

Creation Story

The creation story in the book of Genesis is generally understood by modern biblical scholars to be a composite of at least two main sources, written at different times:

1. **The Priestly (P) Source:** This source is believed to be responsible for the first creation account, found in **Genesis 1:1 up to the first sentence of Genesis 2:4**. This is the more structured, seven-day creation account. The P source is generally dated to the **6th century BCE**, during or shortly after the Babylonian exile. It emphasizes God's transcendence, order, and the Sabbath.
2. **The Yahwist (J) Source:** This source is primarily responsible for the second creation account, beginning from **Genesis 2:4b onwards** (the story of Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden). This account often uses the divine name YHWH (Yahweh) and has a more anthropomorphic portrayal of God. The J source is commonly dated earlier, to the **10th or 9th century BCE**, during the period of the United Monarchy or early divided monarchy in Israel.

These two distinct creation narratives, along with other material, were later combined by editors (redactors) to form the book of Genesis as we know it today. The final compilation of the Pentateuch, including these creation stories, is generally thought to have been completed in the **Persian period (5th-4th century BCE)**.

So, while the stories themselves recount events from the very beginning of time, the *writing* of these stories occurred much later, reflecting the theological and historical concerns of the ancient Israelites at the time of their composition.