

In the Beginning

Intro to Genesis
January 5th, 2025

Why Genesis?

If we get the beginning of the story wrong,
we are prone to misunderstand Jesus

AND

misrepresent Him to others.



Why are we prone to misunderstand Genesis today?

The debates surrounding the controversies (creation vs. evolution, etc.) in Genesis distract us from the wisdom and meaning packed into these early chapters, including answers to our deep worldview-level questions. (Who are we? Why are we here? etc.)

“Knowledge about the construction of the universe is not the same thing as wisdom about its meaning and purpose.”-Tim Mackie

בְּרֵאשִׁית בְּרָא אֱלֹהִים אֶת
הַשָּׁמַיִם וְאֶת הָאָרֶץ

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וְאֶת הָאָרֶץ

**(The Bible is an ancient text,
from an ancient culture!)**



“We assume that the Bible is going to speak my language,
in my mental and cultural categories, and that’s just
violating a fundamental principle of human communication.
It seems to me that if God wants to communicate to us,
He’s going to do it in ways that we normally communicate,
which means that words mean what they mean to the
people who say them.”

- Tim Mackie

“The Bible was written FOR US,
but NOT TO US.”

- John Walton

“Effective communication requires a body of agreed-upon words, terms, and ideas, a common ground of understanding.

For the speaker, this often requires accommodation to the audience by using words and ideas they will understand. For the audience, if they are not native to the language and cultural matrix of the speaker, this means reaching common ground may require seeking out additional information or explanation. In other words, the audience has to adapt to a new and unfamiliar culture.” - John Walton

“(W)ords mean what they mean to the people who say them.”

- Tim Mackie

“Heavens and Earth”
for Ancient Israelite



“Heavens and Earth”
for 21st Century us

VS.



Who are the Ancient Israelites?

Important facts about the original audience of Genesis

- They had a different understanding of the universe (heaven and earth example)
- They were the generation of people who God rescued from Egyptian captivity through Moses (meaning, they had spent the last 400 years in Egyptian slavery, generation after generation, steeping in their idol worship and understanding of the universe, ie. their cosmology.)

¹⁶ All Scripture is God-breathed and is
useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in
righteousness,"

2 Timothy 3:14-16

“¹⁴ But as for you, continue in what you have learned and have become convinced of, because you know those from whom you learned it, ¹⁵ and how from infancy you have known the **Holy Scriptures**, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus. ¹⁶ **All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness,**”

2 Timothy 3:14-16