

good  
NEWS BIBLE

The book of

GENESIS

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# Welcome to the Good News Bible

Welcome to this dyslexia-friendly edition of the book of Genesis, using text from the Good News Bible.

If you are dyslexic, you may find most Bibles very difficult to read, because of their small type, long paragraphs and thin paper. This book has been specially designed with the British Dyslexia Association's style guide in mind, so it has the following features:

- Thicker paper, so that type does not show through
- Cream-coloured paper
- Matt paper
- Plain font
- Larger type
- Wider line spacing
- Short paragraphs
- Bold headings

The Good News Bible is a clear, easy-to read translation of the Bible. It uses ordinary, everyday language so that as many people as possible can read and understand it. This has made it a very popular translation, selling over 150 million copies in the UK alone.

## **About the Bible**

The Bible isn't one book but a collection of books. These books were written at different times by different people. They include many types of writing, such as history, poetry, stories, laws, letters, visions, songs and prayers.

The Bible has two main sections, known as the Old Testament and the New Testament. The Old Testament contains the story of God's relationship with the Israelites, over hundreds of years. It was written mainly in the Hebrew language, with some parts in a language called Aramaic. Genesis is the first book of the Old Testament.

The New Testament continues the story. It tells us about Jesus Christ and how his first followers began to spread the Christian message across the world. It was written in Greek, a language spoken through most of the Roman empire.

Even the newest parts of the Bible are about 2,000 years old, and many parts are much older. This means that everyone who reads it today will find some parts of it hard to understand. It might be helpful if you try to imagine what life was like for the people who first read it. Then think about what the words might mean for us today. If you focus on the parts you do understand, not the parts you find difficult, there will always be something interesting to learn.

## **Finding your way around the book of Genesis**

Genesis is the introduction to the whole Bible. The first 11 chapters tell the story of the origins of the world and are often called 'primeval history' (that is, stories from the earliest ages). From chapter 12 onwards, Genesis tells the family history of Abraham and Sarah and their descendants, ending with the story of their great-grandson, Joseph.

If you're reading the book of Genesis on your own, it's a good idea to read it from beginning to end. This will give you an idea of how the earliest stories about God's 'chosen people' fit together. However, if you are in church or at a study group, someone might ask you to look up the reference for a verse or short passage.

References are always given in this order – book title, chapter title and verse number. For example, Genesis 5.6 means the fifth chapter of Genesis, and the sixth verse of that chapter.

In this book, the chapter numbers are in very large type on a separate line. The verse numbers are the very small numbers that you can see as you read the story.

You can also follow the chapter and verse numbers through the book by looking at the reference at the top of each page.

## **Enjoy reading!**

It is all too easy to assume that we know exactly what a Bible story says, especially if it's a famous one or we have heard it many times before. If this book helps you to read Genesis for yourself more easily, you might find that you understand it in a new way.

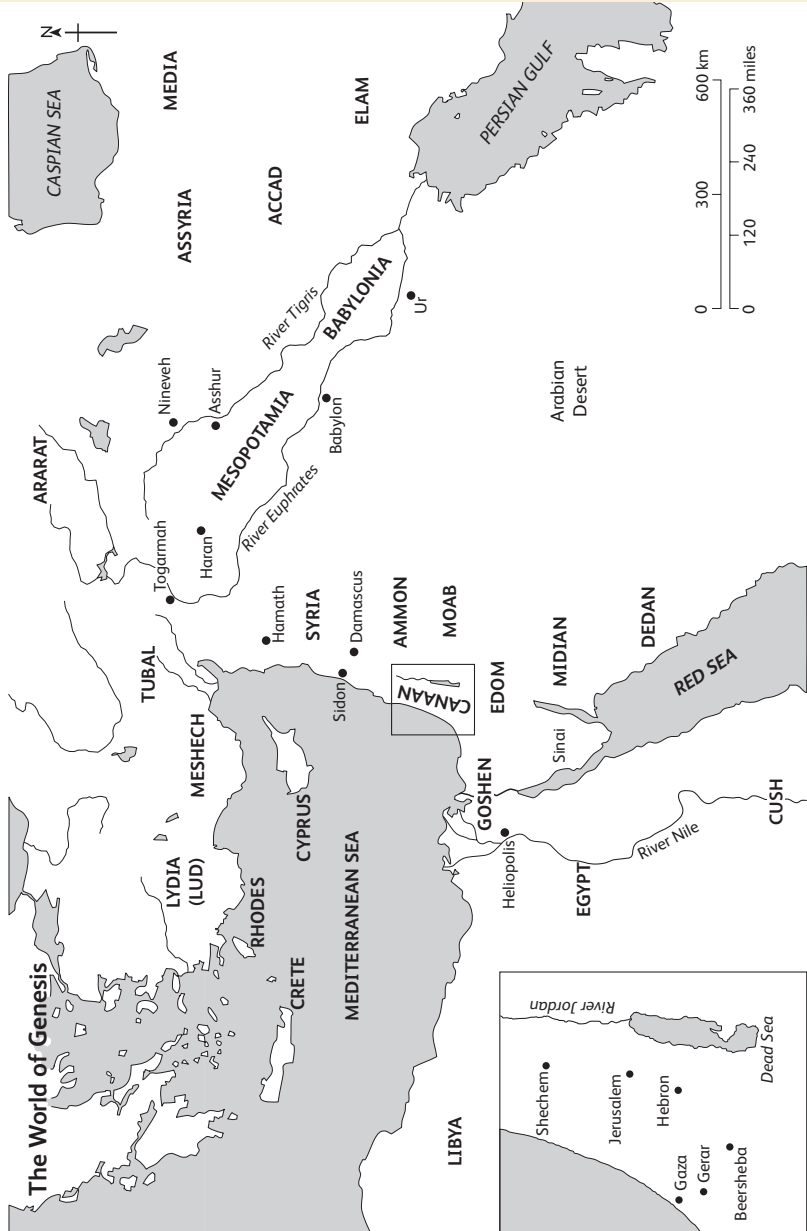
Don't be afraid to ask questions about what you are reading. What excites you? What confuses you? Which are your favourite verses or stories? Write notes for yourself, or draw pictures, or memorise the words so that you can think further about them later.

Why not get together with other people to read the book of Genesis? We all bring our own experiences and thoughts to the Bible, so it can be helpful to talk about it together and find out how other people understand it.

If you've enjoyed this book, the following books of the Bible are also available in a dyslexia-friendly version.

- The Psalms
- Mark's Gospel
- John's Gospel
- Romans
- Revelation

Go to our website, [www.biblesociety.org.uk](http://www.biblesociety.org.uk), to find out more.





# Genesis

## **The start of all things**

**What's it about?** Genesis is all about beginnings: the beginning of time, the beginning of the universe, the beginning of God's people ... and the beginning of his people going their own way.

**Who wrote it?** The first five books of the Bible are often called the Torah (from the Hebrew word meaning 'teaching') or Pentateuch (meaning 'five books' in Greek). Tradition has it that these books were written by Moses, but no one is sure.

**Why read it?** These ancient stories were passed down from generation to generation, and they tell us many things about God, us and our relationship with him. Genesis raises some of the big questions of life and gives us space to discover answers to those questions.

**What's special about it?** Genesis includes many of the most famous and colourful Bible stories and characters. There are also some huge theological ideas introduced in Genesis. As you read, look out for blessing, covenant, 'chosen' people, goodness and sinfulness, righteousness and faith.

# Chapter 1

## The Story of Creation

<sup>1</sup>In the beginning, when God created the universe, **a**  
<sup>2</sup>the earth was formless and desolate. The raging ocean  
that covered everything was engulfed in total darkness,  
and the Spirit of God **b** was moving over the water.

<sup>3</sup>Then God commanded, "Let there be light" — and light  
appeared.

<sup>4</sup>God was pleased with what he saw. Then he separated  
the light from the darkness, <sup>5</sup>and he named the light "Day"  
and the darkness "Night". Evening passed and morning  
came — that was the first day.

<sup>6-7</sup>Then God commanded, "Let there be a dome to  
divide the water and to keep it in two separate places" —  
and it was done. So God made a dome, and it separated  
the water under it from the water above it.

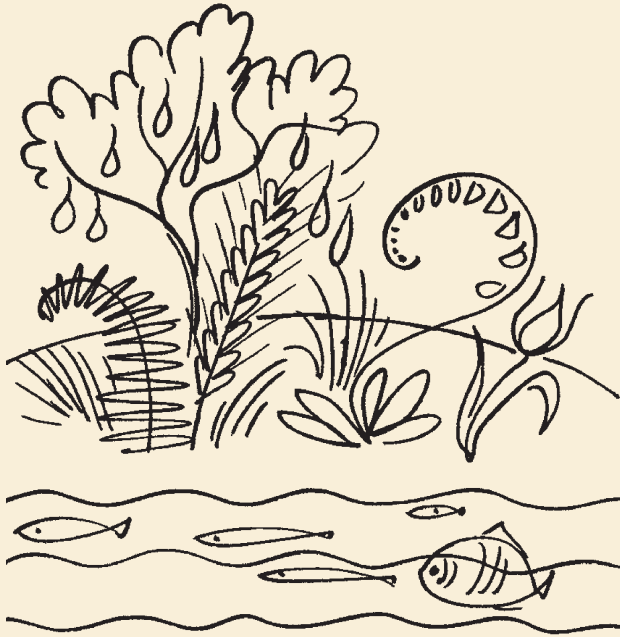
<sup>8</sup>He named the dome "Sky". Evening passed and  
morning came — that was the second day.

<sup>9</sup>Then God commanded, "Let the water below the sky  
come together in one place, so that the land will appear"  
— and it was done.

---

**a** *In the beginning... the universe; or In the beginning God created the universe; or When God began to create the universe.*

**b** *the Spirit of God; or the power of God; or a wind from God; or an awesome wind.*



**“Let the earth produce all kinds of plants ...  
creatures that live in the water” (1.11, 21)**

<sup>10</sup>He named the land “Earth”, and the water which had come together he named “Sea”. And God was pleased with what he saw.

<sup>11</sup>Then he commanded, “Let the earth produce all kinds of plants, those that bear grain and those that bear fruit” — and it was done.

<sup>12</sup>So the earth produced all kinds of plants, and God was pleased with what he saw.

<sup>13</sup>Evening passed and morning came — that was the third day.

<sup>14</sup>Then God commanded, “Let lights appear in the sky to separate day from night and to show the time when days,

years, and religious festivals<sup>c</sup> begin; <sup>15</sup>they will shine in the sky to give light to the earth" — and it was done.

<sup>16</sup>So God made the two larger lights, the sun to rule over the day and the moon to rule over the night; he also made the stars.

<sup>17</sup>He placed the lights in the sky to shine on the earth, <sup>18</sup>to rule over the day and the night, and to separate light from darkness. And God was pleased with what he saw.

<sup>19</sup>Evening passed and morning came — that was the fourth day.

<sup>20</sup>Then God commanded, "Let the water be filled with many kinds of living beings, and let the air be filled with birds."

<sup>21</sup>So God created the great sea monsters, all kinds of creatures that live in the water, and all kinds of birds. And God was pleased with what he saw.

<sup>22</sup>He blessed them all and told the creatures that live in the water to reproduce, and to fill the sea, and he told the birds to increase in number.

<sup>23</sup>Evening passed and morning came — that was the fifth day.

<sup>24</sup>Then God commanded, "Let the earth produce all kinds of animal life: domestic and wild, large and small" — and it was done.

---

<sup>c</sup> *religious festivals; or seasons.*

<sup>25</sup>So God made them all, and he was pleased with what he saw.

<sup>26</sup>Then God said, “And now we will make human beings; they will be like us and resemble us. They will have power over the fish, the birds, and all animals, domestic and wild,<sup>d</sup> large and small.”

<sup>27</sup>So God created human beings, making them to be like himself. He created them male and female, <sup>28</sup>blessed them, and said, “Have many children, so that your descendants will live all over the earth and bring it under their control. I am putting you in charge of the fish, the birds, and all the wild animals.

<sup>29</sup>I have provided all kinds of grain and all kinds of fruit for you to eat; <sup>30</sup>but for all the wild animals and for all the birds I have provided grass and leafy plants for food” — and it was done.

<sup>31</sup>God looked at everything he had made, and he was very pleased. Evening passed and morning came — that was the sixth day.

## Chapter 2

<sup>1</sup>And so the whole universe was completed.

<sup>2</sup>By the seventh day God finished what he had been doing and stopped working.

---

<sup>d</sup> One ancient translation *animals, domestic and wild*; Hebrew *domestic animals and all the earth*.

<sup>3</sup>He blessed the seventh day and set it apart as a special day, because by that day he had completed his creation<sup>e</sup> and stopped working.

<sup>4</sup>And that is how the universe was created.

### **The Garden of Eden**

When the LORD<sup>f</sup> God made the universe, <sup>5</sup>there were no plants on the earth and no seeds had sprouted, because he had not sent any rain, and there was no one to cultivate the land; <sup>6</sup>but water would come up from beneath the surface and water the ground.

<sup>7</sup>Then the LORD God took some soil from the ground and formed a man<sup>g</sup> out of it; he breathed life-giving breath into his nostrils and the man began to live.

<sup>8</sup>Then the LORD God planted a garden in Eden, in the East, and there he put the man he had formed.

<sup>9</sup>He made all kinds of beautiful trees grow there and produce good fruit. In the middle of the garden stood the tree that gives life and the tree that gives knowledge of what is good and what is bad.<sup>h</sup>

<sup>10</sup>A stream flowed in Eden and watered the garden; beyond Eden it divided into four rivers.

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<sup>e</sup> by that day he had completed his creation; or on that day he completed his creation.

<sup>f</sup> the LORD: In this translation 'LORD' stands for the Hebrew name Yahweh.

<sup>g</sup> ground... man: The Hebrew words for "man" and "ground" have similar sounds.

<sup>h</sup> knowledge of what is good and what is bad; or knowledge of everything.

<sup>11</sup>The first river is the Pishon; it flows round the country of Havilah.

<sup>12</sup>(Pure gold is found there and also rare perfume and precious stones.)

<sup>13</sup>The second river is the Gihon; it flows round the country of Cush.<sup>*i*</sup>

<sup>14</sup>The third river is the Tigris, which flows east of Assyria, and the fourth river is the Euphrates.

<sup>15</sup>Then the LORD God placed the man in the Garden of Eden to cultivate it and guard it.

<sup>16</sup>He said to him, "You may eat the fruit of any tree in the garden, <sup>17</sup>except the tree that gives knowledge of what is good and what is bad.<sup>*j*</sup> You must not eat the fruit of that tree; if you do, you will die the same day."

<sup>18</sup>Then the LORD God said, "It is not good for the man to live alone. I will make a suitable companion to help him."

<sup>19</sup>So he took some soil from the ground and formed all the animals and all the birds. Then he brought them to the man to see what he would name them; and that is how they all got their names.

<sup>20</sup>So the man named all the birds and all the animals; but not one of them was a suitable companion to help him.

---

<sup>*i*</sup> Cush (of Mesopotamia); or Ethiopia.

<sup>*j*</sup> knowledge of what is good and what is bad; or knowledge of everything.

<sup>21</sup> Then the LORD God made the man fall into a deep sleep, and while he was sleeping, he took out one of the man's ribs and closed up the flesh.

<sup>22</sup> He formed a woman out of the rib and brought her to him.

<sup>23</sup> Then the man said,

“At last, here is one of my own kind —

Bone taken from my bone, and flesh from my flesh.

‘Woman’ is her name because she was taken out of man.”<sup>k</sup>

<sup>24</sup> That is why a man leaves his father and mother and is united with his wife, and they become one.

<sup>25</sup> The man and the woman were both naked, but they were not embarrassed.

## Chapter 3

### **Human Disobedience**

<sup>1</sup> Now the snake was the most cunning animal that the LORD God had made. The snake asked the woman, “Did God really tell you not to eat fruit from any tree in the garden?”

<sup>2</sup> “We may eat the fruit of any tree in the garden,” the woman answered, <sup>3</sup> “except the tree in the middle of it.”

---

<sup>k</sup> *woman... man*: The Hebrew words for “woman” and “man” have similar sounds.





**“How wonderful it would be to become wise” (3.6)**

God told us not to eat the fruit of that tree or even touch it; if we do, we will die.”

<sup>4</sup>The snake replied, “That’s not true; you will not die.

<sup>5</sup>God said that, because he knows that when you eat it you will be like God<sup>l</sup> and know what is good and what is bad.”<sup>m</sup>

<sup>6</sup>The woman saw how beautiful the tree was and how good its fruit would be to eat, and she thought how wonderful it would be to become wise. So she took some of the fruit and ate it. Then she gave some to her husband, and he also ate it.

<sup>7</sup>As soon as they had eaten it, they were given understanding and realized that they were naked; so they sewed fig leaves together and covered themselves.

<sup>8</sup>That evening they heard the LORD God walking in the garden, and they hid from him among the trees.

<sup>9</sup>But the LORD God called out to the man, “Where are you?”

---

<sup>l</sup> God; or the gods.

<sup>m</sup> know what is good and what is bad; or know everything.

<sup>10</sup>He answered, "I heard you in the garden; I was afraid and hid from you, because I was naked."

<sup>11</sup>"Who told you that you were naked?" God asked. "Did you eat the fruit that I told you not to eat?"

<sup>12</sup>The man answered, "The woman you put here with me gave me the fruit, and I ate it."

<sup>13</sup>The LORD God asked the woman, "Why did you do this?"

She replied, "The snake tricked me into eating it."

### **God Pronounces Judgement**

<sup>14</sup>Then the LORD God said to the snake, "You will be punished for this; you alone of all the animals must bear this curse: from now on you will crawl on your belly, and you will have to eat dust as long as you live.

<sup>15</sup>I will make you and the woman hate each other; her offspring and yours will always be enemies. Her offspring will crush your head, and you will bite her offspring's<sup>n</sup> heel."

<sup>16</sup>And he said to the woman, "I will increase your trouble in pregnancy and your pain in giving birth. In spite of this, you will still have desire for your husband, yet you will be subject to him."

<sup>17</sup>And he said to the man, "You listened to your wife and ate the fruit which I told you not to eat. Because of what you have done, the ground will be under a curse. You will have to work hard all your life to make it produce enough food for you.

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<sup>n</sup> her offspring's; or their.

<sup>18</sup>It will produce weeds and thorns, and you will have to eat wild plants.

<sup>19</sup>You will have to work hard and sweat to make the soil produce anything, until you go back to the soil from which you were formed. You were made from soil, and you will become soil again."

<sup>20</sup>Adam<sup>o</sup> named his wife Eve,<sup>p</sup> because she was the mother of all human beings.

<sup>21</sup>And the LORD God made clothes out of animal skins for Adam and his wife, and he clothed them.

### **Adam and Eve are Sent Out of the Garden**

<sup>22</sup>Then the LORD God said, "Now the man has become like one of us and has knowledge of what is good and what is bad.<sup>q</sup> He must not be allowed to take fruit from the tree that gives life, eat it, and live for ever."

<sup>23</sup>So the LORD God sent him out of the Garden of Eden and made him cultivate the soil from which he had been formed.

<sup>24</sup>Then at the east side of the garden he put living creatures<sup>r</sup> and a flaming sword which turned in all directions. This was to keep anyone from coming near the tree that gives life.

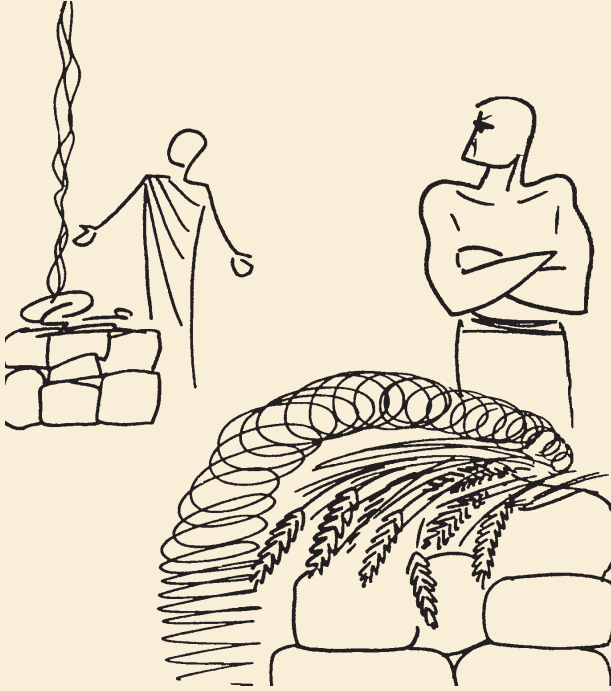
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<sup>o</sup> *Adam*: This name in Hebrew means "humanity".

<sup>p</sup> *Eve*: This name sounds similar to the Hebrew word for "living", which is rendered in this context as "human beings".

<sup>q</sup> *knowledge of what is good and what is bad; or knowledge of everything.*

<sup>r</sup> *living creatures*: See Word List.



“Why that scowl on your face?” (4.6)

## Chapter 4

### Cain and Abel

<sup>1</sup> Then Adam had intercourse with his wife, and she became pregnant. She bore a son and said, “By the LORD’s help I have acquired a son.” So she named him Cain.<sup>r</sup>

<sup>2</sup> Later she gave birth to another son, Abel. Abel became a shepherd, but Cain was a farmer.

<sup>3</sup> After some time, Cain brought some of his harvest and gave it as an offering to the LORD.

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<sup>r</sup> *Cain*: This name sounds like the Hebrew for “acquired”.