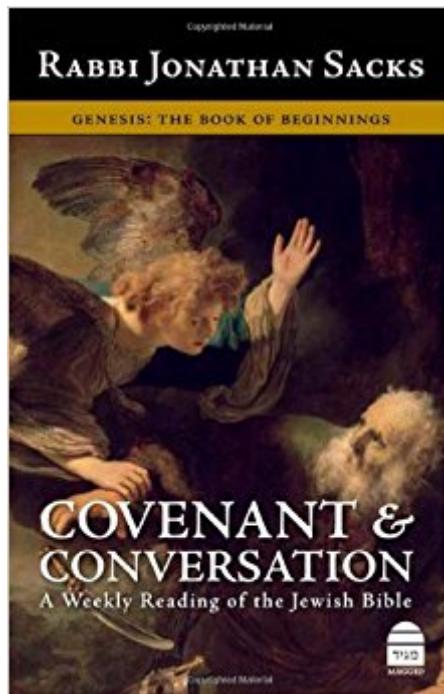


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# Covenant & Conversation Genesis: The Book Of Beginnings



## **Synopsis**

The Torah is an encounter between past and present, moment and eternity, that frames Jewish consciousness. In this first volume of a five-volume collection of parashat hashavua, Rabbi Sir Jonathan Sacks explores these intersections as they relate to universal concerns of freedom, love, responsibility, identity and destiny. Rabbi Sacks fuses Jewish tradition, Western philosophy and literature to present a highly developed understanding of the human condition under God's sovereignty. Erudite and eloquent, *Covenant & Conversation* allows us to experience Rabbi Sacks sophisticated approach to life lived in an ongoing dialogue with the Torah. Winner of the National Jewish Book Award, 2009.

## **Book Information**

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## **Customer Reviews**

...a compilation of masterful derashot by Rabbi Sir Jonathan Sacks on the parashiyot in Be-Reshit, both relating them to life and relating life to the Torah. --Kol HaMevaser, The Jewish Thought Magazine of Yeshiva University *Covenant & Conversation* is not just another book on the Parasha. It is an intellectual and philosophical journey through the underpinnings of our faith and the origins of our people. The essays based on the weekly Torah portion are challenging, thought provoking, and relevant. Rabbi Sacks has a unique ability to impart to his audience an authentic appreciation for the breadth and depth of the wisdom of our Torah. --Rabbi Steven Weil, Orthodox Union Sacks is both a great scholar and a great communicator, and he has done a superb job in crafting commentary than

is at the same time erudite and accessible to the average reader...Sacks calls on the wisdom of ancient commentators and modern scholars alike as he takes readers on their weekly journey through the Torah. --The Jewish StandardSacks is both a great scholar and a great communicator, and he has done a superb job in crafting commentary than is at the same time erudite and accessible to the average reader...Sacks calls on the wisdom of ancient commentators and modern scholars alike as he takes readers on their weekly journey through the Torah. --The Jewish Standard...a compilation of masterful derashot by Rabbi Sir Jonathan Sacks on the parashiyot in Be-Reshit, both relating them to life and relating life to the Torah. --Kol HaMevaser, The Jewish Thought Magazine of Yeshiva UniversitySacks is both a great scholar and a great communicator, and he has done a superb job in crafting commentary than is at the same time erudite and accessible to the average reader...Sacks calls on the wisdom of ancient commentators and modern scholars alike as he takes readers on their weekly journey through the Torah. --The Jewish Standard...a compilation of masterful derashot by Rabbi Sir Jonathan Sacks on the parashiyot in Be-Reshit, both relating them to life and relating life to the Torah. --Kol HaMevaser, The Jewish Thought Magazine of Yeshiva University

Rabbi Sir Jonathan Sacks, Chief Rabbi of the United Hebrew Congregations of the British Commonwealth, is one of the world's leading Jewish figures. Educated at Cambridge University and Jews College London, he has served as Principal of Jews College London and President of the Council of Christians and Jews in the United Kingdom. Chief Rabbi Sacks is the author of numerous books of Jewish thought, and recently provided the English translation and commentary for The Koren Sacks Siddur, the first new Orthodox prayer book in a generation.

Great read! Rabbi Sacks is an excellent writer making complex ideas clear and easy to digest. "Genesis" is about the first book of the Torah (and Bible), which is the building block for all the other books. I should say that this is the first book in a series of five books on the old testament. Sacks is writing these books as a base for conversation. That is to say, you read a little and then discuss the information with others reading the book. I am reading this with two other people and love how Sacks brings out the connection between Genesis and the family of man. We are after all one global community. I am learning about Judaism in the process, really lovely, engaging and clearly presented. If you are interested in learning about Judaism or exploring the book of Genesis, Sacks writing is modern and enlightening.

My rabbi tells me that Exodus is the book that begins the story of the Jewish people. So why did the authorities place Genesis first in the Tanach? I found the answer in this book. According to Rabbi Sacks: "By placing the stories of Genesis before the book of Exodus, with its story for the birth of the Israelites as a nation, the Torah is implicitly telling us of the primacy of the personal over the political." Exodus is the one big story of the birth of a people, but Genesis full of little stories of one person after another. Adam, Abraham, Jonah, Jacob, Joseph... they all take their moment in the spotlight then move offstage to make room for the next person to tell his story. This extremely readable book takes each parasha in turn and looks at its relevance to our lives today. I look forward to its companion essays on Leviticus.

This is one of the most exciting books I have ever read, I love the questions raised by the author and the unique advantage point he brings to the discussion. Everything by Jonathan Sacks is outstanding and intriguing. I hope he finishes the 5 books of the Pentatuch. I read Exodus and it was good but I really loved the Genesis discussion. I finally had to buy it -- I had borrowed it from the Holocaust Library in St. Louis and also asked a local library to purchase it and read it then, but now I live in Virginia and there was no way to borrow it again! Christians will love it -- I sat with my Bible and pen and made notes in it. Best of all it sparks a new way to look at material we have all read 100 times before! Thank you, Jonathan Sacks -- live long and prosper!

I highly recommend this book. It's a good addition to reading this parsha/weekly portion of the torah. This book covers the weekly torah readings for Genesis. Rabbi Sacks finds four different short essays (about 3-5 pages per essay). They are interesting analysis of the week's parsha and examine the stories from a new perspective, one you may have not thought of. Because they are essays, it allows you to spend enough time to develop a thought. I suggest you purchase this in conjunction with the weekly torah portion (he has a book for each book of the torah). While Rabbi Sacks is an Orthodox rabbi, I would suggest that his words would resonate with conservative and reform Jews. Rabbi Sacks is definitely one of the most profound Jewish thinkers in our lifetime. This is a book you should read. The book is also made of good paper stock, has a nicely designed cover and looks nice in a library.

Can't say enough about the insights given in this book. It has really made me think about seemingly surface events in Torah, that had been overlooked from the aspects provided. Deeper meanings have cleared up some misconceptions and others have added a fuller, richer dimension to studying.

The author, without even knowing he has done this: has provided some proofs for further concepts not taught in mainstream Judaism or Christianity about the Sabbath and how important it is to a fuller understanding of the Word. Any serious Bible student should have these books in their libraries.

Brilliant, short analyses of the weekly portions. Sacks' perspective is comparative across several "parshiyot" -- showing connections between different parts of the Bible. Great for the traditional Orthodox AND also for those less so.

Each section of the book, covering the weekly reading of the Jewish Bible, consists of 4 short essays, some focusing more on literary analysis, some on major psychological, historical points etc. The strength of this book is its accessibility to those who have great knowledge of the text and those who don't. His essays often bring together the bigger picture in a way that reading the actual text can not always do. I am currently studying in a Orthodox Yeshiva (Jewish Academy) and weekly one of our head Rabbis give a lecture on the weekly reading and it's clear that Rabbi Sacks is bringing unique views supported by many commentaries and can bring something new even to those learning these texts for a living, like me. An important note is that the book will give the most benefit to those who have a familiarity with the details of the stories, as well as some familiarity with the text itself, but a quick read online of most translations or even a wikipedia summary would help and enhance the read of the book. Another small criticism I have is that at time Rabbi Sacks deals closely with the text but at times he makes very broad claims based on major scientific and psychological finds and only ties them together, sometimes loosely, at the end of the mini essay, and then later he refers to his claim as though it were the most obvious thing in the world. However, the ultimate point he is trying to make is often refreshing, beautiful, and rarely ever more overreaching than the claims of many classical Jewish commentators. A worthwhile read I recommend to Jew and non-Jew alike.

I have just bought the book and got through up until Abraham. Now, taking a break, I want to take a second to vouch for this excellent and insightful commentary. Rabbi Sacks writes eloquently and succinctly, not to mention the commentary, which is terrific!! as a Christian who is half-Jewish by birth, am very grateful I have found this. Truly a gem!

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