

OUR DAILY BREAD

BIBLE **SOURCE** **BOOK**

THE WHO, WHAT, WHERE, WOW

GUIDE TO THE BIBLE

DAVE BRANON



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Our Daily Bread Bible Sourcebook

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GENESIS

Beginnings: The World, Humankind, and the People of God

Top Ten

1. The book of Genesis starts at the beginning of time as we know it and ends in approximately 1806 BC with the death of Joseph.
2. Genesis 3 includes the first hint regarding the gospel of Jesus Christ (vs. 15).
3. Genesis has 50 chapters (fourth most in the Bible) and 1,533 verses.
4. The writer of Genesis, under the influence of the Holy Spirit, used twelve different names for God: Elohim, Yahweh, El Elyon, El Roi, El Shaddai, El Olam, Yahweh-Yireh, Adonai, Shaphat, Abhir, Raah, and Eben.
5. Genesis is the first book of the Pentateuch (Greek for “five scrolls”): Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy. Jews called this section of Scripture the Torah.
6. Every New Testament writer refers to Genesis. In all, there are upwards of two hundred allusions to Genesis in the New Testament. Genesis 1 through 11 is quoted more than one hundred times in the New Testament.
7. Genesis includes the story of the oldest person who ever lived: Methuselah (Genesis 5:27). Methuselah, Noah’s grandfather, died the same year the Flood covered the earth. He was 969 years old. It’s not known whether he died in the Flood.
8. The first social institution mentioned in Genesis, the book of beginnings, is marriage (2:21-25).
9. Archaeology has verified such Genesis peoples as the Hittites (Genesis 15:20; 23:5) and the titles given to Joseph in Egypt (Genesis 39:1, 4; 40:2).

10. Adam is referred to several times in the New Testament (see Romans 5:12-14, 1 Corinthians 15:22, Matthew 19:4-6, Jude 14, Luke 3:23-38, 1 Timothy 2:11-15), which verifies him as a historical person.

Who

Who Wrote It

Because of the connections made in Scripture between Moses and the Law, it is generally accepted that Moses is the author. For example, in John 5:46 Jesus said Moses “wrote about me.” And on the Emmaus Road, Jesus began “with Moses and all the Prophets” to explain who He was (Luke 24:27). Moses grew up in the home of an Egyptian pharaoh, yet he later led the Israelites out of Egypt and toward Canaan. Moses’ brother Aaron and sister Miriam helped him as he led the people to their homeland.

The events recorded in Genesis ended about 300 years before Moses lived. This means he would have received the material for the book through direct revelation of the Holy Spirit (inspiration) and through traditional means of conveying history at the time—probably through oral recitations of earlier events.

Recent studies of ancient writing by Dr. Douglas Petrovich and others indicate that Hebrew writing (which Moses would have used) existed as far back as 1850 BC. This would have been early enough for Moses to record the events of Genesis in writing.¹

Who's in It

Adam, Eve, Cain, Abel, Noah, Moses, Abraham, Sarah, Hagar, Ishmael, Isaac, Jacob, Esau, Joseph

What

Contained in the pages of Genesis are some of the seminal events in humankind’s history. Without a record of creation, we would not know how we got here. Without the story of the Fall, we would not understand why we need a Savior. Without

the retelling of the flood story, we would not grasp God's hatred for sin and His grace in providing salvation. Without the details about Abraham and his family, we would not be able to fully understand the sacrificial system that pointed to the true Lamb of God. Genesis provides us that background—establishing our need for a Savior, the promise of a Savior, and the beginnings of the story of the people through whom the Savior would come to earth to save us.

When

Although there is no textual evidence from the book of Genesis as to when it was written, it can be surmised that for Moses to write this book, it would have been compiled in approximately 1440 BC. This was around the time of the end of the Exodus.

Where

The events recorded in the book of Genesis took place in what we loosely refer to as the Middle East. We cannot know exactly where the first geographic location—the garden of Eden—was located. Because the flood, which would have changed the geography dramatically, occurred after this, we cannot use the place names given in Genesis 2:10–14 as evidence for its present location.

We do know about many other places mentioned in Genesis, most notably Canaan, which is most often referred to as the Promised Land. This was the land to which Abram traveled from his home of Ur. And it would be the place where he would begin the Hebrew nation through his son Isaac.

Why

Genesis is foundational to understanding God's story in the Bible. Clearly, it was written to reveal humans' value as those made in God's image, to explain humankind's need of a Savior, and to introduce the family through whom that Savior would someday come.

Genesis sets up for us the primary themes that will be carried through the remainder of the Bible. The first is creation—the record of God speaking the universe and this planet into existence and populating the earth with its wonders, including seas and land and plants, animals, and other living things. It tells of His fashioning of the first man and the first woman. The second theme introduced in Genesis is the fall of humankind—the sin of Adam and Eve that plunged us all into the darkness of evil from which we would need a Savior. The third theme begins to take shape as God’s plan for the redemption of humankind is initiated through His chosen people, the Israelites.

Wow!

- On Christmas Eve 1968, Apollo 8 astronauts Bill Anders, Jim Lovell, and Frank Borman, after they had come out from behind the moon and were on their way home, read Genesis 1:1–10 for all the world to hear. Borman ended by saying, “Merry Christmas—and God bless all of you, all of you on the good Earth.”
- John Milton’s epic seventeenth-century epic poem *Paradise Lost* was based on a retelling of the Adam and Eve story. It is often considered one of the greatest epic poems in the English language.
- One of the most famous paintings in the world, the ceiling of the Sistine Chapel at the Vatican, has as its centerpiece the creation story as rendered by Michelangelo.

Worth Remembering

- In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth (Genesis 1:1).
- “I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and hers; he will crush your head, and you will strike his heel” (Genesis 3:15).

- The LORD regretted that he had made human beings (Genesis 6:6).
- “I will make you [Abram] into a great nation, and I will bless you; I will make your name great, and you will be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you, and whoever curses you I will curse; and all peoples on earth will be blessed through you” (Genesis 12:2-3).
- “You intended to harm me, but God intended it for good to accomplish what is now being done, the saving of many lives” (Genesis 50:20).

Wonders from the Past

- British archaeologist Leonard Woolley discovered the ancient city of Ur (Genesis 11:31) in the 1920s.
- A list of Sumerian kings (Sumer was an ancient kingdom located in what is now southern Iraq) dating back to about 2100 BC was discovered. In that list of kings is the mention of a great flood.²
- On a series of baked tablets found at Nineveh is recorded the Epic of Gilgamesh, which tells of a great flood and of a man who built a boat to save the animals. The tablet dates to the seventh century BC.³
- Near the town of Harran in Turkey are villages that have the same names as Abraham’s ancestors: Serug and Nahor (see Genesis 11:22-26).

EXODUS

God’s People Escape Egypt, Head for Home

Top Ten

1. Exodus contains the first poetry in the Bible: “The Song of Moses and Miriam” in chapter 15.

2. The time period covered in Exodus is about eighty years.
3. Exodus includes the extremely important answer from God when Moses asked Him His name: “I AM WHO I AM” (3:14).
4. The end of Genesis (death of Joseph) to the beginning of Exodus was a period of three hundred years.
5. In the New Testament are at least eight passages referencing Exodus: John 3:14–17, John 6:32, Acts 7:17–41, Romans 9:15, 1 Corinthians 10:1–13, 2 Corinthians 3:7–18, Hebrews 3:15–19, Hebrews 12:18–25.
6. Moses’ birth is recorded in Exodus 2. His death is mentioned in Deuteronomy 34. He lived 120 years.
7. Exodus 1:5 says seventy-one Hebrews entered Egypt. When it was time for the Exodus itself, millions of Jews escaped Egypt.
8. The tabernacle God directed Moses to build in Exodus 26 is a copy modeled after one that exists in heaven (see Hebrews 8:5).
9. The title “Exodus” is taken from a Greek term that suggests “departure” or a “way out.” Luke used this Greek term in 9:31 when he wrote, referring to Jesus, “They spoke about his departure.” In 2 Peter 1:15, Peter wrote of Jesus’ departure using the same word.
10. Throughout the Old Testament, one of the significant ways God reminds His people who He is by saying, “I am the LORD, who brought you up out of Egypt”—the Exodus story (see Leviticus 11:45; Deuteronomy 20:1; Judges 2:1; Judges 6:8; 1 Samuel 8:8, 10:18; 1 Kings 12:28; Psalm 81:10; Amos 2:10; Micah 6:4).

Who

Who Wrote It?

As with all five of the books of the Pentateuch, it is widely accepted that Moses is the author. One of the compelling reasons to accept Moses as the author of Exodus is the fact that

Jesus quoted him and connected him to verses in the book of Exodus. Here are some of them: Mark 7:10 (Exodus 20:12, 21:17); Luke 20:37 (Exodus 3:6); John 7:19. Also, Philip referred to Moses' authorship in John 1:45.

Who's in It?

Moses, the Pharaohs, Aaron, Miriam, the Israelites

What

In the book of Exodus, God leaves no doubt about who He is and what He can do. The things God accomplishes in these forty chapters sets the tone for the rest of the Old Testament and into the New for belief and faith of all who need a solid foundation of truth and greatness. By first wresting the Hebrews from the hands of the Pharaoh and rescuing them from the frightening armies of Egypt—and then leading the people back to the Promised Land—God shows that He is the King of redemption. Each of His miracles along the wilderness way, and even into the Promised Land as Israel reestablishes herself in the land, demonstrates the trustworthiness of His power. In addition, God reveals His presence with His covenant people—both in the wilderness and in the homeland. The tabernacle allowed the people to experience firsthand His presence with them.

When

The jury is still out on the exact dates of the Exodus. There are two possibilities: the fifteenth century BC or the thirteenth century BC. Some scholars use a dating process based on a passage in 1 Kings, which would mean 480 years had passed between the Exodus until the fourth year of the reign of King Solomon in 966 BC. That would put the Exodus at 1446 BC. However, there are some problems with this relating to dates of events in Egypt when the Hebrews lived there. The second possible date relates to archaeological evidence connected to the destruction of cities in the Promised Land (Jericho, for instance).

Where

It's clear where the Hebrews were as the book of Exodus begins (Egypt), and we know exactly where they were at the end of their wilderness wanderings: waiting to cross the Jordan and go into the land. But what about the forty years of meandering? Do we know that exact route? According to Bible scholar and expert on biblical geography John Beck, "The list of places is not a complete turn-by-turn list like we might use today to navigate toward a destination."⁴ We know the Israelites did not take the shortest route, because God redirected them away from the dreaded Philistines (see Exodus 13:17). But the route they did take is open for debate. We know they made it down toward the southern tip of the Sinai Peninsula to Mount Sinai—and eventually back north toward Canaan.

Why

Clearly, God wants several things from His people. He wants us to trust Him even when we don't know the path ahead. He wants us to recognize who He is: the almighty God who can command seas to part, rocks to give up water, and breakfast to fall from heaven. And He wants a relationship with us. The forty-year journey, the convincing miracles, and the awe-inspiring presence of God in the tabernacle all underscore who God is and what He can do. How can we ever doubt this God? Well, Exodus was written to make it hard to doubt God, but as we keep reading in both the Old Testament and the New, and as we live our lives each day, we know that humans are pretty good at forgetting the lessons of the Exodus.

Wow!

- The story of the Exodus has been translated into film in *The Ten Commandments* (several versions), *The Prince of Egypt*, and the VeggieTales episode *Moe and the Big Exit*.
- In his song "Exodus," Jamaican reggae music legend Bob Marley referenced Moses and the Red Sea.

- It has been estimated that when Moses led the people out of Egypt, more than two million people embarked on one of the largest camping expeditions in history.
- Leon Uris' book *Exodus* details the Jews' return to Israel in 1948. Uris used the biblical Exodus for his themes.

Worth Remembering

- The descendants of Jacob numbered seventy in all; Joseph was already in Egypt (Exodus 1:5).
- There the angel of the LORD appeared to him in flames of fire from within a bush. Moses saw that though the bush was on fire it did not burn up (Exodus 3:2).
- God said to Moses, "I AM WHO I AM. This is what you are to say to the Israelites: 'I AM has sent me to you.'" (Exodus 3:14).
- "This," said the LORD, "is so that they may believe that the LORD, the God of their fathers—the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob—has appeared to you" (Exodus 4:5).
- Afterward Moses and Aaron went to Pharaoh and said, "This is what the LORD, the God of Israel, says: 'Let my people go, so that they may hold a festival to me in the wilderness'" (Exodus 5:1).
- "In days to come, when your son asks you, 'What does this mean?' say to him, 'With a mighty hand the LORD brought us out of Egypt, out of the land of slavery'" (Exodus 13:14).
- Then Moses and the Israelites sang this song to the LORD: "I will sing to the LORD, for he is highly exalted. Both horse and driver he has hurled into the sea" (Exodus 15:1).
- "Who among the gods is like you, LORD? Who is like you—majestic in holiness, awesome in glory, working wonders?" (Exodus 15:11).
- "Now if you obey me fully and keep my covenant, then out of all nations you will be my treasured possession. Although the whole earth is mine" (Exodus 19:5).