

# The Book of Genesis - Origin Story



*This biblical story comes from Genesis, the first book of the Old Testament. It is the creation story of both Jews and Christians. In Genesis, this story is followed immediately by a second creation story in Chapter 2. In the second, God creates man from dust and places him in the Garden of Eden.*

*These stories were written down several thousand years ago. They evolved into the form in which we know them around 450 BCE, about 2,460 years ago.*



*Detail of God from Creation of Adam by Michelangelo Buonarroti*

## **Genesis: Chapter 1**

In the beginning, when God created the heavens and the Earth, the Earth was an empty, shapeless hole of nothing. Darkness was everywhere. And God said, “Let there be light,” and there was light. God saw that the light was good, and he separated the light from the darkness. God called the light “day,” and the darkness he called “night.” And there was evening, and there was morning — the first day.

And God said, “Let there be a dome between the waters to separate water from water.” So God made the dome and separated the water under the dome from the water above it. And it was so. God called the dome “sky.” And there was evening, and there was morning — the second day.

And God said, “Let the water under the sky be gathered to one place, and let dry ground appear.” And it was so. God called the dry ground “land,” and the gathered waters he called “seas.” And God saw that it

was good. Then God said, "Let the land produce vegetation." And it was so. The land produced vegetation: plants bearing seed of every kind and trees bearing fruit with seed in it of every kind. And God saw that it was good. And there was evening, and there was morning — the third day.

And God said, "Let there be lights in the dome of the sky to separate the day from the night." And it was so. God made two great lights — the greater light to govern the day and the lesser light to govern the night. He also made the stars. God set them in the dome of the sky to give light on the Earth, to govern the day and the night, and to separate light from darkness. And God saw that it was good. And there was evening, and there was morning — the fourth day.

And God said, "Let the water teem with living creatures, and let birds fly above the Earth across the dome of the sky." So God created the great creatures of the sea and every living thing of every kind that moves in the teeming water, and every winged bird of every kind. And God saw that it was good. God blessed them and said, "Be fruitful and increase in number and fill the water in the seas, and let the birds increase on the Earth." And there was evening, and there was morning — the fifth day.



And God said, "Let the land produce living creatures of every kind: the livestock, the creatures that move along the ground, and the wild animals, each of every kind." And it was so. God made the wild animals of every kind, the livestock of every kind, and all the creatures that move along the ground of every kind. And God saw that it was good.

Then God said, "Let us make humankind in our image, in our likeness, so that they may rule over the fish in the sea and the birds in the sky, over the livestock and all the wild animals, and over all the creatures that move along the ground."

So God created humankind in his own image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them. God blessed them and said to them, "Be fruitful and increase in number." He put humans in charge of the Earth: "Rule over the fish in the sea and the birds in the sky and over every living creature that moves on the ground."

Then God said, "I give you every seed-bearing plant on the face of the whole earth and every tree that has fruit with seed in it. They will be yours for food. And to all the beasts of the earth and all the birds in the sky and all the creatures that move along the ground — everything that has the breath of life in it — I give every green plant for food." And it was so. God saw all that he had made, and it was good. And there was evening, and there was morning — the sixth Day.

Thus the heaven and the Earth were finished. And on the seventh day God rested from all the work that he had done. God blessed the seventh day. He made it a holy day because on it God rested from all the work that he had done in creation.



*The Garden of Eden by Jacopo Bassano (c. 1570), Galleria Doria Pamphilj, Rome*

# Comprehension Quiz



1. What is the BEST summary of the story?
  - a. God created many things, including light, the stars, birds, livestock, wild animals, and even humans.
  - b. God did not want Earth to be a shapeless hole of nothing, so God created a lot of things over seven days.
  - c. In the beginning there was nothing, and then God created the heavens, the Earth, and everything on Earth over a period of seven days.
  - d. In the beginning there was no light or anything, and then God said there should be light and other good things and there were.
  
2. Which detail BEST supports a main idea of the story?
  - a. On the first day, God created evening and morning.
  - b. The light at night is different from the light in the day.
  - c. God blessed the great creatures in the sea.
  - d. Wild animals are different from livestock.

3. Read the sentences from the story:

***God made two great lights — the greater light to govern the day and the lesser light to govern the night. He also made the stars.***

Which word could replace 'govern' WITHOUT changing the meaning of the first sentence?

- a. Decide
  - b. Rule
  - c. Develop
  - d. Recognize
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4. Read the sentences from the story:
- So God created humankind in his own image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them. God blessed them and said to them, "Be fruitful and increase in number."***

What does God mean when he says to the humans he created, "Be fruitful and increase in number"?

- a. He wants them to eat a lot of fruit.
- b. He wants them to have a lot of children.
- c. He wants them to produce a lot of fruit to eat.
- d. He wants them to grow a lot taller.