

Bereshit (בראשית) – In the Beginning

Bereshit, (בראשית) is the Hebrew name of the first book of the Bible, the *Torah* and the *TNK* (Hebrew Scriptures.) It is also the first word of the first scroll of the Hebrew text, as well as the name for the first *parasha*.

HaAretz VeEt HaShamayim Et Elohim Bara Bereshit
בְּרֵאשִׁית בָּרָא אֱלֹהִים אֶת הַשָּׁמַיִם וְאֶת הָאָרֶץ:

“In the beginning Elohim created the heaven and the earth. And the earth was without form, and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep. And the Ruach Elohim moved upon the face of the waters.” (Genesis 1:1-2)

Bereshit is actually a compound word comprised of two Hebrew words: ב the preposition meaning “in” and שׂר the root which means "beginning." Hence, the title for the first book of the *Torah* means "in the beginning" and, thus, indicates to us that the book describes the beginnings of things.

Another ancient Hebrew name for the first book of the *Torah* is *Sefer Maaseh Bereshit*, the “*Book of Creation*.” The English name, “*Genesis*,” is derived from the *Septuagint* (*LXX*), which is the first known translation of the Hebrew Bible into another language, in this case Greek. It was accomplished around 250 BCE by a committee of seventy rabbis in Egypt. The *LXX* employs the Greek word “*genesis*” which literally means “*origins*” as the title for this book. Hence the Greek/English title also speaks of creation or beginnings. This is the first book of the *Torah*, which is also called the *Pentateuch* from *penta* which is Greek for five and *teuchos* which means tools. The *Torah* was written by *Moshe Rabeinu*.

Biblical scholars have noted a pattern within *Bereshit* itself that apparently *Moshe Rabeinu* intended to use to indicate his own divisions within the book. These indications usually take the form of the phrase “these are the generations of” which in Hebrew is the word *tol’dot* (תולדות). This word suggests a movement from starting point to a finishing point, from a cause to an effect, from a progenitor to a progeny (a key individual in *Elohim*’s plan).

1. Everyone and everything has a beginning — Everyone except Elohim.

¹*In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with Elohim, and the Word was Elohim.* ²*He was with Elohim in the beginning.* ³*All things came to be through him, and without him nothing made had being.* ⁴*In him was life, and the life was the light of mankind.* ⁵*The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not suppressed (comprehended, NASB) it. (John 1:1-5)*

Elohim (a Hebrew plural masculine word literally meaning “*unique deities*” which is only used in the context of the Eternal (יהוה) did not come from anything. He has always been. He is completely self-sufficient depending on no one outside of Himself. Yet He chose to create. In His Sovereignty He chose to create the world, He chose to create us. We did not choose to be born. He gave the command...that is ultimately why we are here!

א בְּרֵאשִׁית הָיָה הַדְּבָר וְהַדְּבָר הָיָה אֶת-הָאֱלֹהִים וְהוּא
הַדְּבָר הָיָה אֱלֹהִים:
ב הוּא הָיָה מְרֵאשִׁית אֶת-הָאֱלֹהִים:
ג כָּל-הַמַּעֲשִׂים נִהְיוּ עַל-יָדוֹ וְאֵין דְּבָר אֲשֶׁר נִעְשָׂה
מִבְּלַעַדָּיו:
ד בּוֹ נִמְצָא חַיִּים וְהַחַיִּים הֵם אוֹר הָאֲדָמָה:
ה וְהָאוֹר זָרַח בַּחֹשֶׁךְ וְהַחֹשֶׁךְ לֹא יְכַלְנֵנו:

2. Bereshit — In summary the Book of Four Events and Four People

The following summary from Walk-Thru-the-Bible ministry gives a concise summary of the first book of the Torah, and it is easily memorized.

FOUR EVENTS					FOUR PEOPLE			
CREATION	FALL	FLOOD	NATIONS		ABRAHAM	ISAAC	JACOB	JOSEPH
Ch. 1-2	Ch. 3-5	Ch. 6-9	Ch. 10-11		Ch. 12-25	Ch. 26-27	Ch. 28-36	Ch. 37-50
The beginning of the human race				Beginnings	The beginning of the chosen race			
Confusion and scattering				Result	Bondage in Egypt			
Primeval history				History	Patriarchal History			
Over 2,000 years				Chronology	Approximately 300 years			
“The seed of the woman”				Emphasis	<i>Malki-Tzedek, B’rit, Beth-El, Azazel/Akeidah, Savior</i>			
1:1	5:1	6:9	10:1	Keys	11:10	11:27	25:12	37:2

3. The Toledot Breakdown of the Book

Genesis 1:1-2:4	The history/origin of the universe
Genesis 2:5-5:2	The history/origin of Adam/mankind
Genesis 5:3-6:9a	The history/origin of Noah
Genesis 6:9b-10:1	The history/origin of Noah’s sons
Genesis 10:2-11:10a	The history/origin of Shem
Genesis 11:10b-27a	The history/origin of Terah
Genesis 11:27b-25:12	The history/origin of Ishmael
Genesis 25:13-19a	The history/origin of Isaac
Genesis 25:19b-26:1	The history/origin of Esau and Jacob

4. A Basic Two Point Thematic Outline of Bereshit

Genesis 1:1-11:32	<p>The Beginning of Mankind</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> I. The Beginning of Creation, Chapter 1 II. The Beginning of People, Chapter 2 III. The Beginning of Sin, Chapter 3 IV. The Beginning of Human Conflict, Chapter 4 V. The Multiplication of Mankind, Chapter 5 VI. The Judgment Against Sinful Mankind, Chapters 6-8 VII. The Covenant with <i>Noach</i>, Chapter 9 VIII. Division into Nations and Languages, Chapter 10-11
Genesis 12:1-50:26	<p>The Beginning of Our Jewish People</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A. Abraham — Chapters 12-20 B. Isaac — Chapters 21-26 C. Jacob — Chapters 27-36 D. Joseph — Chapters 37-50

5. A Basic Geographical Outline of Bereshit

Genesis 1:1-50:26	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I. <i>Gan Eden</i> — Chapters 1-3 II. Mesopotamia — Chapters 4-11 III. Canaan — Chapters 12-36 IV. Egypt — Chapters 37-50
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6. The Hidden Messages in the Hebrew Name of the First Book of the Torah

The name of the second letter of the Hebrew alphabet is *beit* (בית), which means *house*. This word is found in several Hebrew names, such as בית-אל (*Bethel*, “House of El”), and בית-לחם (*Bethlehem*, House of bread). Even the shape of the letter depicts a floor, ceiling, wall and doorway of a house. Since the name and form of *beit* (ב) represent a house, in several ways in it symbolizes a dwelling place:

1. *Yeshua*, in Whom the *fullness of Elohim dwells*
2. The Bible & *Torah*, in which dwells *Elohim's Word* to mankind
3. The creation itself, the present dwelling place of mankind.

א

בראשית

בראשית ברא אלהים את השמים ואת הארץ

Notice how the first *Beit* (ב) is printed oversized in the *Torah* Scroll — the only oversized *Beit* (ב) in the entire *Torah*. It is as if *Elohim* was saying “*I am housing for you something very special, Torah, the words of life itself.*” Indeed, *Torah is life and a Tree of Life (Etz Chayim)*”:

עץ חיים היא למחזיקים בה, ותמכיה מאשר. דרכיה דרכי נעם,
וכל נתיבותיה שלום. השיבנו יי, אליו ונשובה, חדש ימינו כקדם.

A tree of life it is for those who take hold of it, and blessed are the ones who support it. Its ways are ways of pleasantness, and all its paths are peace. Bring us back to You, Adonai, and we shall come, renew our days as the days of old. (Long life is in its right hand, in its left are riches and honor. Adonai was pleased for the sake of His righteousness, to render the Torah great and glorious.)

If we divide the Hebrew word *Bereshit* into its root *Rosh* then what is left is the word *Beit*. *Rosh* literally means head and, of course, *Beit* we know means house. *Bereshit* is thus, the House of the Head, or the Head of the House. We know *Torah* is the House of the Wisdom of *El* and we also know *Yeshua* is the Head of the House. Do you see the connection? Since *Beit* follows *Aleph* in the Hebrew alphabet, notice the pointed nature of the letter in the Torah (ב). One points toward א the other points toward heaven. *Beit* is the house of *Aleph* which is in heaven, the house of *Yeshua*, the *Word* made flesh.

7. The key verse “Enmity between Satan & Y’shua, born of a woman” Redemption & Future Hope

“And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel.” (Gen 3:15)

8. The key attribute of *Elohim*: Our *Elohim* is Sovereign

Where is man in the beginning? Man does not even appear on the scene until the 6th day. Does our *Elohim* really need man? Consider His own words: “*If I were hungry, I would not tell you; for the world is mine, and everything in it.*” (*Ps 50:12*) What then does *Elohim* expect from us? Again, His own words answer the question for us: “¹²*Now, Israel, what does יהוה your Elohim require from you, but to fear יהוה your Elohim, to walk in all His ways and love Him, and to serve יהוה your Elohim with all your heart and with all your soul,* ¹³*and to keep the יהוה’s commandments and His statutes which I am commanding you today for your good?* ¹⁴*Behold, to יהוה your Elohim belong heaven*

and the highest heavens, the earth and all that is in it. ¹⁵Yet on your fathers did יהוה set His affection to love them, and He chose their descendants after them, even you above all peoples, as it is this day. ¹⁶So circumcise your heart, and stiffen your neck no longer. ¹⁷For the יהוה your Elohim is the יהוה your Elohim of gods and Adonai of lords, the great, the mighty, and the awesome Elohim who does not show partiality nor take a bribe. ¹⁸He executes justice for the orphan and the widow, and shows His love for the alien by giving him food and clothing. ¹⁹So show your love for the alien, for you were aliens in the land of Egypt. ²⁰You shall fear יהוה your Elohim; you shall serve Him and cling to Him, and you shall swear by His name. ²¹He is your praise and He is your Elohim, who has done these great and awesome things for you which your eyes have seen.’ (Deut 10:12-21). He then reminds us: “¹⁴Offer to Elohim a sacrifice of thanksgiving and pay your vows to the Most High; ¹⁵Call upon Me in the day of trouble; I shall rescue you, and you will honor Me.” (Ps 50:14-15)

9. The key element of humanity: ruin & rebellion through sin

“⁸They heard the sound of יהוה Elohim walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and the man and his wife hid themselves from the presence of יהוה Elohim among the trees of the garden. ⁹Then יהוה Elohim called to the man, and said to him, ‘Where are you?’ ¹⁰He said, ‘I heard the sound of You in the garden, and I was afraid because I was naked; so I hid myself.’ ¹¹And He said, ‘Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten from the tree of which I commanded you not to eat?’ ¹²The man said, ‘The woman whom You gave to be with me, she gave me from the tree, and I ate.’ ¹³Then יהוה Elohim said to the woman, ‘What is this you have done?’ And the woman said, ‘The serpent deceived me, and I ate.’ ¹⁴יהוה Elohim said to the serpent, ‘Because you have done this, Cursed are you more than all cattle, And more than every beast of the field; On your belly you will go, And dust you will eat All the days of your life; ¹⁵And I will put enmity Between you and the woman, And between your seed and her seed; He shall bruise you on the head, And you shall bruise him on the heel.’ ¹⁶To the woman He said, ‘I will greatly multiply Your pain in childbirth, In pain you will bring forth children; Yet your desire will be for your husband, And he will rule over you.’ ¹⁷Then to Adam He said, ‘Because you have listened to the voice of your wife, and have eaten from the tree about which I commanded you, saying, ‘You shall not eat from it’; Cursed is the ground because of you; In toil you will eat of it All the days of your life. ¹⁸Both thorns and thistles it shall grow for you; And you will eat the plants of the field; ¹⁹By the sweat of your face You will eat bread, Till you return to the ground, Because from it you were taken; For you are dust, And to dust you shall return.” (Gen 3:8-19)

Was it necessary to sin? Is it necessary now? How about you young people, is it necessary for you to experience sin in your life? Is man’s curiosity about sin justified? What did Elohim say? “Then יהוה Elohim said, ‘Behold, the man has become like one of Us, knowing good and evil; and now, he might stretch out his hand, and take also from the tree of life, and eat, and live forever’” (Gen 3:22). It is clear from this account that Elohim did not intend (and does not want us today) to become intimate (to know intimately) in both good and evil. He only wants us to know intimately the good! By the way the word translated to know is the Hebrew infinitive *LaDa-at* (לָדַעַת), from the verb *yodea* which means to be intimate or to have sexual relations. Adonai does not want us to be intimate with Satan or with sin, He wants us to be intimate only with Him!

If you want to be happy and lead a prosperous life, keep Torah! Amen!

♪ Señor Tú nos has sido refugio, de generación en generación. Antes que naciesen los montes, y formases la tierra y el mundo, desde el siglo y hasta el siglo Tú eres Dios. ♪ (Psalm 90:1-2)

יהוה, thou hast been our dwelling place in all generations. Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever thou hadst formed the earth and the world, even from everlasting to everlasting, thou art Elohim. (Psalm 90:1-2)