

# Part 1: In the Beginning...



The Creation – by Michelangelo



## Opening Quotes ▾

📖 "In the beginning God created heaven and earth." Gn 1:1

📖 "He rested on the seventh day after all the work he had been doing." Gn 2:2

📖 "This is why a man leaves his father and mother and becomes attached to his wife, and they become one flesh." Gn 2:24

📖 "I shall put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and hers; He will strike at your head, and you will strike its heel." Gn 3:15

📖 "But if you are not doing right, Sin is crouching at the door hungry to get you. You can still master him." Gn 4:6

📖 "Never again will I curse the earth because of human beings, because their heart contrives evil from their infancy." Gn 8:21

📖 "Let us build ourselves a city and a tower with its top reaching heaven. Let us make a name for ourselves." Gn 11:4

📖 "I look up at your heavens, shaped by your fingers... what is the child of Adam that you care for him? Yet you have made him little less than the angels... made him lord of the works of your hands ." Ps 8



## Background Notes ▾

**PURPOSE:** Theological account of the origins of the universe, creation of man, his fall from grace, and the inauguration of salvation history.

**AUTHOR:** The Torah, or Pentateuch (first five books of the bible), though traditionally attributed in whole to Moses, appears to consist of four documented traditions (J,E,D,P) which were eventually blended and called for simplicity "The Law of Moses."

### DATES & PLACES WRITTEN:

- J document: 10th century BC, Judah (during the divided kingdom).
- E document: 9th century BC, Israel (still during the divided kingdom).
- D document: 7th century BC, Judah (before the Babylonian exile).
- P document: 6th century BC, Judea (during the restoration).
- Final mix: 5th century BC, Judea (after the restoration).

**STYLES:** J (Yahwistic): describes God simply, using human terms; E (Elohistic): describes God more fearfully; D (Deuteronomic): religious emphasis through rules and regulations; P (Priestly): stresses holiness and adds the organization, like numbers, rituals, and genealogies.

📖 the BIG PICTURE		↔ : LAW, History, Writings, Prophets		↔ : key covenants in our Father's plan	
12 Periods ▾		Plot ▾	Other books related to period ▾		📖 stories in each period ▾
BC	🌐 THE BEGINNINGS	GN 1-11	Ps 8, 104		Creation, Adam & Eve, Cain & Abel, Noah's ark, Tower of Babel
1850	👤 THE PATRIARCHS	GN 12-50	Job		Abraham, Isaac, Jacob (Israel), Joseph, Melchizedek
1250	🏠 EXODUS FROM EGYPT	EX			Moses, the burning bush, the plagues, passover, exodus
1200	♣️ JOURNEY TO CANAAN	NM, Jos	LV, DT		Sinai desert, 10 commandments, Levites, Law, Joshua
1100	⚔️ THE JUDGE CYCLE	Jg	Ruth		12 tribes, Deborah, Gideon, Samson, Samuel
1030	👑 KINGS & PROPHETS	1 & 2 S	1 Ch, Ps, Prov		Saul, David, Solomon, Jerusalem, the Temple
1000	🏰 THE DIVIDED KINGDOM	1 Kg	2 Ch, Prov, Ecc, Songs		Israel (N), Judah (S), Elijah & Elisha, Isaiah, Assyrian exile
721 587	🌀 BABYLONIAN EXILE	2 Kg	2 Ch, Tob, Hos, Am, Hab, Is, Jer, Lam, Jl, Mic, Zp, Jon, Nah, Ob, Ez, Dan, Bar		Babylonians, "major" prophets, Isaiah (to Israel), Jeremiah (to Jerusalem), Ezekiel (to Exiles)
538	⚙️ THE RESTORATION	Ezr, Neh	Est, Judith, Hag, Zech, Mal, Job		Cyrus, 2nd temple, 2nd Law, "minor" prophets, new writings
163 63	🕯️ THE REPURIFICATION	1 Mac	Dn, 2Mac, Sirach, Wisdom		Greeks, Maccabean revolt, Hasmonean Dynasty, Romans, Jewish sects (Pharisees, Saducees, Zealots, Essenes)
AD	👤 JESUS CHRIST	LK	MT, MK, JN		Incarnation, Good News, New Law, Cross & Resurrection
33 70	🕯️ APOSTOLIC CHURCH	Acts	Rm, 1&2Co, Ga, Ep, Phil, Col, 1&2Th, 1&2 Tm, Ti, Phm, Hb, Ja, 1P, 2P, 1,2&3J, Jd, Rv		Pentecost, council, journeys, epistles, Body/Bride of Christ



## The Story of Part 1: In the Beginning...



Once upon a time... no, wait, let's back up... Before there was even time, before there was anything, there was God. God spoke, and *bang!* Time, matter, space, the universe was born. In Mesopotamian myths like *Enuma Elish*, the world was born out of the carcass of a cosmic, slain dragon, with humans running around trying to appease the gods of nature. But the Bible shows us only one true God who created the universe in an orderly fashion, pleased with his own work, calling it "good." In other fertility myths, the gods of nature would play, mate, and fight, resulting in seasons and changes in weather, often angry at man for bothering them. The Bible presents the first man and woman not as noisy little creatures who annoyed the gods, but rather, as the crowning achievement of God's creation, made in his own image, given souls which allowed them to accept or reject him freely, and they were loved by him, even when they disobeyed him.

At this point the entire human race consisted of two people. They were granted the *natural* gift of life, the *supernatural* gift of grace which allowed them fellowship with God, and the *preternatural* gifts of immortality, freedom from suffering, and perfect control over their instincts. As long they obeyed their Creator, they and their descendants would enjoy these free gifts as an inheritance.

In order for there to be something to obey in the first place, he made Adam the guardian of Eden, and gave him and his wife who was fashioned from him free access to eat from any tree except the Tree of Knowledge. "Eat from this tree," God warned them, "and you will surely die." Adam and Eve were not the only creatures God created with free will. He also created the angels, one of whom freely rebelled against God. We see this fallen angel in the "cunning serpent" who entered the garden and tempted Adam and Eve to disregard God's commandment: "You will not die. You will actually know good from evil, and be like gods!" Despite their perfect control, the woman, seeing that the fruit was good, disobeyed God, ate of it and gave to her husband, who also ate. The devil's lie, like most convincing lies, had an element of truth, for they did not die that day physically, but they died spiritually, having spurned God, the source of life itself. As God promised, they truly died that day and lost the supernatural gift of grace, and would now experience mortality, suffering, toiling, painful childbirth, tension between male and female, and tension between man and nature, having to tame the animals of the earth as well as the animal instincts within. These consequences of original sin which we inherit today may seem unfair to us until we realize that we have no claim to our natural lives in the first place, and that what we inherit is not the *guilt*, but the *effect*, of original sin.

Does that mean, then, that we are born destined to perish in a broken world never being able to see God face to face? The story doesn't end there! "Because you have done this," decreed God to the serpent, "I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and hers; he will strike your head and you its heel." This primordial promise of hope has been called the *protoevangelium*, the "first good news." The woman and her child prefigure a "second Eve" and a "second Adam" whose obedience will later untie the knot of disobedience of the first Adam and Eve, giving all of us a new free choice to obey God and inherit not only what was lost, but in addition to fellowship with God, everlasting life as his children, face to face with our Creator! But we're getting ahead of the story!

The free will with which we can accept deliverance from the effects of this first sin is made apparent in the story of the second sin, which took place between Cain and Abel, Adam and Eve's sons. When God disapproved of Cain's sacrifice to him but approved of Abel's, God warned Cain not to give in to his jealousy, that sin was literally "crouching at his door" but that *he could still master it*. The devil, as influential as he is, can never *force* us to sin. But like father like son, Cain gave in to temptation and sinned. He murdered his brother.

From this point on civilization spread, and sin with it. There were still good men like Enoch, who "walked with God." God took Enoch straightaway to heaven without allowing him to taste death. Another good man was his descendant, Noah. By Noah's time everyone lived in rejection of God. Deciding it was time to clean house, God sent a flood to destroy all of his creatures except Noah and his family, instructing him to build a massive boat which would house himself, his family, and a male and female of every animal to repopulate the earth once the flood subsided. After the flood, Noah offered God an animal sacrifice and God made a *covenant* with Noah, swearing that he would never destroy the world again with a flood, leaving the rainbow as a beautiful reminder.

But once man repopulated the world, sin reared its ugly head again. Men got together and proudly decided to build a tower high enough to touch God, "making a name for themselves." God destroyed the tower, and spread man throughout the earth, giving them different languages so that they could no longer collaborate on reaching him by their own strengths.

With that, we have the story of creation followed by four stories of man's fall from grace, a story which will eventually end the way it began – with a serpent and its child, and a woman and her child. 



## Defending the Faith: The Big Bang and Evolution

*"Don't the theories of the Big Bang and of Evolution disprove the Genesis account of the creation of man, his soul, and the universe?"*

It is often overlooked that the Big Bang theory and the theory of evolution are just that: theories. But even if they turn out to be true, neither of them actually negate God's creation of the universe and the creation of man and his soul. Proving the theories would only affirm that the Genesis account is a *theological*, not a scientific, account of the origins of man and the universe. In that light the Bible does not contradict the theories. The Bible reveals that God made the universe out of nothing. The Big Bang suggests that the universe started as an "infinitely small point" but does not explain where that small point came from, or why it "banged". And while the theory of evolution suggests that man's body evolved from lower life forms, Genesis also asserts that God created man *from the earth* and infused a soul into his body. If man's body indeed came from lower life forms, these in turn could have come from the earth. Neither is it necessary to assume that a "day" in Genesis is 24 hours and not a million years. As the old saying goes, the Bible does not aim to teach how the heavens go, but how to go to heaven.

The only problem with the theory of evolution is when it is taken to mean that man's *soul* was not infused by God, but that it simply evolved, so that man can be seen as merely an advanced ape. The problem is that this overlooks critical evidence. Why is the earliest evidence of art on earth a series of incredibly realistic sculptures and cave paintings, while no other animal in history has shown the inclination to art? (Compare the recent paintings by gorillas in a controlled environment with "primitive" man's cave paintings!) Why does man alone wear artificial clothing? Why is it that man exhibits strictly religious behavior, such as burying the dead with rituals that point to an afterlife, practicing asceticism of his bodily urges, and denying his own instincts for some higher purpose? Evolution does not explain these easily observable facts. The opening chapters of the Bible, on the other hand, answer all of these peculiarities to man with a simple truth revealed by God: man has a soul.

And if there was a Big Bang, then there must have been a Big Banger: God.



## Expressing the Faith: Rapping up the Beginnings

A rhythmic way of remembering the first four stories of man's fall after the Creation. © Joe Tuñón 1993

*If you wanna know how the Bible began,  
God made the world and then God made man  
But man didn't recognize his earthly place  
And these are the stories 'bout his fall from grace:  
There's ADAM and EVE  
and CAIN and ABEL,  
There's NOAH and the FLOOD  
and the TOWER of BABEL.  
That's the Word.*

*God made Adam and God made Eve  
The serpent came along, and they believed  
That they could have the knowledge to be like gods  
They found themselves naked, ashamed of their bods  
(top)*

*Cain was going crazy, his mind was unstable  
God put his sacrifice aside, and then accepted Abel's  
God said Do the right thing, or you're gonna regret it  
But he killed his brother and he'll never forget it  
(top)*

*Sin was everywhere, that was for sure  
Except for one man whose name was Noah  
God said, Build a boat 'cause I'm gonna flood the world  
Take two of every animal – a boy and a girl  
(top)*

*So creation started over when the flood subsided  
But then God's anger was again ignited  
When the people of Babel tried to build that tower  
Trying to attain God's unreachable power.  
(top)*

*So if you wanna learn about the stories that you heard,  
Then open up the Bible and read God's...  
Believe God's...  
Read God's...  
Believe God's...  
WORD!*

↗ **Next time: "Our Forefathers..."** ↖