

# Contents

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<b>1</b>	<b>The Creation</b> — <i>March 26–April 1</i> —————	5
<b>2</b>	<b>The Fall</b> — <i>April 2–8</i> —————	18
<b>3</b>	<b>Cain and His Legacy</b> — <i>April 9–15</i> —————	31
<b>4</b>	<b>The Flood</b> — <i>April 16–22</i> —————	44
<b>5</b>	<b>All Nations and Babel</b> — <i>April 23–29</i> —————	57
<b>6</b>	<b>The Roots of Abraham</b> — <i>April 30–May 6</i> —————	72
<b>7</b>	<b>The Covenant With Abraham</b> — <i>May 7–13</i> —————	85
<b>8</b>	<b>The Promise</b> — <i>May 14–20</i> —————	98
<b>9</b>	<b>Jacob the Supplanter</b> — <i>May 21–27</i> —————	111
<b>10</b>	<b>Jacob-Israel</b> — <i>May 28–June 3</i> —————	124
<b>11</b>	<b>Joseph, Master of Dreams</b> — <i>June 4–10</i> —————	137
<b>12</b>	<b>Joseph, Prince of Egypt</b> — <i>June 11–17</i> —————	150
<b>13</b>	<b>Israel in Egypt</b> — <i>June 18–24</i> —————	163

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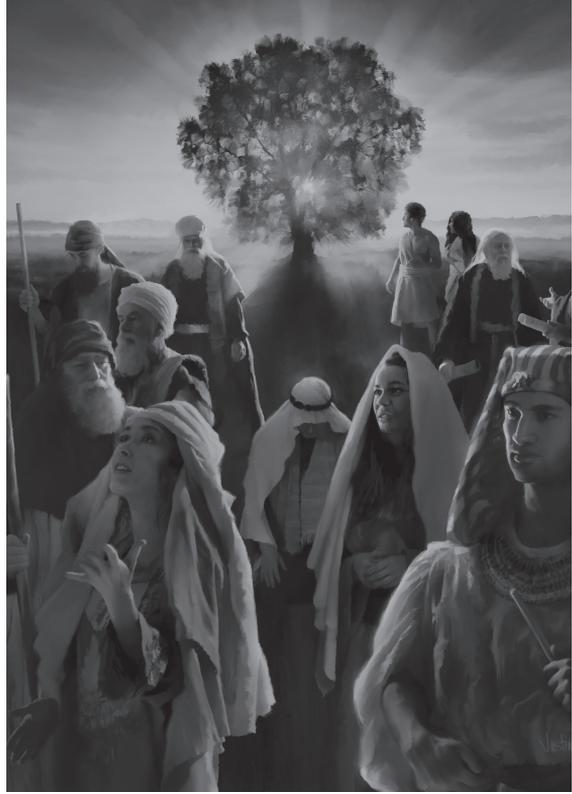
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# THE BOOK OF THE BEGINNING



Genesis is about Jesus: Jesus our Creator, Jesus our Sustainer, Jesus our Redeemer. Writing millennia after the Genesis text itself had been penned by Moses, and reaching back across those ages to the patriarch's very words, the apostle John reveals Jesus in the Creation account: "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things were made through Him, and without Him nothing was made that was made. In Him was life, and the life was the light of men" (*John 1:1–4, NKJV*).

What did John write here? "In the beginning" all things that were made, all things that once didn't exist, came into existence—by Jesus. All creation—from galaxies hurtling across the cosmos in staggering pinwheels of fire and light to the meticulous DNA woven miraculously into the cell to quantum waves—Jesus created and sustains it all. And the book of Genesis is the first story in Scripture of both this creation and the redemption of this creation. Here, in this book, is the world's only "official" account of our origins.

The English word "Genesis" is derived from the Greek *genesis*, which means "beginning," itself derived from the Hebrew *bereshit*, "in the beginning"—the first word of the book (hence, the first word of the entire Bible!). Genesis gives us the foundation, the base, upon which all the following scriptures rest. Because it is first, and so foundational to all that comes after, Genesis is probably the most quoted or referred-to book in the rest of the Scriptures.

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Genesis is important because it is the book that, more than any other work, anywhere, helps us understand just who we are as human beings, a truth especially important now, in a day when we humans are deemed as nothing but accidents, chance creations of a purely materialistic universe. Or, as one physicist put it, we humans are “organized mud” (which is to some degree true, though for him the laws of nature alone organized it!). Genesis, however, reveals to us our true origin, that we were beings purposely and perfectly made in the image of God in a perfect world. Genesis also explains the Fall—that is, why our world is no longer perfect and why we as humans aren’t, as well. Genesis, however, also comforts us with God’s promise of salvation in a world that, in and of itself, offers us nothing but suffering and death.

*Genesis . . . also comforts us with God’s promise of salvation in a world that, in and of itself, offers us nothing but suffering and death.*

With its dramatic stories of miracles (Creation, births, the rainbow) and judgments (the Flood, Sodom and Gomorrah) witnessing to God’s holy presence, Genesis is awe inspiring. But Genesis also is a book with moving human stories of love (Jacob and Rachel), of hatred (Jacob and Esau), of birth (Isaac, Jacob, Jacob’s sons), of death (Sarah, Rachel, Jacob, Joseph), of murder (Cain, Simeon, and Levi), and forgiveness (Esau and Jacob, Joseph and his brothers). It also is an instruction book with lessons on ethics (Cain, Babel), on faith (Abraham, Jacob), and on the hope and promise of redemption (the crushing of the serpent, the Promised Land).

During this quarter, not only will we read and study the book of Genesis—but we also will enjoy its beautiful stories and learn to walk better with the Lord of Creation, the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.

Meanwhile, the geographical movements of the book—from Eden to Babel, to the Promised Land, to Egypt, to the prospect of the Promised Land—remind us of our nomadic journeys and nurture our hope for the real Promised Land, the new heaven and the new earth. As we follow these characters across the pages of Genesis, we will discover that—regardless of how different the time, place, culture, and circumstance—often their stories are, in many ways, ours, as well.

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# How to Use This Teachers Edition

**“The true teacher is not content with dull thoughts, an indolent mind, or a loose memory. He constantly seeks higher attainments and better methods. His life is one of continual growth. In the work of such a teacher there is a freshness, a quickening power, that awakens and inspires his [class].”**

—Ellen G. White, *Counsels on Sabbath School Work*, p. 103.

To be a Sabbath School teacher is both a privilege and a responsibility. A privilege because it offers the teacher the unique opportunity to lead and guide in the study and discussion of the week’s lesson so as to enable the class to have both a personal appreciation for God’s Word and a collective experience of spiritual fellowship with class members. When the class concludes, members should leave with a sense of having tasted the goodness of God’s Word and having been strengthened by its enduring power. The responsibility of teaching demands that the teacher is fully aware of the Scripture to be studied, the flow of the lesson through the week, the interlinking of the lessons to the theme of the quarter, and the lesson’s application to life and witness.

This guide is to help teachers to fulfill their responsibility adequately. It has three segments:

- 1. Overview** introduces the lesson topic, key texts, links with the previous lesson, and the lesson’s theme. This segment deals with such questions as Why is this lesson important? What does the Bible say about this subject? What are some major themes covered in the lesson? How does this subject affect my personal life?
- 2. Commentary** is the chief segment in the Teachers Edition. It may have two or more sections, each one dealing with the theme introduced in the Overview segment. The Commentary may include several in-depth discussions that enlarge the themes outlined in the Overview. The Commentary provides an in-depth study of the themes and offers scriptural, exegetic, illustrative discussion material that leads to a better understanding of the themes. The Commentary also may have scriptural word study or exegesis appropriate to the lesson. On a participatory mode, the Commentary segment may have discussion leads, illustrations appropriate to the study, and thought questions.
- 3. Life Application** is the final segment of the Teachers Edition for each lesson. This section leads the class to discuss what was presented in the Commentary segment as it impacts Christian life. The application may involve discussion, further probing of what the lesson under study is all about, or perhaps personal testimony on how one may feel the impact of the lesson on one’s life.

**Final thought:** What is mentioned above is only suggestive of the many possibilities available for presenting the lesson and is not intended to be exhaustive or prescriptive in its scope. Teaching should not become monotonous, repetitious, or speculative. Good Sabbath School teaching should be Bible-based, Christ-centered, faith-strengthening, and fellowship-building.