

Overview of the Book of Genesis

By Dr. Dallas Burdette
dburdette22@charter.net
334-467-7029

WEBSITE: freedominchrist.net

THE NECESSITY OF STUDYING THE HEBREW SCRIPTURES

Genesis is the first book of our Bible. In many respects, Genesis must be regarded as the most important book of the Bible. The loss of some books of either the Old or the New Testament would not seriously affect our faith; other parts of the Bible could supply what would be missing. But it is not so with Genesis. There is no substitute for this book. Genesis is altogether unique. Without Genesis the rest of the Bible is all but impossible. Everything begins with Genesis.¹ (Emphasis mine)

Before we approach an analysis of the Hebrew Scriptures, we should reflect upon the words of Paul who wrote to the Christians in Rome from Corinth about AD 57. Toward the end of his book, he exhorted the believers to read and rely upon the sacred Scriptures to strengthen themselves in their daily walk with God. The following words of Paul should resonate with every believer to encourage the study of the thirty-nine books in the Hebrew canon:

For everything that was written in the past was written to teach us, so that through endurance and the encouragement of the Scriptures [Old Testament] we might have hope. (Romans 15:4).

Just a few years later, he wrote his farewell letter to Timothy from Rome (about AD 67) concerning the need to reflect upon the Scriptures that he had learned from infancy. In this short Epistle, he penned words that should echo within the hearts of all of God's family:

But as for you, continue in what you have learned and have become convinced of, because you know those from whom you learned it,¹⁵ and how from infancy you have known the holy Scriptures

¹Alfred M. Rehwinkel, *The Wonders of Creation: An Exploration of the Origin & Splendors of the Universe* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Book House, 1974), 18. **Alfred M. Rehwinkel** (b. 1887), Professor Emeritus, Concordia Seminary St. Louis, Missouri.

[Hebrew canon—Law, Prophets, Psalms], which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus.¹⁶ All Scripture is God-breathed [*theopneustos*] and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness,¹⁷ so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work. (2 Timothy 3:14-17)

As observed in the above citation, the New International Version translates the Greek word *theopneustos* as “God-breathed.” On the other hand, the New Revised Standard version translates this same Greek word as “inspired.” Millard Erickson’s² comments on this section of Scripture is extremely helpful in grasping the full significance of the word *theopneustos*: “By inspiration of Scripture we mean that **supernatural influence of the Holy Spirit on the Scripture writers** that rendered their writings an accurate record of the revelation or that **resulted in what they wrote actually being the Word of God**” (Emphasis mine--bold).³ How do we view the Holy Scriptures? Is the Bible simply just another book? No! It is the Word of God. The following words by Gordon Fee⁴ are extremely thought provoking in awakening us to the reality of the Bible as God’s written Revelation.

Because the Bible is God’s Word, it has eternal relevance; it speaks to all humankind, in every age and in every culture. Because it is God’s Word, we must listen—and obey. But because God chose to speak his Word through human words in history, every book in the Bible also has historical particularity; **each document is conditioned by the language, time, and culture in which it was originally written** (and in some cases also by the oral history it had before it was written down). Interpretation of the Bible is demanded by the “tension” that exists between its *eternal relevance* and its *historical particularity*.⁵ (Emphasis mine—underlining and bold)

SCHOLARSHIP AND GENESIS 1—11

In Genesis we have God’s first revelation concerning himself. In Genesis we have the only record of the origin of the universe, the origin of man, the beginning of sin, the consequence of sin, the first gospel, the first death, the first record of human civilization, the first city, the end of the first world, the emergence of a second world from the wreckage of the Flood, and the beginning of the race from which the Messiah was to come. **In fact, in Genesis we have the beginning of all things.** Genesis answers a thousand questions for which we would have no answer were it not for this book. Genesis is the very foundation of our Bible and all that follows has its roots deeply embedded in this first revelation of God to man.⁶ (Emphasis mine—underlining and bold)

²Millard Erickson (b. 1932), Distinguished Professor of Theology at Western Seminary, Portland, and author of more than twenty books.

³Millard J. Erickson, *Christian Theology*, 3rd ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2013), 169.

⁴Gordon Fee (b. 1934) is a leading expert in pneumatology and textual criticism of the New Testament. He also serves as professor emeritus of New Testament Studies at Regent College in Vancouver, British Columbia.

⁵Gordon D. Fee and Douglas K. Stuart, *How to Read the Bible for All Its Worth*, 3rd ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1993), 21.

⁶Alfred M. Rehwinkel, *The Wonders of Creation: An Exploration of the Origin & Splendors of the Universe*, 18.

Unfortunately, many scholars fail to appreciate the significance of the first eleven chapters of the Book of Genesis. Why? One reason is that the Book of Genesis sets forth the fact that God [the Trinity] created the heavens and the earth within six literal days (Genesis 1:1-31). The expression “evening and morning,” should arrest our attention to a literal day, not millions of years. Following this Book of Genesis, Moses also wrote the Book of Exodus (1445 BC), and, in this book, he wrote, once more, about the six days of creation. We should listen to him as he describes the events as set forth in the Book of Genesis (Chapter 1):

For **in six days** the LORD **made the heavens and the earth, the sea, and all** that is in them, but he rested on the seventh day. Therefore the LORD blessed the Sabbath day and made it holy. (Exodus 20:11)

Just a little over four hundred years later, King David (1010-970 BC) wrote about Moses’ statement concerning the origin of the Universe: “**by the word of the Lord** were the heavens made, their starry host **by the breath of his mouth**” (Psalm 33:6). Remember, Moses wrote: “**And God said**, ‘Let there be light,’ and there was light” (Genesis 1:3). The Book of Genesis reveals the various activities performed on each of the six days. The following is a brief chart of the events that occurred during the six-day period of creation:

1. **DAY ONE:** Light and darkness (Genesis 1:3-5)
2. **DAY TWO:** Sky and seas: separated waters from above from waters below (1:6-8)
3. **DAY THREE:** Dry land/plant life (1:9-13)
4. **DAY FOUR:** Sun, moon, stars (1:14-19)
5. **DAY FIVE:** Sky creatures (birds) and sea animals (1:20-23)
6. **DAY SIX:** Land animals (wild and domesticated, 1:24) and Adam and Eve who were made in God’s image (1:24-31)
7. **DAY SEVEN:** God rested from His work (2:2-3)

Following the creation of the Universe, we are conscious the heavens declare the glory of God. It is in this vein that David penned the following words: “**The heavens declare the glory of God**; the skies proclaim the work of his hands” (Psalm 19:1). As stated above, we are aware of the philosophy that many scholars deny the authenticity of the Book of Genesis, especially Chapters 1 through 11. The Book of Genesis is a book about beginnings. For instance, Genesis 1:1 states, “**In the beginning** God created the heavens and the earth.” The following divisions in the Book of Genesis should assist us in comprehending this Book that lays out the fall of Adam and Eve as well as God’s intervention to rescue humanity from sin-death, that is to say, separation from God:

1. **Chapter 1** reveals the story of Adam and Eve.
2. **Chapter 2** records the institution of marriage. “The Lord God said, ‘It is not good for man to be alone. I will make a helper suitable for him’” (2:18).
3. **Chapter 3** informs us about the temptation that Adam and Eve faced in the Garden of Eden.
4. **Chapter 4** relates the story of Cain and Abel and the family history of Cain. Another incident recorded in this chapter by Moses is the birth of Seth and his godly heritage (4:25).
5. **Chapter 5** gives Adam’s genealogy up to the time of Noah.

6. **Chapters 6-9** unveils the story behind the world-wide flood.
7. **Chapters 10-11** develops the story of the Tower of Babel, which also includes the Table of Nations leading up to the tragic event that resulted in the various languages.
8. **Chapters 12-24** narrates the story of Abraham (2166-1991 BC) and two of His children (Ishmael and Isaac) and his grandson (Jacob)
9. **Chapters 25-27** gives the story of Isaac (2066-1886 BC).
10. **Chapters 28-36** tells the story of Jacob (2006-1859 BC).
11. **Chapters 37-50** re-counts the story of Joseph (1915-1805 BC)

Within the first eleven chapters of Genesis, we discover four main events that characterize the story of God up to the time of Abraham in Chapter 12. These four major events that transpired are:

1. Creation (Chapters 1—2)
2. The Fall of Adam and Eve (Chapters 3—5)
3. The world-wide flood (Chapters 6—9)
4. The Tower of Babel with the origin of the various languages (Chapters 10-11)

Even though we have categorized the fifty chapters of Genesis, we still need to be conscious that Chapters 12—50 focus on four individuals. Why were these individuals named in Genesis? It seems obvious that they were included because of their role in God’s scheme of redemption. God needed to create a distinct nation through whom the “seed” of woman would come. God did this through the lineage, or descent, of Abraham. The following is the breakdown of these four personalities, which players in God’s scheme of redemption are disclosed with a tremendous amount of historical data behind each character:

1. Abraham (Chapters 12—24)
2. Isaac (Chapters 25—27)
3. Jacob (Chapters 28—36)
4. Joseph (chapters 37—50)⁷

JESUS’ CONFIRMATION OF THE HEBREW SCRIPTURES

Adam and Eve

The Book of Genesis is the background for an understanding of the whole of God’s total written Revelation. Did Jesus recognize the Book of Genesis as historical and authentic? For the moment, we need to jump from the time of Moses (1526-1406 BC) to the first century. Jesus began His ministry when He was about thirty years old (Luke 3:23). Toward the end of Jesus’ earthly ministry (AD 33), Jesus confronted the religious leaders concerning the issue of divorce

⁷Joseph sold by his brothers (Chapters 38-39); Joseph in prison, Chapters 40-41; Joseph in power, Chapters 42-50; and finally, Joseph let his brothers know that God was still in control (50:20)

(Mark 10:2). It is significant that Jesus did not deny Mosaic authorship as he responded to their question. In fact, he cited from the Book of Genesis as historical:

Some Pharisees came and tested him by asking, “Is it lawful for a man to divorce his wife?”³ “What did **Moses** command you?” he replied.⁴ They said, “**Moses** permitted a man to write a certificate of divorce and send her away.”⁵ “It was because your hearts were hard that **Moses** wrote you this law,” Jesus replied.⁶ “**But at the beginning of creation** God [Genesis 1:1] ‘made them **male and female** [Genesis 1:27].’⁷ ‘For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife [Genesis 2:24],⁸ and the two will become one flesh.’ So they are no longer two, but one.⁹ Therefore what God has joined together, let man not separate.” (Mark 10:2-9)

Jesus accepted the beginning of God’s creation in that He “made them [Adam and Eve] **male and female** (Mark 10:6). In other words, Jesus accepted the account of creation as it is recorded in the Book of Genesis (Chapters 1—2).

Noah

Chapters 6—8 of the Book of Genesis give the story of Noah and the world-wide flood. This story is not fictional in nature. The flood is a historical fact. Within a short time before Jesus’ arrest and Crucifixion, He foretold the overthrow of Apostate Israel; yet, in this Olivet Discourse, Jesus speaks of Noah and the world-wide flood as historical. The events leading up to the destruction of Jerusalem would be similar to the events that transpired prior to the flood—many refused to believe what was foretold about the destruction of humanity with a world-wide flood or the destruction of Jerusalem in AD 70. We should observe Jesus’ response to this lack of awareness to the forthcoming destruction of Jerusalem, which comments about Noah add to the authenticity of the Book of Genesis:

For in the days before the flood, people were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, up to the day **Noah** entered the ark;³⁹ and they knew nothing about what would happen **until the flood came and took them all away**. That is how it will be at the coming of the Son of Man. (Matthew 24:38-39)

Abraham

Once more, as stated above, Chapters 12—24 of Genesis tells the story of Abraham (2166-1991 BC), which narrative reveals God’s promise to him that all nations of the earth would be blessed through his seed (12:1-3). Abraham left his father’s house when he was seventy-five years old (2091 BC). Yet, two-thousand years later, Jesus referred to Abraham as recorded in the Book of Genesis. Jesus encountered opposition from the religious leaders about His claim to Deity. In this antagonism to His assertion, John, one of the Twelve, records this episode:

Jesus replied, “If I glorify myself, my glory means nothing. My Father, whom you claim as your God, is the one who glorifies me.⁵⁵ Though you do not know him, I know him. If I said I did not, I

would be a liar like you, but I do know him and keep his word. ⁵⁶ Your father Abraham rejoiced at the thought of seeing my day; he saw it and was glad.” ⁵⁷ “You are not yet fifty years old,” the Jews said to him, “and you have seen **Abraham!**” ⁵⁸ “I tell you the truth,” Jesus answered, “before Abraham was born, I am!” (John 8:54-58)

Lot’s Wife

Just a perusal of the New Covenant writings reveals the authenticity of the Hebrew canon. Jesus spoke of Adam and Eve, Abraham, Noah, and also of Lot’s wife as historical persons. Moses wrote about this tragedy of Lot’s wife being turned into a pillar of salt: “But **Lot’s wife** looked back and she became a pillar of salt” (Genesis 19:26). Toward the end of Jesus’ earthly ministry, He said, “Remember **Lot’s wife**” (Luke 17:32).

Jesus Cites from the Hebrew Scriptures

Matthew, one of the Twelve, cites the temptation of Jesus in the desert. In His encounter with Satan, Jesus had to rebuke Satan three different times from the Sacred Scriptures. Prior to the Temptation, Jesus went without food for forty days and forty nights. As a result of this period of fasting, Jesus was hungry. Satan sought to entice Jesus to turn stones into bread. Jesus countered his remarks with a citation from Deuteronomy 8:3— “Man does not live on bread alone but on every word that comes from the mouth of the Lord.” After this failure to entice Jesus to fulfill His hunger, Satan cited Psalms 91:11-12 to Jesus in order to persuade Him to cast Himself down from the highest point of the Temple. Satan failed to interpret this Scripture in context. As a result of this misapplication, Jesus then cited from Deuteronomy 6:16— “Do not test the Lord your God.” Finally, Satan requested that Jesus fall down and worship him, but Jesus, once more cited from the Book of Deuteronomy: “It is the Lord your God you must follow, and him you must revere” (Deuteronomy 13:4). Jesus paraphrased this citation by saying, “For it is written, ‘Worship the Lord your God, and serve him only’” (Matthew 4:10).

THE INITIAL ANNOUNCEMENT OF THE BEGINNING OF GOD’S SCHEME OF REDEMPTION IN THE BOOK OF GENESIS

As we examine other details in the Book of Genesis, we need to turn our attention to Chapter 3. Moses records the fall of Adam and Eve and, at the same time, he recorded God’s announcement of One who would come to restore the disruption of fellowship between Himself and humanity. This prophecy is documented by Moses in Genesis 3:15 and is developed throughout the Pentateuch. Apparently, God instituted animal sacrifice as pictorial of the ultimate sacrifice for the sins of lost humanity. In this unique book of beginnings, we have a lot of historical data given as we witness God’s providence in accomplishing His objective to restore the damage done by Adam and Eve. The overall theme of Genesis surrounds the announcement of the coming Messiah. Paul, in his epistle to Titus, called attention, indirectly, to Genesis 3:15 when he penned the following words:

Paul, a servant of God and an apostle of Jesus Christ for the faith of God's elect and the knowledge of the truth that leads to godliness—² a faith and knowledge resting on the hope of eternal life, which God, who does not lie, promised before the beginning of time. (Titus 1:1-2)

God knew when He created Adam and Eve that they would sin. Paul clearly states that “**before** the beginning of time” that God had planned out the means of rescue. This is very similar to Paul's remarks to the Christians in Ephesus:

Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in the heavenly realms with every spiritual blessing in Christ. ⁴ For **he [God the Father] chose us in him [God the Son] before the creation of the world** to be holy and blameless in his sight. In love ⁵ he predestined us to be adopted as his sons **through Jesus Christ**, in accordance with his pleasure and will—⁶ to the praise of his glorious grace, which he has freely given us in the One he loves. ⁷ **In him** we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, in accordance with the riches of God's grace. (Ephesians 1:3-7)

John, who penned the Book of Revelation prior to June of AD 68, foretold about the beast (Rome and its Emperor Nero) coming up out of the sea (Revelation 13:1). Yet in this summary of the beast's power over Judaism, he dropped into this account an astounding statement about Jesus' Crucifixion. We should pay attention to John's description of Jesus' death, which death, in the mind of the Trinity, had already taken place before He spoke the Universe into existence. The following words should grab our attention:

All inhabitants of the earth will worship the beast—all whose names have not been written in the book of life belonging to the Lamb that was slain from the creation of the world. (Revelation 13:8)

STORY OF ABRAHAM: GENESIS 12 THROUGH 24

Remember, beginning with Genesis 12, God called Abram (Abraham) to leave his own country, his people, and his household (12:1). This section of Scripture begins with the announcement once more of the coming Messiah as recorded in 3:15. God revealed His plans to Abraham when he was seventy-five years old concerning the ultimate seed (Jesus) of Abraham as the means of all nations being blessed. We should focus our attention on this magnificent prophecy of God's intent to bless **all nations through Abram's seed**:

I will make you into a great nation and I will bless you; I will make your name great, and you will be a blessing. ³I will bless those who bless you, and whoever curses you I will curse; and **all peoples [Gentiles and Jews] on earth will be blessed through you.**” (12:2-3)

Approximately two thousand years later, a convert (Paul⁸) from Judaism to Christianity reflected upon God's promise to Abraham concerning his “seed” through whom all nations

⁸For a detailed account of Paul's conversion, see Dallas Burdette, “Paul's Conversion: Apologetic for Christianity,” in Dallas Burdette, *Christian Apologetics: Defense of the Christian Faith against Atheism* (Germany: Blessed Hope Publishing, 2015), 115-138.

would be blessed. About AD 49, Paul wrote to the various congregations within the province of Galatia the following words:

The promises were spoken to Abraham and to his seed. **The Scripture** [Genesis] **does not say** “and to seeds,” meaning many people, but “**and to your seed,**” meaning one person, who is Christ. ¹⁷What I mean is this: The law, introduced 430 years later, does not set aside the covenant previously established by God and thus do away with the promise. ¹⁸For if the inheritance depends on the law, then it no longer depends on a promise; **but God in his grace gave it to Abraham through a promise.** (Galatians 3:16-18)

Later this promise was passed on to Abraham’s son (Isaac) and then to his grandson (Jacob). Out of the twelve sons of Jacob, God choose Judah (son of Leah—Genesis 29:35) through whom the Messiah would come (see Matthew 1:1-17). Ultimately, God sent Jacob and his sons into Egypt to make them into a nation so that they would no longer be nomads. God created a nation through whom the Messiah would come. As Jacob was dying, he foretold events that would eventually transpire within the various families of his sons (49:1-28). What is significant is what Jacob said to Judah. These words of warning depict the ultimate destruction of Israel as a nation. In other words, Judah’s existence as a political kingdom would not cease until the promised Messiah should come. It is in this vein that Jacob (2006-1859 BC) prophesied concerning an event that was approximately nineteen-hundred years in the future. How did Jacob know about this future catastrophe in AD 70? The answer is that God revealed this prediction to him through supernatural revelation. We should listen to this astounding prophecy by Jacob:

Judah, your brothers will praise you; your hand will be on the neck of your enemies; your father’s sons will bow down to you. ⁹You are a lion’s cub, O Judah; you return from the prey, my son. Like a lion he crouches and lies down, like a lioness—who dares to rouse him? ¹⁰**The scepter will not depart from Judah, nor the ruler’s staff from between his feet [political power], until he comes [Jesus the Christ] to whom it belongs and the obedience of the nations is his.** (Genesis 49:8-10)⁹

As we walk through the thirty-nine books of the Hebrew Scriptures, we are acquainted with the passing of centuries before the Messiah would come. **God had to delay the “remedial system”** (God’s scheme of redemption) **in order to prepare Christianity for humanity and humanity for the reception and enjoyment of Christianity.** It seems that God had to demonstrate certain things in order for the Gospel to be fully and properly revealed and appreciated to the human race as God’s power for the redemption of lost humanity. For instance, the following list categories five events that prepared Christianity for humanity:

- God had to demonstrate the insufficiency of nature to meet and to supply the wants of our fallen nature.
- God also had to reveal the inability of human beings to save themselves from sin-death.
- God likewise needed to expose the exceeding sinfulness of sin in the human race.

⁹See Dallas Burdette, “Unraveling God’s Predictive History: The Second Coming,” in Dallas Burdette, *Commentary on Daniel: An Unraveling of God’s Messianic Kingdom* (Longview, FL: Xulon Press, 2016), 562-585, for an exegesis of Genesis 49:8-10.

- God had to establish the requisite of holiness as a condition of salvation, which holiness could only be credited by faith to the human race “in” and “through” Jesus [see 1 Corinthians 1:20-31].
- God had to develop a new religious vocabulary for the reception and enjoyment of Christianity, which He did through the Temple and its sacrifices.

GENTILES VERSUS JEWS

God used the Gentiles as well as the Jews to illustrate the utter futility on the part of humanity to establish their own righteousness. In order to establish the above principles, **God demonstrated through the Gentiles** the inadequacy of secular philosophy to satisfy the desires of their human nature. For example, even with the various philosophies of the Gentiles—Platonism, Aristotelianism, Stoicism, Epicureanism, and every other scheme of philosophy—men and women were still sighing and groaning under the burden of sin. In other words, Gentiles were still longing for some hitherto undiscovered remedy that would be adequate to the wants of their entire nature. On the other hand, **God also demonstrated to the Jews** that even with His Law, they, too, were still groaning under the burden of sin and longing for some hitherto undiscovered remedy that would be adequate to satisfy their sinful condition. The Jews came to realize that even with a perfect Law, they were still weighed down with sin.¹⁰ About AD 49, Paul wrote from Antioch, Syria to the Christians in the province of Galatia about the timing of the coming of Christ. He penned the following words that interpret why there was a delay in God’s scheme of redemption “in” and “through” Jesus:

What I am saying is that as long as the heir is a child, he is no different from a slave, although he owns the whole estate.² He is subject to guardians and trustees until the time set by his father.³ So also, when we were children, we were in slavery under the basic principles of the world.⁴ **But when the time had fully come, God sent his Son, born of a woman, born under law,**⁵ **to redeem those under law, that we might receive the full rights of sons.**⁶ Because you are sons, God sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, the Spirit who calls out, “*Abba, Father.*”⁷ So you are no longer a slave, but a son; and since you are a son, God has made you also an heir. (Galatians 4:1-7)

We should stand in awe of the splendor and magnificence of this Great Salvation that God has made available through faith “in” and “through” Jesus the Messiah. Again, we are made aware of God’s promise to Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden (Genesis 3:15) and to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob. The coming of Jesus as a means of restoring what was lost in Adam and Eve is set forth by Peter in his First Epistle to the Christians in the various provinces of the Roman Empire—Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia (1 Peter 1:1). In this Epistle he writes about the prehistory of the Christ:

He was chosen before the creation of the world, but was **revealed in these last times** for your sake.²¹ Through him you believe in God, who raised him from the dead and glorified him, and so your faith and hope are in God.²² **Now that you have purified yourselves by obeying the truth** [the

¹⁰I am indebted to Robert Milligan for these helpful and stimulating insights. See Robert Milligan, *The Scheme of Redemption as It is Revealed and Taught in the Holy Scriptures*, originally published 1868, (St Louis: The Bethany Press, sixteenth printing, 1962), 72-82.

Gospel] so that you have sincere love for your brothers, love one another deeply, from the heart.²³ For you have been born again, not of perishable seed, but of imperishable, through the living and enduring word of God. (1 Peter 1:20-23)

Finally, we need to focus, once more, on the words of His preexistence and death before God spoke the Universe into existence. It is in this vein that we find in the Book of Revelation a statement concerning His death for lost humanity that originated within the Trinity before time began. The following words should make us stand in awe as we are given a glimpse of the love manifest within the Trinity: “All inhabitants of the earth will worship the beast—all whose names have not been written in **the book of life belonging to the Lamb [Jesus] that was slain from the creation of the world**” Revelation 13:8). Remember, the Book of Genesis serves as a background to all the other books in the entire corpus of God’s written Revelation. This statement is reminiscent of Genesis 3:15. What does the Book of Genesis mean to us? Have we reflected upon Genesis 1:27? Remember, we are created in God’s own image. What does this mean to us? Hopefully, this Scripture will cause each of us to reflect upon our relationship to God. It seems that Moses is simply saying that we are social beings who were made for God, but that we also need God. Are we restless in our spiritual journey of faith? If so, we need to reflect upon Augustine’s¹¹ statement about our relationship to God:

GREAT art Thou, O Lord, and greatly to be praised; great is Thy power, and of Thy wisdom there is no end. And man, being a part of Thy creation, desires to praise Thee, who bears about with him his mortality, the witness of his sin, even the witness that Thou “resist the proud,”—yet man, this part of Thy creation, desires to praise Thee. Thou movest us to delight in praising Thee; for **Thou hast formed us for Thyself, and our hearts are restless till they find rest in Thee**¹²

Yes, **God formed us for Himself, and we are restless until we find rest in Him**. Thousands of suicides could be stopped if only individuals would put their trust in God. Only God can fill the void or vacuum within our lives. Only God gives meaning to life. In concluding this brief overview of the Book of Genesis, I cite from Alister McGrath’s relevant words concerning our understanding of what it means **to be created in God’s image**. He writes with great insight as he seeks to unfold what is behind this penetrating phrase:

We are made in **the image of God**. We have an inbuilt capacity—indeed, an inbuilt *need*—to relate to God. **Nothing that is transitory can ever fill this need**. To fail to relate to God is to fail to

¹¹**Aurelius Augustinus** (354–430) is often simply referred to as St. Augustine or Augustine Bishop of Hippo (the ancient name of the modern city of Annaba in Algeria). He is the preeminent Doctor of the Church according to Roman Catholicism, and is considered by Evangelical Protestants to be in the tradition of the Apostle Paul as the theological fountainhead of the Reformation teaching on salvation and grace.

¹²Augustine of Hippo, “*The Confessions of St. Augustine*,” in *The Confessions and Letters of St. Augustine with a Sketch of His Life and Work*, ed. Philip Schaff, trans. J. G. Pilkington, vol. 1, A Select Library of the Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers of the Christian Church, First Series (Buffalo, NY: Christian Literature Company, 1886), 45.

be completely human. **To be fulfilled is to be filled by God.** Nothing that is not God can ever hope to take the place of God.¹³ (Emphasis mine—underlining and bold)

HISTORISITY OF THE BOOK OF GENESIS

As we approach the Book of Genesis, we quickly observe that this unique book is a compilation of a large collection of individual records that go back to the time of Adam and Eve. These documents predate the time of Moses, which documents were, apparently, preserved down through the centuries. In my judgment, it seems that Moses had access to these genealogical tables of people from Adam to the time of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. If these records are carefully studied, we become aware that from the time of Adam to the time of Christ, we are dealing with approximately four-thousand years. These ancient annals, according to Moses, were trustworthy, historical, and reliable. As in every civilized nation, we accept written testimony from those in the ancient past as of primary standing. Just a casual reading of the Book of Genesis reveals that Moses recorded ten separate accounts of “generations,” which statistics were handed down from generation to generation.

Ten Historical Accounts from Adam to Jacob

Moses records the time frame that God took to bring about the finished product of His Creation. God deliberately took five literal days to accomplish His goal for the benefit of both Adam and Eve who were created on the sixth day. Since God created Adam and Eve full grown, He, apparently, gave both the gift of writing which was passed on to future generations. As a result of this gift of communicating, we can account for the data found in the following ten sections. In Genesis 2:4, Moses states, “**This is the account of** the heaven and the earth when they were created” (Adam and Eve). We could also translate this phrase as “**This is the history of**” Adam and Eve. Beginning with Genesis 5:1, Moses lists the genealogical data from Adam to Noah: “**This is the written account of Adam’s line.**”

Beginning with Genesis 6:9, Moses gives the account of Noah’s family line: “Noah was a righteous man, blameless among the people of his time, and he walked with God. Noah has three sons, Shem, Ham, and Japheth.” Following the statistics of Noah’s family, Moses then records The Table of Nations in Genesis 10:1: “**This is the account of Shem, Ham and Japheth.** Noah’s sons who themselves had sons after the flood.” Beginning with Genesis 11:10, Moses records: “**This is the account of Shem.**” In Genesis 25:12, Moses calls attention to one of Abraham’s sons (Ishmael). Moses informs his readers: “**This is the account of Abraham’s son Ishmael.**” Again, Moses reveals information about Jacob and Esau in Genesis 25:19: “**This is the account of Abraham’s son Isaac.**” Then, in Genesis 36:1, Moses gives the family tree of

¹³ Cited in George H. Guthrie and J. Scott Duvall, *Biblical Greek Exegesis: A Graded Approach to Learning Intermediate and Advanced Greek* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1998), 17. See Alister E. McGrath, *Intellectuals Don’t Need God and Other Modern Myths* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1993), 30.

Esau's descendants: "**This I the account of Esau** (that is, Edom)." Finally, in Genesis 37:2, Moses writes, "**This is the account of Jacob.**"

Historical Documents Preserved from Adam to Moses

A Brief examination of the Book of Genesis discloses that Moses, apparently, had written documents before Him as he penned the first book of the Pentateuch. The information about Creation and the ten tables of genealogy had apparently been handed down from the time of Adam to Jacob by various authors. I believe that the data revealed by Moses was guided by the hand of God. The Book of Genesis is inspired by the Holy Spirit. Now the question is: how do we know this? The following examination should reveal the assertions set forth in this examination of the overview of the Book of Genesis. In my judgment, it would seem that Adam would have had the gift of writing at the time of his existence. Adam was created full grown with the ability even to name the animals. We will briefly observe this mind-set in our next study on "Advanced Civilizations." For now, we turn our attention to statements by Moses that clearly indicates that he copied earlier document into his first book.

Advanced Civilizations

Apparently, God endowed certain individuals **to develop musical instruments and to play the instruments with skill**. In addition to this ability, God gave others the aptitude to forge all kinds of tools out of bronze and iron. How early in the history of Adam and Even do we discover the capability to make various instruments to create music and to forge certain tools to accomplish various projects? The answer is found in Genesis, Chapter 4. Moses calls attention to Cain, one of the sons of Adam and Eve, through whom we read about major undertakings. Just a casual reading of this section of Scripture, we are amazed at "the remarkable inventions and the high level of civilization described in Genesis 4:20-24, achieved by the generation of Adam."¹⁴ The following is Moses' account of this high level of civilization:

Cain lay with his wife, and she became pregnant and gave birth to Enoch. Cain was then building a city, and he named it after his son Enoch. ¹⁸ To Enoch was born Irad, and Irad was the father of Mehujael, and Mehujael was the father of Methushael, and Methushael was the father of Lamech. ¹⁹ Lamech married two women, one named Adah and the other Zillah. ²⁰ Adah gave birth to **Jabal**; he was the father of those who live in tents and raise livestock. ²¹ His brother's name was **Jubal**; he was the father of all who play the harp and flute. ²² Zillah also had a son, **Tubal-Cain**, who forged all kinds of tools out of bronze and iron. Tubal-Cain's sister was Naamah. ²³ Lamech said to his wives, "Adah and Zillah, listen to me; wives of Lamech, hear my words. I have killed a man for wounding me, a young man for injuring me. ²⁴If Cain is avenged seven times, then Lamech seventy-seven times." (Genesis 4:17-24)

¹⁴Alfred M. Rehwinkel, *The Wonders of Creation: An Exploration of the Origin & Splendors of the Universe*,

Our next chapter (Chapter 2) examines the relevance of the Hebrew Scriptures in the life of Christians. The Old Testament writings are neglected by many Christians in their studies of God's Word. One objective of this chapter is to focus upon the reason behind the Hebrew Scriptures in the life of the Christian community. Since the Apostles and the early Church relied heavily upon the Hebrew Scriptures in explaining the Gospel, we, too, need to become more acquainted with the Book of Genesis as well as the other thirty-eight books of the Hebrew Scriptures. The New Testament writings abound with echoes from the Old Testament Canon. We should direct our attention, once more, to the words of Jesus to His disciples before His ascension:

And while they still did not believe it [His Resurrection] because of joy and amazement, he asked them, "Do you have anything here to eat?"⁴² They gave him a piece of broiled fish,⁴³ and he took it and ate it in their presence.⁴⁴ He said to them, "This is what I told you while I was still with you: Everything must be fulfilled that is written about me in the Law of Moses, the Prophets and the Psalms."⁴⁵ **Then he opened their minds so they could understand the Scriptures** [Hebrew Scriptures—Genesis through Malachi].⁴⁶ He told them, "This is what is written: **The Christ will suffer and rise from the dead on the third day,**⁴⁷ and repentance and forgiveness of sins will be preached in his name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem.⁴⁸ You are witnesses of these things.⁴⁹ I am going to send you what my Father has promised; but stay in the city until you have been clothed with power from on high." (Luke 24:41-49)