



Genesis Part 1: Creation and Chaos

Script References

Introduction

00:00–00:47

Jon: The first book in the Bible is a book you've probably heard of. It's called Genesis.

Tim: Genesis comes from a Hebrew word. It's pronounced *ray-sheet*, and it just means "beginning."

Jon: Now, there's a lot of stories from the book of Genesis, and it's easy just to pull out a specific story and try to tell you what it might mean. But we think the best way to understand this book is to look at the book as a whole and show you how the whole thing is designed.

Tim: The book is designed to fall into two main parts. You have chapters 1 through 11, which is telling the story of God and the whole world. And then you have the second part, which is about God and Abraham's family. That's chapters 12 through 50. And how the two of those parts relate, that's where you find the message of the book.

In the Beginning

00:26–02:54

Jon: Okay, so let's start back at the beginning. The first part of Genesis begins with the creation story, where God creates everything.¹

1. Genesis 1-2

Tim: And how exactly that happens, of course, that's where all the debates come. But he takes a dark, watery chaos and he turns it into a beautiful garden where humans can flourish.

Jon: That sounds nice.

Tim: It does sound nice. In fact, seven different times, God says of all that he's made that it's good.

Jon: And this is where we meet the first human characters in the Bible, Adam and Eve.

- Tim:** They're both individual characters, but they're also representative. "Adam" is the Hebrew word for "humanity," and "Eve" is the Hebrew word for "life." And God creates them in his image.² In other words, humanity reflects, or is meant to reflect, the creativity, the goodness, and character of the creator out into the world that he's made. They're supposed to reproduce and make cultures and neighborhoods and art and gardens and everything else. But he gives them a moral choice about how they're going to go about building this world. And this is what the tree of the knowledge of good and evil is all about. 2. Genesis 1:26-27
- Jon:** And he tells them, "Don't eat of the fruit of this tree or you will die."³ What's that all about? 3. Genesis 2:17
- Tim:** So up until now, God has been the one defining and providing what is good, and so God is the one with the knowledge of good and evil. But now this tree represents a choice. Will the humans trust God's definition of good and evil, or are they going to seize the opportunity and define good and evil for themselves?
- Jon:** And Adam and Eve eat the fruit.⁴ 4. Genesis 3
- Tim:** This is the core biblical explanation for that concept of sin—that desire to call the shots myself. It's the inward turn of the human heart to do what's good for me and my tribe, even if it's at the expense of you and your tribe.
- Jon:** And the problem is humans are horrible at defining good and evil without God. And so now that humanity has made this choice, things get really ...
- Tim:** Really, really bad.

The Downward Spiral of Humanity

02:55–04:29

- Tim:** Genesis 3 through 11 is tracing this downward spiral of all humanity. So Adam and Eve, they can't trust each other anymore. So there's a little story about how they were naked and felt fine about it beforehand, but now they feel shameful because all of a sudden, Adam's definition of good and evil might be different than Eve's. And so they hide from each other.⁵ 5. Genesis 3:7
- Jon:** Then there's another story of temptation. Cain is jealous of his brother Abel, and he gives in and kills him.⁶ 6. Genesis 4
- Tim:** There's a story right after Cain about a guy named Lamech. And all we know about Lamech is that he accumulates wives like property, and he sings songs about how he's a more violent, vengeful person than Cain ever was. And he's proud of it!⁷ 7. Genesis 4:18-24
- Jon:** Things get so bad with the human race that we see God decide to just wipe us out.

Tim: Yeah. We typically think of the flood story as about God being angry, but it actually begins with God's sadness and grief about the state of his world. And so out of his passion to preserve the goodness of his world, he washes it clean with the flood.⁸

8. Genesis 6

Jon: But there's a glimmer of hope. He chooses Noah and his whole family, and he saves them on this boat.

Tim: Don't forget about the animals.

Jon: Right. And the animals. So Noah and his family are going to reboot all of humanity. I mean, he must be a pretty great guy.

Tim: But this is the story most people don't know because it's kind of weird. Noah gets off the boat and he plants a vineyard and he gets totally plastered. And then something sketchy happens in his tent with his son. It's a tragic story.⁹

9. Genesis 9:20-27

The Tower of Babel

04:30–05:12

Jon: So from here, humanity grows again, but things are as bad as before. And the last story is the famous story of the Tower of Babel.

Tim: And in this story, you have all of the nations uniting together to use this new technology they have, the brick. And they want to make a name for themselves and build this big city with a huge tower that will reach up to the gods. But God knows that this city will be a nightmare, and so in his mercy, he scatters them.¹⁰ All of these stories are underlining the same basic idea. When humans seize autonomy from God, when they define good and evil for themselves, it results in a world of tragedy and death.

10. Genesis 11

Conclusion

05:13–05:25

Jon: And this leaves you wondering, is there any hope for humanity?

Tim: Yes. Yeah, there is. It's the very next story that answers that question. It's the beginning of God's mission to rescue and restore his world.