah, with stories about the flood
- ⑤ _____ Stories of Noah’s sons, and the people groups that would come from them
- ⑥ _____ A list beginning with Shem, showing his descendants down to Abraham
- ⑦ _____ Stories beginning with Terah, Abraham’s father, giving us the history of Abraham and God’s covenant with him, continued in the stories of Isaac, Abraham’s son
- ⑧ _____ A list of the descendants of Ishmael, giving us a brief history of what happened to Abraham’s oldest son, the one who was not the son God had promised
- ⑨ _____ Stories about Isaac’s two sons, Jacob and Esau
- ⑩ _____ A brief story about Esau, the son of Isaac who was not the one to whom the blessing was passed on, with lists of his descendants and where they settled
- ⑪ _____ Stories of Jacob, telling us how Jacob and his large family ended up in Egypt

Read Genesis 1–2.

Copy the first three words of the book of Genesis. ❶ _____

This is where the book of Genesis (beginnings) gets its name. What existed before the heavens and the earth? ❷ _____

What did God create on each of the six days of creation?

Day 1 ❸ _____

Day 2 ❹ _____

Day 3 ❺ _____

Day 4 ❻ _____

Day 5 ❼ _____

Day 6 ❽ _____

Copy Genesis 1:3. ❾ _____

Look through the chapter and count how many times you find the words “And God said, ‘Let . . .’” Write the number here ❿ _____

Because the Latin term for “let there be” is *fiat*, we say that God created “by fiat.” He only had to speak and each thing came into being, in all its complexity, just the way he wanted it to be. All through the Bible, we find the theme of God’s powerful word accomplishing whatever he speaks. Although humans make things, and even animals make things in a limited fashion, God is the only one who can create something “by fiat,” just by speaking. The other unique thing about God’s creative acts is



that God creates out of nothing. A beaver needs wood to build its dam, a painter needs paint and canvas to paint a landscape, a sculptor needs marble to sculpt a statue, but God creates out of nothing. He needs no materials from which to create. He speaks the material itself into being when he makes something. Since the Latin word for “nothing” is *nihil*, we say God created “ex nihilo”—out of nothing.

What did God do on the seventh day? ❶ _____

What did God do to the seventh day? ❷ _____

How many times, in chapter 1, do you find “and God saw that . . . it was good?”

❸ _____

What was God looking at when he saw that it was “very good?”

❹ _____

In 1:26–28, how did God make man? In ❺ _____

What did God tell man to subdue? ❻ _____

What did he give man dominion over? ❼ _____

Having dominion over the rest of the earth and all that is in it is part of what it means to be made in the image of God. As God has authority over all things, so he has made us like himself and given us a limited authority over the rest of creation. Birds use only what they need to survive: bugs or seeds to eat, water to drink, and twigs to build a nest. A bear will use a cave he finds to sleep in and will eat whatever he finds that is edible; he may use a tree trunk for scratching his back.