

### Who wrote it?

Good question - The first five books of the Bible are known as the books of Moses. Historically it has been believed that Moses wrote them, or at least the majority of them. (It would be difficult to write about one's own death!!).

Modern scholars see evidence of later editing, but Jesus spoke of their content as being from Moses so even with some editing: Author - Moses.



### Things to look out for!

Look at the way God relates to Adam and Eve before they eat the fruit. "God was walking in the garden..." This is NOT a distant God.

Look at the recurring patterns of sin and evil. Adam & Eve, Cain & Abel, the people of Noah's day, Noah himself, the builders at Babel. Think about what the reasons are for their sin - envy, pride, carelessness, greed, ambition.

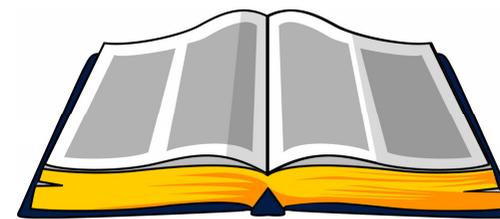
Look at how God deals with people - think about what this tells us of God's character - love and compassion, but also holiness and anger.

### Science vs Religion

People like Richard Dawkins love to say horrible things about Christians (and other faiths too!) It is very tempting to get into arguments about who is right and who is wrong. Yet look through history and you will find many scientists who were great men of faith.

Copernicus, Kepler and the famous Galileo, who gave us the basis of our modern Cosmology, were all devout believers. Galileo saw no problem interpreting Genesis 1 according to scientific theory. Sir Isaac Newton (famous for the apple on the head) attributed the precision of the planetary orbits to the work of "an intelligent and powerful being." Even Einstein, perhaps the most famous scientific mind of our modern age said, "I want to know how God created this world, I am not interested in this or that phenomenon, in the spectrum of this or that element. I want to know His thoughts, the rest are details."

Even looking at the creation narrative shows how close it is to the scientific description. The universe begins with a big bang "Let there be light". Matter condenses into stars and planets (days 2,3 & 4). Life begins in the water (Day 5) and then land animals and birds (Day 5 & 6) before people arrive (Day 6). Much of science is based in theory - not solid fact. Genesis offers one such theory. God made everything. It does not explain how he did it. Indeed, it does not know how he did it. It just says that he did. A last word from Einstein - "Science without religion is lame, religion without science is blind."



## A YEAR WITH THE BIBLE

Part

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## CREATION AND PRE-HISTORY

It may seem strange starting our year with the Bible by tackling just the first eleven of the 1,189 chapters, but this part of the Bible is very important in understanding where the rest fits in. It would be very easy to skip straight to Abraham and start the story there, but without an understanding of why the world is the way it is, not much would make sense.

The Bible starts with the words "In the Beginning..." - it is the meaning of the Hebrew word from which the title "Genesis" comes. The Bible starts with the assertion that before anything else existed God was there. John's Gospel echoes this starting point, emphasising Jesus' place at the start of all creation. More arguments have been started over the meaning and interpretation of these few chapters than almost any other. Those who follow a very strict and literal interpretation of the Bible believe that the world was created some 6,000 years ago in 6 periods of 24 hours. Most scientists, both those with a faith and those without, hold that the Earth is slightly older, at around 15.2 Billion years old. The arguments rage, yet it seems to many to be a rather silly thing to argue about. In C.S. Lewis's *The Voyage of the Dawn Treader*, the annoying cousin Eustace says "In our world a star is a huge ball of flaming gas." The response is "Even in your world, my son, that is not what a star is but only what it is made of." Science, perhaps, tells us what the world is made of and how it came to be. Genesis tells us much more about why the world is the way it is.

The first chapter tells us that God made the world, not how he did it, but that it was definitely by his command and that "it was VERY good." The next ten chapters detail the way in which our human selfishness and greed damage and pollute the beautiful world God has made. Be it the disobedience of Adam and Eve, the murder of Abel by his brother Cain, the ways of the world which led to the great flood, the fall of Noah into drunkenness and sin or the arrogance of mankind in building a tower in Babel that would reach up to God, what we see in these words is what we see in our world. Human sin and human greed have damaged the world almost beyond hope.

There would be no hope were it not for a God whose love endures forever - who still remembers how the world was, and who promises to restore it one day. The rest of the bible is the story of that great restoration.

# Key Events - Creation and Pre-History - Genesis 1-11

