

<sup>The</sup> *New American Bible*

**Basic Youth Edition**

For the text of the articles and introductions:

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The *New American Bible*

**Basic Youth Edition**

Including the Revised Psalms and the Revised New Testament  
Translated from the Original Languages with Critical Use of  
All the Ancient Sources

Saint Mary's Press™

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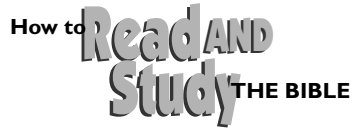
# SPECIAL FEATURES

**The New American Bible Basic Youth Edition is loaded with special features to help make it easier for you to read and understand the Bible. Here is a list of some of those features and where to find them.**

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## HOW TO READ AND STUDY THE BIBLE

The chapter that follows this general introduction gives advice for interpreting the Bible and a process for studying the Bible alone or with a group.



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## SUGGESTED READING PLANS

This chapter offers some great reading plans to get you started in studying the Bible.



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## SECTION INTRODUCTIONS

Each major section of the Bible (the Pentateuch, the historical books, the wisdom books, the prophetic books, the Gospels and the Acts of the Apostles, and the Letters and Revelation) begins with background on the books in that section.



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## BOOK INTRODUCTIONS

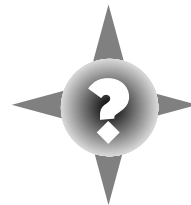
Introductions at the beginning of most books (sometimes two or three books share a single introduction) give insight into each book's central message and an overview of its contents. You can find more extensive book introductions in other editions of the New American Bible.



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## WHERE DO I FIND IT?

Several indexes are located at the back of the Bible. The first index helps you locate Bible passages on events, people, and teachings of Jesus. The second index helps you find Bible passages related to each sacrament.



**D**isplays of awesome cosmic power, tender love stories, tearful family reunions, and tales of deceit, rape, murder, and worldwide destruction. Does this sound like the script for next summer's blockbuster movie? No, it's the Book of Genesis! It is the story of how a world created for love and harmony goes astray because of human sin. Through it all, God is at work, forming a people to restore what was lost.

## At a Glance

- I. The Primeval History (1, 1—11, 26).
- II. The Patriarch Abraham (11, 27—25, 18).
- III. The Patriarchs Isaac and Jacob (25, 19—36, 43).
- IV. Joseph and His Brothers (37, 1—50, 26).

## In-depth

Genesis gathers together inspired stories and traditions that reveal God's nature and purpose and the beginning of the Israelites' special relationship with God. Genesis has four main sections. The first section (1, 1—11, 26) contains some of the Bible's most memorable stories about Creation and the effect of sin. Chapters 1–2 tell two stories of Creation that portray the beauty and wonder of the natural world and emphasize the goodness and harmony that God intended in Creation. Creation culminates in human beings, made in God's own image. Those first human beings, Adam and Eve, live in a wonderful garden in harmony with God, Creation, and each other. But in chapter 3, sin enters the world, and as a result, Adam and Eve will experience separation, suffering, and ultimately death.

## Quick Facts

### Period Covered

The stories in the first eleven chapters are primeval history. Genesis 11, 27—50, 26 covers the period of the ancestors, or patriarchs and matriarchs (from 2000 to 1500 B.C.).

### Author

An unknown author gathered oral traditions and stories from tribal peoples sometime from 1225 to 1000 B.C. (see Introduction to the Pentateuch).

### Themes

the goodness of Creation, human responsibility, the effects of sin, covenant, God's bringing good out of evil

And sin spreads, first to the family (Cain and Abel in chapter 4), then to all society (Noah and the Flood in chapters 6–9). Even after the Flood and God's covenant with Noah, the story of the tower of Babel demonstrates that sin pits nation against nation. As you read these chapters, remember that they were written not as historical accounts or scientific explanations but as symbolic stories that shared faith experiences and taught important religious truths.

Sections two through four of Genesis (11, 27—50, 26) tell the story of the origins of the Israelite people. The story begins with Abraham and Sarah (originally called Abram and Sarai) and continues with Ishmael and Isaac and with Isaac and Rebekah's children, Esau and Jacob. Genesis ends with Joseph, one of Jacob's twelve sons, cleverly saving Egypt and Israel from famine. These sections introduce the covenant God makes with Abraham and remind the reader that God's plans will overcome human sin and weakness.

# Genesis



Genesis, the first book of the Bible, opens with the Hebrew word *bereshit*, which means “in the beginning.” The title “Genesis” was given to the Septuagint (Greek) translation of the book, because of its concern with the origin of the world (Gn 1, 1; 2, 4), of the human race, and, in particular, of the Hebrew people.

Eleven structural units (toledoth), of unequal length and importance, present the unity and purpose of the book in terms of God’s universal sovereignty, his dealings with men, and his choice and formation of a special people to be the instrument of his plan of salvation.

The tracing of the direct descent from Adam to Jacob constitutes the major part of the book, while the genealogical tables of lateral branches are not so developed nor of such interest as those that pertain to the story of the Israelite people. In fact, these lateral branches gradually disappear from the narrative. And with the introduction of Abraham and his covenant with God, the history of humanity as such becomes contracted to the story of the descendants of Abraham through Isaac and Jacob—the chosen people.

Despite its unity of plan and purpose, the book is a complex work, not to be attributed to a single original author. Several sources, or literary traditions, that the final redactor used in his composition are discernable. These are the Yahwist (J), Elohist (E) and Priestly (P) sources, which in turn reflect older oral traditions (see Introduction to the Pentateuch).

In Genesis, the Yahwist source is the most important by reason of its teaching, its antiquity, and the continuity it gives the book. It constitutes a sacred history, continually drawing attention to the working out of God’s design through his interventions in the affairs of men. The Elohist source, less well preserved, is found in fragmentary form only, depicting God’s manifestations through visions and dreams rather than theophanies. Angels are God’s intermediaries with men. Moreover, there is a solicitude for the divine transcendence and greater sensitivity toward the moral order. The Priestly source contains those elements—chronological data, lists, genealogies—that construct the framework of Genesis and bind its contents together. To the J and E sources it adds such legal institutions as the sabbath rest, circumcision and the alliances between God and Noah and God and Abraham.

The interpreter of Genesis will recognize at once the distinct object that sets chapters 1—11 apart: the recounting of the origin of the world and of man (primeval history). To make the truths contained in these chapters intelligible to the Israelite people destined to preserve them, they needed to be expressed through elements prevailing among that people at that time. For this reason, the truths themselves must therefore be clearly distinguished from their literary garb.



With the story of the patriarchs Abraham, Isaac and Jacob (Gn 11, 27—50, 26), the character of the narrative changes. While we do not view the account of the patriarchs as history in the strict sense, nevertheless certain of the matters recounted from the time of Abraham onward can be placed in the actual historical and social framework of the Near East in the early part of the second millennium B.C. (2000–1500), and documented by non-biblical sources.

Genesis contains many religious teachings of basic importance: the preexistence and transcendence of God, his wisdom and goodness, his power through which all things are made and on which they all depend; the special creation of man in God's image and likeness, and of woman from the substance of man; the institution of marriage as the union of one man with one woman; man's original state of innocence; man's sin of pride and disobedience; its consequences for the protoparents and their posterity. Despite the severity of their punishment, hope of reconciliation is offered by God through the first as well as the subsequent promises of salvation and blessing. Abraham is blessed for his faith and obedience, and he is to be a blessing for all nations through his offspring, Isaac, Jacob, and Jacob's sons (Gn 12, 3; 18, 18; 22, 18), of whom the Messiah, mankind's greatest blessing, will eventually be born (Gal 3, 8).

Frequent references to Genesis are found in the New Testament. Christ becomes the antithesis of Adam: sin and death come to mankind through Adam, justification and life through Jesus Christ (Rom 5, 12.17ff). Noah's ark becomes the symbol of the church, by which men are saved from destruction through the waters of baptism (1 Pt 3, 20ff); Abraham's faith is the model for all believers; the sacrifice of his son Isaac typifies the sacrifice of Christ, Son of the Father. The liturgy, too, relates the persons of Abel, Abraham and Melchizedek to Christ in his act of sacrifice.

The Book of Genesis is divided as follows:

- The Primeval History (1, 1—11, 26).
- The Patriarch Abraham (11, 27—25, 18).
- The Patriarchs Isaac and Jacob (25, 19—36, 43).
- Joseph and His Brothers (37, 1—50, 26).

## I: The Primeval History

### First Story of Creation

**1**<sup>1†</sup> In the beginning, when God created the heavens and the earth, <sup>2</sup>\*† the earth was a formless wasteland, and darkness covered the abyss, while a mighty wind swept over the waters.

<sup>3</sup>\* Then God said, "Let there be light," and there was light. <sup>4</sup> God saw how good the light was. God then separated the light from the darkness. <sup>5</sup>† God called the light "day," and the darkness he called "night." Thus evening came, and morning followed—the first day.

<sup>6</sup> Then God said, "Let there be a dome in the middle of the waters, to separate one body of water from the other." And so it happened: <sup>7</sup>\* God made

the dome, and it separated the water above the dome from the water below it. <sup>8</sup> God called the dome "the sky." Evening came, and morning followed—the second day.

<sup>9</sup>\* Then God said, "Let the water under the sky be gathered into a single basin, so that the dry land may appear." And so it happened: the water under the sky was gathered into its basin, and the dry land appeared. <sup>10</sup> God called the dry land "the earth," and the basin of the water he called "the sea." God saw how good it was. <sup>11</sup>\* Then God said, "Let the earth bring forth vegetation: every kind of plant that bears seed and every kind of fruit tree on earth that bears fruit with its seed in it." And so it happened: <sup>12</sup> the earth brought forth every kind of plant that bears seed and every kind of fruit tree on earth that

† **1, 1—2, 4a:** This section introduces the whole Pentateuch. It shows how God brought an orderly universe out of primordial chaos.

**1, 2:** *The abyss:* the primordial ocean according to the ancient Semitic cosmogony. After God's creative activity, part of this vast body forms the salt-water seas (vv 9f); part of it is the fresh water under the earth (Ps 33, 7; Ez 31, 4), which wells forth on the earth as springs and fountains (Gn 7, 11; 8, 2; Prv 3, 20). Part of it, "the upper water" (Ps 148, 4; Dn 3, 60), is held up by the dome of the sky (Gn 1, 6f) from which rain descends on the earth (Gn 7, 11; 2 Kgs 7, 2.19; Ps 104, 13). A *mighty wind:* literally, "a wind of God," or "a spirit of God"; cf Gn 8, 1.

**1, 5:** In ancient Israel a day was considered to begin at sunset. According to the highly artificial literary structure of Gn 1, 1—2, 4a, God's creative activity is divided into six days to teach the sacredness of the sabbath rest on the seventh day in the Israelite religion (Gn 2, 2f).

\* **1, 1:** Gn 2, 1.4; Pss 8, 4; 38—39; 90, 2; Wis 11, 17; Sir 16, 24; Jer 10, 12; 2 Mc 7, 28; Acts 14, 15; Col 1, 16; Heb 1, 2f; 3, 4; 11, 3; Rv 4, 11. **1, 2:** Jer 4, 23. **1, 3:** 2 Cor 4, 6. **1, 7:** Prv 8, 27f; 2 Pt 3, 5. **1, 9:** Jb 38, 8; Ps 33, 7; Jer 5, 22. **1, 11:** Ps 104, 14.