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Welcome to the Bible!

The Bible is unique among books. It declares itself to be written by God, the Creator of the universe. This all-powerful God used 40 inspired authors to pen the Scriptures over the course of 1500 years. The Bible is a written history of God's saving grace. From the very first chapter, God sovereignly moves history in a definite direction toward the consummation of all things in the new heavens and the new earth, where His name will be honored for all eternity and His voice obeyed by all the people of the earth.

Even though the Bible is an ancient book, its truths are as relevant today as when they were first written thousands of years ago. Because the Bible is God's revelation to mankind, its principles are timeless, giving answers to every question and need in your life.

It is my desire that the Bare Bones Bible® Handbook will become a tool to acquaint you with God's plan for the ages and enhance your present understanding of the Bible. I pray this handbook will stimulate you to a lifetime of discovering for yourself the amazing truths presented in God’s Word, the Bible.
The Old Testament
The Historical Books

The first 17 books of the Bible trace the history of man from creation through the inception and destruction of the nation of Israel. In the Pentateuch (the first five books of the Bible), Israel is chosen, redeemed, and prepared to enter a promised homeland. The remaining 12 historical books record the conquest of that land, a transition period in which judges ruled over the nation, the formation of the kingdom, and the division of that kingdom into northern (Israel) and southern (Judah) kingdoms, and finally the destruction and captivity of both kingdoms.
Genesis

In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. (1:1)

Theme: Beginnings
Date written: 1445–1405 B.C.
Author: Moses
Setting: Middle East

The Hebrew word for Genesis means “in the beginning,” and that is exactly what Genesis is all about. As the first book of the Bible, Genesis lays out the foundations for everything that is to follow, including the key truths God wants you to know in order to make sense of your life. Throughout the pages of Genesis you experience the awesome power of God in His creation, the righteous judgment of God in the flood sent to punish the sinful disobedience of humanity, and the tender mercy of God in His protection of Noah and his family from the flood. You also witness the wondrous grace of God as He sets in motion His plan to redeem humanity, first through the founding of the nation of Israel, and ultimately through the sending of Jesus Christ. Genesis is filled with key moments that form the very basis of history.

The Skeleton

Chapters 1–2  The Creation

God creates the earth out of nothing, a perfect habitation for Adam and Eve, the first man and woman. He places them in the idyllic Garden of Eden and blesses their relationship.
▼ Chapters 3–5  *The Fall and Its Aftermath*

The perfection of God’s creation is disrupted when Satan tempts Adam and Eve to disobey God and usurp His rule over their lives, trying to become like gods themselves. When they give in to this temptation—referred to as “the fall”—they damage their relationship with God, are driven from the Garden, and must live outside the original blessing God intended for them. (However, even in the midst of this calamity, God is already setting in motion His long-term plan to redeem humanity and bring man back into an intimate relationship with Him.) Following the sin of their original parents, the human race degenerates into violence, wickedness, and self-destruction.

▼ Chapters 6–11  *The Flood and a New Beginning*

In His displeasure with the wickedness of humanity, God determines to destroy man with a worldwide flood. Only Noah (a righteous man) and his family are spared from the devastation. From Noah’s family the earth is repopulated as they spread out and form the first nations.

▼ Chapters 12–25  *The Story of Abraham*

God calls Abraham to leave his home country and travel to a promised land, and tells Abraham he will become the father of His chosen people. To Abraham God gives many promises, one of which is that he—a childless old man—will have many descendants who will form a great nation, a people through whom salvation will come. This promise would be fulfilled in Abraham’s greatest descendant, Jesus Christ.

▼ Chapters 24–28  *The Story of Isaac*

Growing old and still without a child, Abraham begins to despair. But true to God’s promise, Isaac is born to Abraham and his wife Sarah in their old age.

▼ Chapters 28–36  *The Story of Jacob*

Isaac has two sons, Jacob and Esau. Although Isaac favors Esau, the eldest brother, Jacob schemes to secure the privileges of the birthright from his father. In fear of Esau’s anger at being swindled out of his birthright, Jacob is forced to flee for his life. After many adventures, including a mysterious late-night wrestling match with God, Jacob finally matures into the man God intends him to be. God renames him *Israel,*
which means “He who struggles with God,” and Jacob’s 12 sons become the 12 tribes of Israel.

▶ **Chapters 37–50  The Story of Joseph**

Genesis closes with the account of Joseph, the favored son of Jacob, who is tragically sold into slavery into Egypt by his jealous brothers. But God has plans for Joseph and triumphantly establishes him as a leader in Egypt, which makes it possible for Joseph’s family to later settle there with him and survive a devastating seven-year-long famine.

**Putting Meat on the Bones**

In addition to the great events such as the creation of the universe, the fall, the flood, and the founding of Israel, God also wants readers to become acquainted with the individual people who will be a part of His plan for redeeming the human race. The people He chooses are not perfect saints. They are, at times, deeply flawed in character and action. Genesis records that they lie, deceive others, question God, or are excessively proud—but God is able to use them anyway. This is one of the wonderful messages of the book of Genesis: The God who created us is not finished with us. He is in the business of “re-creating” us, giving us new beginnings and helping us become the kind of people He desires us to be.

**Fleshing It Out in Your Life**

Just as with Abraham, Jacob, Joseph, and others in Genesis, God can do great things through weak vessels, including you. By His grace and because of His sovereign plan, your mistakes and shortcomings do not disqualify you from being part of His grand plan, a plan still being worked out in you!

**Life Lessons from Genesis**

▶ God, the unique and sovereign Creator, made you and knows you better than you know yourself.
God created you in His image, as an expression of Himself.

God uses people with feet of clay—the imperfect, the failures, the flawed—to accomplish His will.

God takes evil seriously, and those who reject His love and wisdom will experience His judgment.

God is well able to turn your tragedies into triumphs.

Where to Find It

The story of creation .......................... Genesis 1:1–2:3
The first prophecy about Jesus .............. Genesis 3:15
The account of Noah and the ark ............ Genesis 6:1–8:22
Abraham told to sacrifice his son Isaac .... Genesis 22:1-14
Jacob dreams of the ladder to heaven .......... Genesis 28:10-22
Jacob wrestles with God ..................... Genesis 32:22-32
Joseph interprets Pharaoh’s dreams ........ Genesis 41:1-36

Bare Bones Facts about Abraham

• He was a descendant of Shem, one of Noah’s sons.
• He married his half-sister, Sarah.
• He courageously rescued his nephew Lot by defeating a powerful foe.
• His name was changed by God from Abram to Abraham, meaning “father of multitudes.”
• He was known as a friend of God (2 Chronicles 20:7).
• His many acts of obedience and trust testified to his faith in God.
• He was the father of the Jewish and Arabic nations.
• He lived 175 years.