

GENESIS PROFILE

AUTHOR

Because Genesis is part of the unified Pentateuch, establishing its authorship and date should not be separated from the composition of the Pentateuch as a whole. Evidence suggests that, like the remainder of the Pentateuch, Moses gave the book its essential substance and later editors supplemented it, all by the Holy Spirit's inspiration (For a more detailed discussion of Mosaic authorship see "The Pentateuch.") It should be noted that the Bible's own witness to Moses' authorship is supported by extrabiblical sources such as the *Enuma Elish*, the *Atrahasis Epic*, and the *Gilgamesh Epic*.

DATE AND OCCASION

Given the biblical and extrabiblical evidence linking Genesis and its contents to Moses and his era, we may reasonably conclude that the book dates from the fifteenth century B.C.

The historical narrative of Genesis recounts the creation and fall of mankind, and God's election of Israel to a unique covenant relationship with Him, in order to bless a fallen world. That covenant relationship consists of God's commitment to the patriarchs to make of their elect offspring a great nation and the chosen nation's commitment to obey Him and so to become a light to the Gentiles. Genesis recounts the origins of this redemptive nation, reaching back to the beginnings of mankind and the world and of the conflict between the kingdom of God and the kingdom of Satan in which the nation was to play a crucial role.

PURPOSE AND THEMES

Purpose:

Genesis was written to show that Israel's God is the sovereign Creator whose purpose to establish His covenant rule will not be hindered by the sinfulness of humanity.

Themes:

Primeval History 1:1-11:9: Although God has created the world for the benefit of humanity, people continue to rebel against His authority, leading to judgment.

Patriarchal History 11:10-37:1: God chooses a family through which He will begin to fulfill His redemptive purposes for humanity.

Joseph's History 37:2-50:26: God fulfills His promises in spite of the evil intentions of people.

(Portions of this information were drawn directly from "The First Book of Moses Called Genesis" found in *The Reformation Study Bible* and from lecture notes taken from *Genesis through Joshua*, by Dr. Richard P. Belcher, Jr.)