

NEW INTERNATIONAL VERSION

THE
GRACE AND TRUTH
STUDY BIBLE



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NIV, The Grace and Truth Study Bible
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OLD TESTAMENT

Genesis	1	Ecclesiastes	883
Exodus	76	Song of Songs	896
Leviticus	131	Isaiah	906
Numbers	167	Jeremiah	999
Deuteronomy	219	Lamentations	1090
Joshua	263	Ezekiel	1101
Judges	295	Daniel	1167
Ruth	328	Hosea	1188
1 Samuel	335	Joel	1204
2 Samuel	379	Amos	1211
1 Kings	418	Obadiah	1224
2 Kings	465	Jonah	1227
1 Chronicles	507	Micah	1232
2 Chronicles	550	Nahum	1242
Ezra	592	Habakkuk	1248
Nehemiah	609	Zephaniah	1253
Esther	629	Haggai	1258
Job	641	Zechariah	1263
Psalms	688	Malachi	1278
Proverbs	838		

NEW TESTAMENT

Matthew	1287	1 Timothy	1675
Mark	1345	2 Timothy	1684
Luke	1383	Titus	1691
John	1439	Philemon	1697
Acts	1486	Hebrews	1700
Romans	1540	James	1723
1 Corinthians	1570	1 Peter	1732
2 Corinthians	1599	2 Peter	1744
Galatians	1617	1 John	1752
Ephesians	1628	2 John	1763
Philippians	1641	3 John	1766
Colossians	1652	Jude	1769
1 Thessalonians	1661	Revelation	1774
2 Thessalonians	1670		

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ALPHABETICAL ORDER OF THE BOOKS OF THE BIBLE

The books of the New Testament are indicated by italics.

<i>Acts</i>	1486	Judges	295
Amos	1211	1 Kings	418
1 Chronicles	507	2 Kings	465
2 Chronicles	550	Lamentations	1090
<i>Colossians</i>	1652	Leviticus	131
<i>1 Corinthians</i>	1570	<i>Luke</i>	1383
<i>2 Corinthians</i>	1599	Malachi	1278
Daniel	1167	<i>Mark</i>	1345
Deuteronomy	219	<i>Matthew</i>	1287
Ecclesiastes	883	Micah	1232
<i>Ephesians</i>	1628	Nahum	1242
Esther	629	Nehemiah	609
Exodus	76	Numbers	167
Ezekiel	1101	Obadiah	1224
Ezra	592	<i>1 Peter</i>	1732
<i>Galatians</i>	1617	<i>2 Peter</i>	1744
Genesis	1	<i>Philemon</i>	1697
Habakkuk	1248	<i>Philippians</i>	1641
Haggai	1258	Proverbs	838
<i>Hebrews</i>	1700	Psalms	688
Hosea	1188	<i>Revelation</i>	1774
Isaiah	906	<i>Romans</i>	1540
<i>James</i>	1723	Ruth	328
Jeremiah	999	1 Samuel	335
Job	641	2 Samuel	379
Joel	1204	Song of Songs	896
<i>John</i>	1439	<i>1 Thessalonians</i>	1661
<i>1 John</i>	1752	<i>2 Thessalonians</i>	1670
<i>2 John</i>	1763	<i>1 Timothy</i>	1675
<i>3 John</i>	1766	<i>2 Timothy</i>	1684
Jonah	1227	<i>Titus</i>	1691
Joshua	263	Zechariah	1263
<i>Jude</i>	1769	Zephaniah	1253

ABBREVIATIONS AND TRANSLITERATIONS

ABBREVIATIONS

General

c	<i>century</i>	etc.	<i>and so on</i>	NT	<i>New Testament</i>
c.	<i>about, approximately</i>	i.e.	<i>that is</i>	OT	<i>Old Testament</i>
cf.	<i>compare, confer</i>	KJV	<i>King James (Authorized Version)</i>	p., pp.	<i>page, pages</i>
ch., chs.	<i>chapter, chapters</i>	lit.	<i>literally, literal</i>	v., vv.	<i>verse, verses</i>
e.g.	<i>for example</i>				

The Old Testament

Genesis	Ge	Ecclesiastes	Ecc
Exodus	Ex	Song of Songs	SS
Leviticus	Lev	Isaiah	Isa
Numbers	Nu	Jeremiah	Jer
Deuteronomy	Dt	Lamentations	La
Joshua	Jos	Ezekiel	Eze
Judges	Jdg	Daniel	Da
Ruth	Ru	Hosea	Hos
1 Samuel	1Sa	Joel	Joel
2 Samuel	2Sa	Amos	Am
1 Kings	1Ki	Obadiah	Ob
2 Kings	2Ki	Jonah	Jnh
1 Chronicles	1Ch	Micah	Mic
2 Chronicles	2Ch	Nahum	Na
Ezra	Ezr	Habakkuk	Hab
Nehemiah	Ne	Zephaniah	Zep
Esther	Est	Haggai	Hag
Job	Job	Zechariah	Zec
Psalms	Ps	Malachi	Mal
Proverbs	Pr		

The New Testament

Matthew	Mt	1 Peter	1Pe
Mark	Mk	2 Peter	2Pe
Luke	Lk	1 John	1Jn
John	Jn	2 John	2Jn
Acts	Ac	3 John	3Jn
Romans	Ro	Jude	Jude
1 Corinthians	1Co	Revelation	Rev
2 Corinthians	2Co		
Galatians	Gal		
Ephesians	Eph		
Philippians	Php		
Colossians	Col		
1 Thessalonians	1Th		
2 Thessalonians	2Th		
1 Timothy	1Ti		
2 Timothy	2Ti		
Titus	Titus		
Philemon	Phm		
Hebrews	Heb		
James	Jas		

TRANSLITERATIONS

A simplified system has been used for transliterating words from ancient Biblical languages into English. The only transliterations calling for comment are these:

Transliteration	Pronunciation
ʾ	Glottal stop
h	Similar to the “ch” in the German word <i>Buch</i>
t	Similar to the “t” in the verb “tear”
ʿ	Similar to the glottal stop
š	Similar to the “ts” in “hits”
ś	Similar to the “s” in “sing”

QUICK START GUIDE

What is The Grace and Truth Study Bible?

The *NIV Grace and Truth Study Bible* is an all new study Bible built by a team of scholars and pastors committed to delivering a trustworthy and approachable guide to Scripture to Bible readers. Unwavering in its commitment to evangelical steadfastness, this study Bible paints a stunning canvas of the goodness of God's redemptive plan revealed in the gospel of Jesus Christ.

What is a study Bible?

A study Bible contains the full text of the Bible, along with a library of study features that help the reader more completely grasp and understand what the text is saying. The study notes introduce and explain a wide variety of background information related to the biblical text, providing deeper insights for individuals who are ready to devote themselves to study of the text.

What do the features of this study Bible offer me?

Book introductions: Each book of the Bible has a “book introduction” that offers helpful information about that book of the Bible. The book introductions in this Bible give an overview of the book and provide helpful information to the reader.

Cross reference system: Where does this word or term appear in other parts of the Bible? A cross reference system gives you the ability to search the Scriptures for ideas and themes that reappear as terms are used in various books.

Study notes: What is the Bible saying here? God's Word was written down many years ago by different authors in in different settings. The study notes at the bottom of each page help explain or give background on words, phrases, and the flow of the argument to aid you in greater understanding of what God is saying in his Word. Each note was thoughtfully crafted to guide you to more clearly understanding the Word of God.

Concordance: A concordance to the New International Version text is located at the back of the Bible. It will help you find the location of words or phrases that are found in the Scripture text.

Maps: Fourteen full-color maps at the end of this study Bible help readers to visualize the geographic context of what they are studying. The maps are supplemented by a complete map index.

*“All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting
and training in righteousness, so that the servant of God may
be thoroughly equipped for every good work”*

(2 Timothy 3:16–17).



THE GRACE AND TRUTH STUDY BIBLE: INTRODUCTION

God has given his children many good gifts, but the gift of his Word is among the most precious of all. The fact that God has spoken to us is breathtaking. He shows his love for us in speaking to us and giving us the Bible, so that we may know him. The Bible is God's self-revelation, and in its pages we have all that we need in order to know God, to know Christ, to know the Good News of the Gospel, and to know how we are to live as God's people.

So, where you find Christians, you find them reading and studying the Bible. *The Grace and Truth Study Bible* is intended to help Christians read God's Word, understand it, and develop a constant hunger to know more and more biblical truth. Every note, every explanation, is intended to help the reader understand the Word of God. It is designed so that you can read it at home, take it to Bible study and church, and know it for many rewarding years as a constant companion.

Grace and truth are two of the most wonderful words found in the Bible. Grace is the love God shows us despite our sin, and truth is the very foundation of our faith. Christianity is not defined only by beliefs but by eternal truths. Of course, grace and truth reveal God's own character, ultimately revealed to us in Jesus Christ, the Son, who is "full of grace and truth" (Jn 1:14). These two words summarize biblical theology, and they are fitting as the name of this study Bible. Our hope is that readers of the Bible will learn to see grace and truth revealed on every page of God's Word.

The Bible is an unfolding story that begins with the creation of the world and ends with the promise of God's ultimate glory in the kingdom of Christ. Starting with Genesis and ending with Revelation, the Bible contains book after book that unveil the history of God's people and his purposes, bringing spiritual instruction to the reader. *The Grace and Truth Study Bible* contains helps and added material that are designed to maximize understanding. This study Bible will benefit new believers who are looking to understand the Christian faith for the first time, and it will help maturing Christians who are eager to dig deeper into biblical truth.

This entire project, and each of the writers and editors involved, is committed to the complete truthfulness and trustworthiness of the Bible. We believe that the Bible is verbally inspired, inerrant, infallible, and perfect. We affirm historic Christian orthodox teaching. This project is graciously evangelical, Reformed, and complementarian. Our hope is to serve Christians and the church. Every contributor to this project is a personal student of God's Word, as well as a scholar. In *The Grace and Truth Study Bible*, we are learning the Holy Scriptures together.

In the Old Testament, we see God's sovereignty and power in creation, the special creation of human beings made in God's image. We learn of our fall into sin and see God's loving determination to redeem sinful humanity. We learn of patriarchs and matriarchs in the faith and witness God's covenant love as he chooses Israel. God establishes his law, and then we meet prophets and kings and the consummate promise of a coming King and Messiah and Savior. In the

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New Testament we find the greatest good news of all: the Savior has come, Jesus Christ the Lord. We learn of the ministry of Jesus, hear him teach, and witness his fulfillment of all that the prophets foretold. We learn of Christ's death, burial, resurrection from the dead, and ascension to the Father, and we hear the apostles preach the gospel to the world for the very first time. We learn how to know Christ as our own Lord and Savior and how to live as Christians. The church is taught in truth and in the sure and certain hope of God's everlasting promises.

Every feature of this study Bible is intended to help readers see more, learn more, know more, and understand more of God's Word, in order that we will be more faithful in following Christ. Our greatest hope is that readers who are not yet believers in Jesus Christ will find him in these pages, trust him with their whole heart, confess him as the Christ, know him as Savior, follow him as Lord, repent of their sins, and receive God's forgiveness and the gift of life everlasting.

May the God of all glory, grace, and truth bless every reader of his Word and open our eyes to see. And may *The Grace and Truth Study Bible* serve to glorify God and edify the church. That is our fervent hope.

Now, join the great adventure and start reading the Word of God.

R. Albert Mohler, Jr.,
General Editor

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

A study Bible of this scale and vision requires a massive team marked by deep commitment to the project from the very beginning. It is my privilege to recognize some key members of this outstanding team, without whom this study Bible would not exist. We have worked together seamlessly and with a spirit of joy.

An early step was to find just the right Old and New Testament editors, and we found them in James M. Hamilton and Benjamin L. Merkle. Both are outstanding scholars and teachers of the Bible, and they proposed a team of equally committed scholars of the Bible to write the project, book by book. They supervised the process of writing, ensured the quality and theological faithfulness of every note, and maintained our momentum. To both of them we owe a tremendous debt of gratitude. Through this project, their lifelong commitment to teaching the Bible is extended, and we are the richer for it.

Mitchell Chase, a most remarkable pastor and scholar, gave much of his life to this project as Managing Editor. It would not have happened without him. Throughout the project, his pastoral and academic skills were on full display. I am incredibly thankful for him.

Dallas Goebel and Joshua Hutchens served as Theological Reviewers for the Old and New Testaments, and their skills and commitment are reflected throughout the project.

The team at HarperCollins Christian, Zondervan, has been remarkable. Their vision for the project is a reflection of their own commitment to the publication of God's Word and resources that will help God's people. In particular, I want to thank John Kramp and Melinda Bouma for their leadership and guidance, and Shari Vanden Berg for her expertise and editorial care. The skills of Natalie Block as copyeditor are revealed in the precision and care apparent on every page.

Book by book through the Bible, 42 wonderful teachers of God's Word contributed to this project. Each of them took time from other pursuits to join in this effort, bringing their pastoral, biblical, and theological skills to this study Bible. Without them, this study Bible would not exist. With them, we shared the joy of helping God's people to understand the Bible more deeply. I am thankful for every one of them.

Ultimately, a project like this is a labor of love and devotion that finds its fulfillment only when it is used. Our hope and prayer is that every labor invested in this study Bible will mean that readers will grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. That will be enough.

Finally, we pray that all glory will be to the Triune God, whose Scripture we love and treasure. May God bless this study Bible so that it serves his people, not only in this generation, but for generations to come. To the everlasting glory of his name, that is our prayer.

R. Albert Mohler, Jr.,
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PREFACE

The goal of the New International Version (NIV) is to enable English-speaking people from around the world to read and hear God's eternal Word in their own language. Our work as translators is motivated by our conviction that the Bible is God's Word in written form. We believe that the Bible contains the divine answer to the deepest needs of humanity, sheds unique light on our path in a dark world and sets forth the way to our eternal well-being. Out of these deep convictions, we have sought to recreate as far as possible the experience of the original audience—blending transparency to the original text with accessibility for the millions of English speakers around the world. We have prioritized accuracy, clarity and literary quality with the goal of creating a translation suitable for public and private reading, evangelism, teaching, preaching, memorizing and liturgical use. We have also sought to preserve a measure of continuity with the long tradition of translating the Scriptures into English.

The complete NIV Bible was first published in 1978. It was a completely new translation made by over a hundred scholars working directly from the best available Hebrew, Aramaic and Greek texts. The translators came from the United States, Great Britain, Canada, Australia and New Zealand, giving the translation an international scope. They were from many denominations and churches—including Anglican, Assemblies of God, Baptist, Brethren, Christian Reformed, Church of Christ, Evangelical Covenant, Evangelical Free, Lutheran, Mennonite, Methodist, Nazarene, Presbyterian, Wesleyan and others. This breadth of denominational and theological perspective helped to safeguard the translation from sectarian bias. For these reasons, and by the grace of God, the NIV has gained a wide readership in all parts of the English-speaking world.

The work of translating the Bible is never finished. As good as they are, English translations must be regularly updated so that they will continue to communicate accurately the meaning of God's Word. Updates are needed in order to reflect the latest developments in our understanding of the biblical world and its languages and to keep pace with changes in English usage. Recognizing, then, that the NIV would retain its ability to communicate God's Word accurately only if it were regularly updated, the original translators established the Committee on Bible Translation (CBT). The Committee is a self-perpetuating group of biblical scholars charged with keeping abreast of advances in biblical scholarship and changes in English and issuing periodic updates to the NIV. The CBT is an independent, self-governing body and has sole responsibility for the NIV text. The Committee mirrors the original group of translators in its diverse international and denominational makeup and in its unifying commitment to the Bible as God's inspired Word.

In obedience to its mandate, the Committee has issued periodic updates to the NIV. An initial revision was released in 1984. A more thorough revision process was completed in 2005, resulting in the separately published TNIV. The updated NIV you now have in your hands builds on both the original NIV and the TNIV and represents the latest effort of the Committee to articulate God's unchanging Word in the way the original authors might have said it had they been speaking in English to the global English-speaking audience today.

Translation Philosophy

The Committee's translating work has been governed by three widely accepted principles about the way people use words and about the way we understand them.

XIV ◆◆ PREFACE

First, the meaning of words is determined by the way that users of the language actually use them at any given time. For the biblical languages, therefore, the Committee utilizes the best and most recent scholarship on the way Hebrew, Aramaic and Greek words were being used in biblical times. At the same time, the Committee carefully studies the state of modern English. Good translation is like good communication: one must know the target audience so that the appropriate choices can be made about which English words to use to represent the original words of Scripture. From its inception, the NIV has had as its target the general English-speaking population all over the world, the “International” in its title reflecting this concern. The aim of the Committee is to put the Scriptures into natural English that will communicate effectively with the broadest possible audience of English speakers.

Modern technology has enhanced the Committee’s ability to choose the right English words to convey the meaning of the original text. The field of computational linguistics harnesses the power of computers to provide broadly applicable and current data about the state of the language. Translators can now access huge databases of modern English to better understand the current meaning and usage of key words. The Committee utilized this resource in preparing the 2011 edition of the NIV. An area of especially rapid and significant change in English is the way certain nouns and pronouns are used to refer to human beings. The Committee therefore requested experts in computational linguistics at Collins Dictionaries to pose some key questions about this usage to its database of English — the largest in the world, with over 4.4 billion words, gathered from several English-speaking countries and including both spoken and written English. (The Collins Study, called “The Development and Use of Gender Language in Contemporary English,” can be accessed at <http://www.thenivbible.com/about-the-niv/about-the-2011-edition/>.) The study revealed that the most popular words to describe the human race in modern U.S. English were “humanity,” “man” and “mankind.” The Committee then used this data in the updated NIV, choosing from among these three words (and occasionally others also) depending on the context.

A related issue creates a larger problem for modern translations: the move away from using the third-person masculine singular pronouns — “he/him/his” — to refer to men and women equally. This usage does persist in some forms of English, and this revision therefore occasionally uses these pronouns in a generic sense. But the tendency, recognized in day-to-day usage and confirmed by the Collins study, is away from the generic use of “he,” “him” and “his.” In recognition of this shift in language and in an effort to translate into the natural English that people are actually using, this revision of the NIV generally uses other constructions when the biblical text is plainly addressed to men and women equally. The reader will encounter especially frequently a “they,” “their” or “them” to express a generic singular idea. Thus, for instance, Mark 8:36 reads: “What good is it for someone to gain the whole world, yet forfeit their soul?” This generic use of the “distributive” or “singular” “they/them/their” has been used for many centuries by respected writers of English and has now become established as standard English, spoken and written, all over the world.

A second linguistic principle that feeds into the Committee’s translation work is that meaning is found not in individual words, as vital as they are, but in larger clusters: phrases, clauses, sentences, discourses. Translation is not, as many people think, a matter of word substitution: English word *x* in place of Hebrew word *y*. Translators must first determine the meaning of the words of the biblical languages in the context of the passage and then select English

words that accurately communicate that meaning to modern listeners and readers. This means that accurate translation will not always reflect the exact structure of the original language. To be sure, there is debate over the degree to which translators should try to preserve the “form” of the original text in English. From the beginning, the NIV has taken a mediating position on this issue. The manual produced when the translation that became the NIV was first being planned states: “If the Greek or Hebrew syntax has a good parallel in modern English, it should be used. But if there is no good parallel, the English syntax appropriate to the meaning of the original is to be chosen.” It is fine, in other words, to carry over the form of the biblical languages into English—but not at the expense of natural expression. The principle that meaning resides in larger clusters of words means that the Committee has not insisted on a “word-for-word” approach to translation. We certainly believe that every word of Scripture is inspired by God and therefore to be carefully studied to determine what God is saying to us. It is for this reason that the Committee labors over every single word of the original texts, working hard to determine how each of those words contributes to what the text is saying. Ultimately, however, it is how these individual words function in combination with other words that determines meaning.

A third linguistic principle guiding the Committee in its translation work is the recognition that words have a spectrum of meaning. It is popular to define a word by using another word, or “gloss,” to substitute for it. This substitute word is then sometimes called the “literal” meaning of a word. In fact, however, words have a range of possible meanings. Those meanings will vary depending on the context, and words in one language will usually not occupy the same semantic range as words in another language. The Committee therefore studies each original word of Scripture in its context to identify its meaning in a particular verse and then chooses an appropriate English word (or phrase) to represent it. It is impossible, then, to translate any given Hebrew, Aramaic or Greek word with the same English word all the time. The Committee does try to translate related occurrences of a word in the original languages with the same English word in order to preserve the connection for the English reader. But the Committee generally privileges clear natural meaning over a concern with consistency in rendering particular words.

Textual Basis

For the Old Testament the standard Hebrew text, the Masoretic Text as published in the latest edition of *Biblia Hebraica*, has been used throughout. The Masoretic Text tradition contains marginal notations that offer variant readings. These have sometimes been followed instead of the text itself. Because such instances involve variants within the Masoretic tradition, they have not been indicated in the textual notes. In a few cases, words in the basic consonantal text have been divided differently than in the Masoretic Text. Such cases are usually indicated in the textual footnotes. The Dead Sea Scrolls contain biblical texts that represent an earlier stage of the transmission of the Hebrew text. They have been consulted, as have been the Samaritan Pentateuch and the ancient scribal traditions concerning deliberate textual changes. The translators also consulted the more important early versions. Readings from these versions, the Dead Sea Scrolls and the scribal traditions were occasionally followed where the Masoretic Text seemed doubtful and where accepted principles of textual criticism showed that one or more of these textual witnesses appeared to provide the correct reading. In rare cases, the translators have emended the Hebrew text where it appears to have become corrupted at an even earlier stage of its transmission. These departures from the Masoretic Text are also indicated in the textual

footnotes. Sometimes the vowel indicators (which are later additions to the basic consonantal text) found in the Masoretic Text did not, in the judgment of the translators, represent the correct vowels for the original text. Accordingly, some words have been read with a different set of vowels. These instances are usually not indicated in the footnotes.

The Greek text used in translating the New Testament has been an eclectic one, based on the latest editions of the Nestle-Aland/United Bible Societies' Greek New Testament. The translators have made their choices among the variant readings in accordance with widely accepted principles of New Testament textual criticism. Footnotes call attention to places where uncertainty remains.

The New Testament authors, writing in Greek, often quote the Old Testament from its ancient Greek version, the Septuagint. This is one reason why some of the Old Testament quotations in the NIV New Testament are not identical to the corresponding passages in the NIV Old Testament. Such quotations in the New Testament are indicated with the footnote "(see Septuagint)."

Footnotes and Formatting

Footnotes in this version are of several kinds, most of which need no explanation. Those giving alternative translations begin with "Or" and generally introduce the alternative with the last word preceding it in the text, except when it is a single-word alternative. When poetry is quoted in a footnote a slash mark indicates a line division.

It should be noted that references to diseases, minerals, flora and fauna, architectural details, clothing, jewelry, musical instruments and other articles cannot always be identified with precision. Also, linear measurements and measures of capacity can only be approximated (see the Table of Weights and Measures). Although *Selah*, used mainly in the Psalms, is probably a musical term, its meaning is uncertain. Since it may interrupt reading and distract the reader, this word has not been kept in the English text, but every occurrence has been signaled by a footnote.

As an aid to the reader, sectional headings have been inserted. They are not to be regarded as part of the biblical text and are not intended for oral reading. It is the Committee's hope that these headings may prove more helpful to the reader than the traditional chapter divisions, which were introduced long after the Bible was written.

Sometimes the chapter and/or verse numbering in English translations of the Old Testament differs from that found in published Hebrew texts. This is particularly the case in the Psalms, where the traditional titles are included in the Hebrew verse numbering. Such differences are indicated in the footnotes at the bottom of the page. In the New Testament, verse numbers that marked off portions of the traditional English text not supported by the best Greek manuscripts now appear in brackets, with a footnote indicating the text that has been omitted (see, for example, Matthew 17:[21]).

Mark 16:9–20 and John 7:53—8:11, although long accorded virtually equal status with the rest of the Gospels in which they stand, have a questionable standing in the textual history of the New Testament, as noted in the bracketed annotations with which they are set off. A different typeface has been chosen for these passages to indicate their uncertain status.

Basic formatting of the text, such as lining the poetry, paragraphing (both prose and poetry), setting up of (administrative-like) lists, indenting letters and lengthy prayers within narratives and the insertion of sectional headings, has been the work of the Committee. However, the choice between single-column and double-column formats has been left to the publishers. Also the issuing of "red-letter" editions is a publisher's choice—one that the Committee does not endorse.

The Committee has again been reminded that every human effort is flawed—including this revision of the NIV. We trust, however, that many will find in it an improved representation of the Word of God, through which they hear his call to faith in our Lord Jesus Christ and to service in his kingdom. We offer this version of the Bible to him in whose name and for whose glory it has been made.

The Committee on Bible Translation



THE
OLD TESTAMENT



GENESIS

“In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth” (Ge 1:1) are the first words of not only the book of Genesis but of the Bible as a whole. Genesis is a book about beginnings: the beginning of time and space, the heavens and the earth, the planets, the solar system, the galaxies, and life on earth—from the tiniest microbe to the mammoth blue whale. But it is primarily the beginning of the grand story of God and his image bearers, whom he made to demonstrate his glory and grace on the earth. Genesis functions as the opening scene of a great drama as it sets the props and introduces the main actors.

The universe is a theater for divine glory, and in this theater the main protagonists (God and humanity) take their place. Without this book, the rest of the biblical story would be incomprehensible, for in Genesis we find a doctrine of creation and descriptions of the significance, meaning, and goal of human life. Without this book it would be almost impossible to discover the impulse that drives the biblical narrative. It would be impossible to discover what the second Adam was all about without the first Adam, to understand the basis for marriage without the first two chapters of Genesis, to comprehend the new creation without understanding the old creation.

Many details in the New Testament presuppose a knowledge of details from this first Old Testament book, such as Jesus’ reference to the Son of Man being a ladder bridging heaven and earth (Ge 28; cf. Jn 1:51) and Paul’s statement in Romans 8 that God did not spare his own Son from judgment for sinners (Ge 22; cf. Ro 8:32). Probably the most important doctrine of the New Testament—that God justifies sinners through faith—is derived from Genesis 15:6, a verse quoted five times in the New Testament (Ro 4:3,9,22; Gal 3:6; Jas 2:23).

Genesis is the grand overture to the biblical story. It describes an originally good creation, humanity’s sin, the corruption of the world, and the beginning of its restoration, which is only completed in the consummation of all things. The end of the biblical story recapitulates the early chapters of Genesis in a restoration that goes beyond the very good world God made in Genesis. In the new creation, there is no night (Rev 21:25), no sea (Rev 21:1), and no temple (Rev 21:22). There is a great city instead of a garden (Rev 21:10) and trees of life on each side of the great river of life flowing from the throne of God (Rev 22:1–2). There will no more be death or curse (Rev 22:3–4), and the marriage will be between God and his people (Rev 21:1–3).

2 ◇◇ GENESIS INTRODUCTION

Genesis is structured by using genealogies to introduce each section. A majestic prologue is followed by ten sections, each introduced by a genealogical formula (Ge 2:4; 5:1; 6:9; 10:1; 11:10,27; 25:12,19; 36:1; 37:2). This arrangement enables the reader to clearly see the origins of the human race and its destiny. Early on, the world that was lost due to rebellion, but Scripture announces a descendant (Ge 3:15) who will conquer and restore the pristine glory of the human race. The narrative follows that “offspring” through all kinds of obstacles. At various appropriate climactic moments, we see that the offspring will be the means by which God blesses the entire earth. The genealogical line of the human race is narrowed down to a single family, chosen by God to be the bearer of universal blessing (Ge 12). Three stories trace this lineage: the Abraham story (Ge 12–25), the Jacob story (Ge 25–36), and the Joseph story (Ge 37–50). Following crisis after crisis and many seemingly insurmountable obstacles, we read of a strange meeting between the most powerful ruler in the ancient world (the pharaoh of Egypt) and an old crippled figure named Jacob/Israel (Ge 47:7–10). Ironically the latter blesses the former, and his progeny is the means by which the then-known world receives life. When this old man is on his deathbed, he blesses the son through whom the restoration of God’s rule will take place: Judah (Ge 49:8–12). Judah’s line will eventually culminate in the birth of Jesus Christ, who brings salvation and restoration to the world.

Genesis is a theological book. It is not primarily a book about doctrine, nor a history book, nor a scientific treatise, nor a political tract. It presents God’s story of redemption—a redemption that is not just narrowly individualistic but one that is national and ultimately universal. When readers get bogged down by the absence of scientific and historical details, they are like observers seeking to find how many hours there are in a mile or how many colors there are in an hour. They are trying to examine a work of art with scientific rigor and methodology rather than drawing back and appreciating its breathtaking beauty. While history is important to the biblical narrative, it is noted primarily for theological reasons. Even the few events in the lives of the patriarchs in Genesis are selected from an immense number of possibilities because of their theological importance. Theology is the driving engine of the biblical narrative.



The Beginning

1 In the beginning^a God created^b the heavens^c and the earth.^d **2** Now the earth was formless^e and empty,^f darkness was over the surface of the deep,^g and the Spirit of God^h was hoveringⁱ over the waters.

3 And God said,^j “Let there be light,” and there was light.^k **4** God saw that the light was good,^l and he separated the light from the darkness.^m **5** God calledⁿ the light “day,” and the darkness he called “night.”^o And there was evening, and there was morning^p — the first day.

6 And God said,^q “Let there be a vault^r between the waters^s to separate water from water.” **7** So God made the vault and separated the water under the vault from the water above it.^t And it was so.^u **8** God called^v the vault “sky.”^w And there was evening, and there was morning^x — the second day.

9 And God said, “Let the water under the sky be gathered to one place,^y and let dry ground^z appear.” And it was so.^a

10 God called^b the dry ground “land,” and the gathered waters^c he called “seas.”^d And God saw that it was good.^e

^{1:1} ^a Ps 102:25; Pr 8:23; Isa 40:21; 41:4, 26; Jn 1:1-2
^b ver 21, 27;
^c Ge 2:3 ^c ver 6;
^d Ne 9:6;
^e Job 9:8;
^f 37:18; Ps 96:5; 104:2; 115:15; 121:2; 136:5;
^g Isa 40:22; 42:5; 51:13; Jer 10:12; 51:15 ^d Ge 14:19; 2Ki 19:15;
^h Ne 9:6;
ⁱ Job 38:4;
^j Ps 90:2; 136:6; 146:6; Isa 37:16; 40:28; 42:5; 44:24; 45:12; 18; Jer 27:5; 32:17; Ac 14:15; 17:24; Eph 3:9; Col 1:16;
^k Heb 3:4; 11:3; Rev 4:11; 10:6
^l 1:2 ^e Isa 23:1; 24:10; 27:10; 32:14; 34:11
^m Isa 45:18;
ⁿ Jer 4:23
^o Ge 8:2;
^p Job 7:12; 26:8; 38:9; Ps 36:6; 42:7; 104:6; 107:24; Pr 30:4
^q Ge 2:7;
^r Job 33:4;
^s Ps 104:30;
^t Isa 32:15
^u Dt 32:11;
^v Isa 31:5

11 Then God said, “Let the land produce vegetation:^f seed-bearing plants and trees on the land that bear fruit with seed in it, according to their various kinds.^g” And it was so.^h **12** The land produced vegetation: plants bearing seed according to their kindsⁱ and trees bearing fruit with seed in it according to their kinds. And God saw that it was good.^j **13** And there was evening, and there was morning^k — the third day.

14 And God said, “Let there be lights^l in the vault of the sky to separate the day from the night,^m and let them serve as signsⁿ to mark sacred times,^o and days and years,^p **15** and let them be lights in the vault of the sky to give light on the earth.” And it was so.^q

^{1:3} ^j ver 6; Ps 33:6, 9; 148:5; Heb 11:3 ^k 2Co 4:6*; 1Jn 1:5-7
^l 1:4 ^l ver 10, 12, 18, 21, 25, 31; Ps 104:31; 119:68; Jer 31:35
^m ver 14; Ex 10:21-23; Job 26:10; 38:19; Ps 18:28; 104:20;
ⁿ 105:28; Isa 42:16; 43:7 ^o 1:5 ^o ver 8, 10; Ge 2:19, 23 ^p Ps 74:16
^q ver 8, 13, 19, 23, 31 ^r 1:6 ^q S ver 3 ^r S ver 1; Isa 44:24; 2Pe 3:5
^s ver 9; Ps 24:2; 136:6 ^t 1:7 ^t Ge 7:11; Job 26:10; 38:8-11, 16; Ps 68:33; 148:4; Pr 8:28 ^u ver 9, 11, 15, 24 ^v 1:8 ^v S ver 5
^w Job 9:8; 37:18; Ps 19:1; 104:2; Isa 40:22; 44:24; 45:12;
^x Jer 10:12; Zec 12:1 ^x S ver 5 ^y 1:9 ^y Job 38:8-11; Ps 33:7; 104:6-9; Pr 8:29; Jer 5:22; 2Pe 3:5 ^z Ps 95:5; Jnh 1:9; Hag 2:6
^a S ver 7 ^{1:10} ^b S ver 5 ^c Ps 33:7 ^d Job 38:8; Ps 90:2; 95:5 ^e S ver 4 ^{1:11} ^f Ps 65:9-13; 104:14 ^g ver 12, 21, 24, 25; Ge 2:5; 6:20; 7:14; Lev 11:14, 19, 22; Dt 14:13, 18; 1Co 15:38
^h S ver 7 ^{1:12} ^l S ver 1 ^l S ver 4 ^{1:13} ^k S ver 5 ^{1:14} ^l Ps 74:16; 136:7 ^m S ver 4 ⁿ Jer 10:2 ^o Ps 104:19 ^p Ge 8:22; Jer 31:35-36; 33:20, 25 ^{1:15} ^q S ver 7

1:1–2 Genesis 1:1–2:3 is the prologue not only for the book of Genesis but for the Bible as a whole, and it is like a grand musical overture for the biblical symphony that will follow. It has its own introduction in verses 1–2 and then unfolds in a symmetrical seven-day sequence that corresponds to the Israelite workweek: six days of work followed by one day of rest. By working for six days and resting for one in worship, the Israelites imitate their Creator. The first three days match the second three in their form and content. God organizes what he created into a formal structure in days 1–3, and he fills it with content in days 4–6. A final day of rest caps the creation as the Creator delights in what he has made. The presence of God’s Spirit at the beginning, the centrality of the spoken word, and the use of the divine plural before the creation of humanity (Ge 1:26–28) signals the work of a triune God.

The main actor in the biblical story appears right at the beginning: God. The word “God” in verse 1 translates the Hebrew word *Elohim*, a title signifying the great Creator. God’s act of creation in verse 1 brings into being the stuff of reality, which is formless and empty in verse 2. The rest of the prologue will show how the Creator completes the creation so that he can cease working on the seventh day (2:1).

1:3–5 In Hebrew literature, the first word an individual speaks is indicative of his or her character. In his first recorded speech in Scripture, God dispels darkness with his command for the presence of light. Light is a central characteristic of God in the Bible (1Jn 1:5). God speaks, and light appears effortlessly. What is more, he sees his creation and takes delight in it. It is “good” in that it serves its

purpose to dispel darkness. The darkness is not good. God separates the light from the darkness and begins to name reality: light is “day,” darkness is “night.” This naming will continue through the next two days. The word “day” can signify daylight or the alternation of day and night. Later it describes an entire seven-day period (Ge 2:4).

1:6–8 The second day is introduced by a divine command, by which God separates “water from water” with the sky (described as a vault). This captures an ancient understanding of the world that envisioned the waters of the earth as separated from the waters above the earth by a giant dome. Unlike the gods of ancient Near Eastern myths, God does not form and separate parts of creation by fighting forces of chaos. He acts with an effortless spoken word. This is the only day God does not pronounce a verdict of goodness.

1:9–13 On the third day, God gives two divine commands: one that pushes back the waters to let dry ground appear, and one that produces plant life from the dry ground. God is shaping the earth into a place for the habitation and sustenance of animal and human life. This day concludes God’s creation of the structures of creation; in the next three days, he will fill these structures with content. After this day, God will no longer name the reality he makes. It will be up to humanity to continue this naming task (cf. 2:19–23).

1:14–19 On the fourth day, God creates lights to rule the light and the darkness of day one. The poetic structure of these verses resolves the tension of God creating light before he creates the sun and stars: the second triad of days correspond to the first triad. The fact that the astral bodies are unnamed downplays their mythological significance, since

4 ◇◇ GENESIS 1:16

16God made two great lights — the greater light^t to govern^s the day and the lesser light to govern^t the night.^u He also made the stars.^v 17God set them in the vault of the sky to give light on the earth,¹⁸ to govern the day and the night,^w and to separate light from darkness. And God saw that it was good.^x 19And there was evening, and there was morning^y — the fourth day.

20And God said, “Let the water teem with living creatures,^z and let birds fly above the earth across the vault of the sky.”^a 21So God created^b the great creatures of the sea^c and every living thing with which the water teems and that moves about in it,^d according to their kinds, and every winged bird according to its kind.^e And God saw that it was good.^f 22God blessed them and said, “Be fruitful and increase in number and fill the water in the seas, and let the birds increase on the earth.”^g 23And there was evening, and there was morning^h — the fifth day.

24And God said, “Let the land produce living creaturesⁱ according to their kinds:^j the livestock, the creatures that move along the ground, and the wild animals, each according to its kind.” And it was so.^k 25God made the wild animals^l according to their kinds, the livestock according to their kinds, and all the creatures that move along the ground according to their kinds.^m And God saw that it was good.ⁿ

26Then God said, “Let us^o make mankind^p in our image,^q in our likeness,^t so that they may rule^s over the

fish in the sea and the birds in the sky,^t over the livestock and all the wild animals,^a and over all the creatures that move along the ground.”

27So God created^u mankind^v in his own image,^w in the image of God^k he created them; male and female^y he created them.^z

28God blessed them and said to them,^a “Be fruitful and increase in number;^b fill the earth^c and subdue it. Rule over^d the fish in the sea and the birds in the sky and over every living creature that moves on the ground.^e”

29Then God said, “I give you every seed-bearing plant on the face of the whole earth and every tree that has fruit with seed in it. They will be yours for food.^f 30And to all the beasts of the earth and all the birds in the sky and all the creatures that move along the ground — everything that has the breath of life^g in it — I give every green plant for food.^h” And it was so.

31God saw all that he had made,ⁱ and it was very good.^j And there was evening, and there was morning^k — the sixth day.

1:16 ^tDt 17:3; Job 31:26; Jer 43:13; Eze 8:16
^sPs 136:8
^uPs 136:9
^vJob 38:33; Ps 74:16; 104:19; Jer 31:35; Jas 1:17
^wDt 4:19; Job 9:9; 38:7, 31-32; Ps 8:3; 33:6; Ecc 12:2; Isa 40:26; Jer 8:2; Am 5:8
^{1:18} ^wJer 33:20; 25 ^xS ver 4
^{1:19} ^yS ver 5
^{1:20} ^zPs 146:6
^aGe 2:19
^{1:21} ^bS ver 1
^cJob 3:8; 7:12; Ps 74:13; 148:7; Isa 27:1; Eze 32:2
^dPs 104:25-26 ^eS ver 11
^fS ver 4
^{1:22} ^gver 28; Ge 8:17; 9:1, 7, 19; 47:27; Lev 26:9; Eze 36:11
^{1:23} ^hS ver 5
^{1:24} ⁱGe 2:19
^jS ver 11
^kS ver 7
^{1:25} ^lGe 7:21-22; Jer 27:5
^mS ver 11
ⁿS ver 4
^{1:26} ^oGe 3:5, 22; 11:7; Ps 100:3; Isa 6:8
^pIsa 45:18
^qver 27; Ge 5:3; 9:6; Ps 8:5; 82:6; 89:6; 1Co 11:7; 2Co 4:4; Col 1:15; 3:10; Jas 3:9
^rAc 17:28-29
^sGe 9:2; Ps 8:6-8
^tPs 8:8

^a 26 Probable reading of the original Hebrew text (see Syriac); Masoretic Text *the earth*

1:27 ^uS ver 1 ^vGe 2:7; Ps 103:14; 119:73 ^wS ver 26 ^xGe 5:1 ^yGe 5:2; Mt 19:4; Mk 10:6; Gal 3:28 ^zDt 4:32 ^{1:28} ^aGe 33:5; Jos 24:3; Ps 113:9; 127:3, 5 ^bS Ge 17:6 ^cS ver 22; Ge 6:1; Ac 17:26 ^dver 26; Ps 115:16 ^ePs 8:6-8 ^{1:29} ^fGe 9:3; Dt 12:15; Ps 104:14; 1Ti 4:3
^{1:30} ^gGe 2:7; 7:22 ^hJob 38:41; Ps 78:25; 104:14, 27; 111:5; 136:25; 145:15; 147:9 ^{1:31} ⁱPs 104:24; 136:5; Pr 3:19; Jer 10:12 ^jS ver 4; 1Ti 4:4 ^kS ver 5

their names (sun, moon) represented gods in the worldview of Israel's neighbors.

1:20–23 On the fifth day, God gives two divine commands: one to populate the water and the sky (created on day two) with marine and avian life, and another to bless the life with the ability to reproduce. In these verses we also find the first word of blessing in the creation story, and its meaning is clear: to give life and not death, to enable animal life to flourish and prosper in the domain for which these animals were created. Fertility, pregnancy, reproduction, and the fullness of flourishing life are the prime indicators of blessing. **1:24–31** The sixth day has two parts. First, God makes animals for the land (vv. 24–25), and second, God makes human beings (vv. 26–31). God first creates three classes of land animals: domestic animals, animals like reptiles and insects that creep on the ground, and wild animals. Then, for the first time, there is a pause in the action as God takes counsel with himself. This pause signals the importance of the next creative act: God

decides to create humanity in his own image and likeness. The use of the plural to describe God (“our”) is probably a reference to the Trinity (cf. the Spirit of God in v. 2), but it could also be a reference to the divine court (the angels). God creates both genders in his image, with no hint of inequality between males and females. The words “image” and “likeness” connote both a unique relation to God (humanity is like him) and a unique relation to the rest of creation (humanity is to rule creation). Evidence from the ancient Near East shows us that ancient peoples erected statues of rulers to show the ruler’s dominion over that area. While God has created a good world, it is a world that is wild, and one that people need to tame and subdue and develop. They need to harness its energy, cultivate its plants, harvest its crops, and fill its spaces. Human work is a blessing and not a curse; it is a means by which God exercises his rule over the created order. With the final act of creation, God declared that all he had made was *very good*!

2 Thus the heavens and the earth were completed in all their vast array.^l

²By the seventh day^m God had finished the work he had been doing; so on the seventh day he rested from all his work.ⁿ ³Then God blessed the seventh day and made it holy,^o because on it he rested^p from all the work of creating^q that he had done.

Adam and Eve

⁴This is the account^r of the heavens and the earth when they were created,^s when the LORD God made the earth and the heavens.

⁵Now no shrub had yet appeared on the earth^a and no plant had yet sprung up,^t for the LORD God had not sent rain on the earth^u and there was no one to work the ground,⁶ but streams^b came up from the earth and watered the whole surface of the ground. ⁷Then the LORD God formed^v a man^{cw} from the dust^x of the ground^y and breathed into his nostrils the breath^z of life,^a and the man became a living being.^b

⁸Now the LORD God had planted a garden in the east, in Eden;^c and there he put the man he had formed. ⁹The LORD God made all kinds of trees grow out of the

^{2:1} Dt 4:19; 17:3; 2Kl 17:16; 21:3; Ps 104:2; Isa 44:24; 45:12; 48:13; 51:13
^{2:2} Dt 5:14
ⁿ ver 2-3;
 Ex 20:11; 31:17; 34:21; Jn 5:17; Heb 4:4*
^{2:3} Ex 16:23; 20:10; 23:12; 31:15; 35:2; Lev 23:3; Ne 9:14; Isa 58:13; Jer 17:22
^p Ps 95:11; Heb 4:1-11
^q S Ge 1:1
^{2:4} Ge 5:1; 6:9; 10:1; 11:10; 27; 25:12; 19; 36:1, 9; 37:2 ^a Ge 1:1; Job 38:8-11
^{2:5} Ge 1:11
^u Job 38:28; Ps 65:9-10; Jer 10:13
^{2:7} Isa 29:16; 43:1, 21; 44:2
^w S Ge 1:27
^x Ge 3:19; 18:27; Job 4:19; 10:9; 17:16; 34:15; Ps 90:3; Ecc 3:20; 12:7
^y Ge 3:23; 4:2; Ps 103:14; Jer 18:6; 1Co 15:47
^z S Ge 1:2;

ground — trees^d that were pleasing to the eye and good for food. In the middle of the garden were the tree of life^e and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.^f

¹⁰A river^g watering the garden flowed from Eden;^h from there it was separated into four headwaters. ¹¹The name of the first is the Pishon; it winds through the entire land of Havilah,ⁱ where there is gold. ¹²(The gold of that land is good; aromatic resin^{dj} and onyx are also there.) ¹³The name of the second river is the Gihon; it winds through the entire land of Cush.^e ¹⁴The name of the third river is the Tigris;^k it runs along the east side of Ashur. And the fourth river is the Euphrates.^l

^a 5 Or land; also in verse 6 ^b 6 Or mist
^c 7 The Hebrew for man (adam) sounds like and may be related to the Hebrew for ground (adamah); it is also the name Adam (see verse 20).
^d 12 Or good; pearls ^e 13 Possibly southeast Mesopotamia
 Job 27:3; Isa 2:22 ^a S Ge 1:30; Isa 42:5; Ac 17:25 ^b Job 12:10; 32:8; 33:4; 34:14; Ps 104:29; Isa 57:16; Eze 37:5; 1Co 15:45*
^{2:8} c ver 10, 15; Ge 3:23, 24; 4:16; 13:10; Isa 51:3; Eze 28:13; 31:9, 16; 36:35; Joel 2:3 ^{2:9} d Eze 31:8 ^e Ge 3:22, 24; Pr 3:18; 11:30; S Rev 2:7 ^f Eze 47:12 ^{2:10} g Nu 24:6; Ps 46:4; Eze 47:5 ^h S ver 8 ^{2:11} i Ge 10:7; 25:18 ^{2:12} j Nu 11:7 ^{2:14} k Ge 41:1; Da 10:4
^l Ge 15:18; 31:21; Ex 23:31; Nu 22:5; Dt 1:7; 11:24; Jos 1:4; 2Sa 8:3; 1Kl 4:21; 2Kl 23:29; 24:7; 1Ch 5:9; 18:3; 2Ch 35:20; Jer 13:4; 46:2; 51:63; S Rev 9:14

2:1–3 The seventh day is a day of completion as God ceases from all his labors and rests in all his works. He does not speak or work, as he did on the other days. Like the second part of the sixth day (which broke the repetitive patterns), the seventh day is unique. It alone is mentioned three times, it is the only day God blesses, and it is the only day without a closing formula (“evening and morning”). The seventh day is a day searching for an ending, an ending that will eventually be fulfilled in the Sabbath rest God provides (Heb 4:9–11). **2:4** This next text is often considered a second creation account, but if it is, we can see it as a complementary creation account (vv. 4–25). Whereas the first account describes creation with a more panoramic vision (1:1–2:3), this section zooms in to focus on God’s creation of humanity and his personal and intimate care of his creation. Chapters 2–3 refer to God as “LORD God”—a name that captures God’s covenantal relationship with humanity. Whereas the first account used staccato-like repetition to describe a sequence of seven days, which climaxed with the creation of humanity and the Sabbath, this account begins with the creation of the male human and climaxes with the creation of the female human. While the first account focuses on the goodness of creation, this account recognizes that it is “not good” for the man to be alone (2:18). While the first account identifies humanity’s task of having dominion over the creation, this text makes clear that this dominion includes acts of gardening, protecting, and classifying. At the end of the prologue of creation in Genesis 1, God creates humanity in his image; the meaning of this image is more fully developed in Genesis 2, when the “LORD God” creates the human pair. Genesis 2:4 contains the first use of the genealogical formula “This is the account . . .” This formula serves as a title for the next sequence of events, which conclude at the end of

chapter 4. This text depicts the heaven and earth as parents of the man and woman. While humans owe their origin to the ground, it is God who creatively shapes this ground to make them and who inspires them with his breath. He does this in a very intimate way, crafting the man from the dust of the ground and the woman from the man’s side. **2:5–6** The world is not yet a habitable place for humanity. There is no plant life or (presumably) animal life. This is a problem God will partially rectify with the creation of humanity. These verses parallel the prologue in chapter 1, where creation is unformed and unfilled before God creates light (1:2). **2:7–9** God forms the man from the ground. In Hebrew, the words for “man” and “ground” are related. The linguistic similarity shows the close relationship between the two entities. God places the man in the garden he has already prepared for him. The man does not have to earn access to the garden; God places him within it to care for it. Among all the trees of the garden, two receive special focus: a “tree of life” and a “tree of the knowledge of good and evil” (v. 9). In the new creation there will be only the tree of life (Rev 22:2). **2:10–14** These verses slow down the narrative’s pace by presenting a digression focusing on the source of life for the garden and the source for water for the regions outside the garden. A spring within the garden wells up and forms a river. As this river emerges from the garden, it divides into four rivers, two of which are still known today: the Tigris and Euphrates. The other two (the Pishon and Gihon) may have symbolic names, since they rhyme and since their meaning suggests the word “spring”: the springer and the gusher. Later prophetic texts present similar imagery of a mighty river flowing out of the temple (Eze 47). Later in the biblical story, Jesus is a new temple who promises the water of life to any who will believe in him (Jn 4:10–14; Rev 22:1–4).

6 ◇◇ GENESIS 2:15

¹⁵The LORD God took the man and put him in the Garden of Eden^m to work it and take care of it. ¹⁶And the LORD God commanded the man, “You are free to eat from any tree in the garden;ⁿ ¹⁷but you must not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil,^o for when you eat from it you will certainly die.”^p

¹⁸The LORD God said, “It is not good for the man to be alone. I will make a helper suitable for him.”^q

¹⁹Now the LORD God had formed out of the ground all the wild animals^r and all the birds in the sky.^s He brought them to the man to see what he would name them; and whatever the man called^t each living creature,^u that was its name. ²⁰So the man gave names to all the livestock, the birds in the sky and all the wild animals.

But for Adam^a no suitable helper^v was found. ²¹So the LORD God caused the man to fall into a deep sleep;^w and while he was sleeping, he took one of the man’s ribs^b and then closed up the place with flesh. ²²Then the LORD God made a woman from the rib^{c,x} he had taken out of the man, and he brought her to the man.

²³The man said,

“This is now bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh;^y

2:15 ^mS ver 8
2:16 ⁿGe 3:1-2
2:17 ^oGe 3:11, 17
^pGe 3:1, 3; 5:5;
9:29; Dt 30:15,
19; Jer 42:16;
Eze 3:18;
S Ro 5:12;
S 6:23
2:18 ^qPr 31:11;
1Co 11:9; 1Ti 2:13
2:19 ^rPs 8:7
^sS Ge 1:20
^tS Ge 1:5
^uGe 1:24
2:20 ^vGe 3:20;
4:1
2:21 ^wGe 15:12;
1Sa 26:12;
Job 33:15
2:22 ^x1Co 11:8,
9, 12; 1Ti 2:13
2:23 ^yGe 29:14;
Eph 5:28-30
^zS Ge 1:5
^a1Co 11:8
2:24 ^bMal 2:15
^cMt 19:5*;
Mk 10:7-8*;
1Co 6:16*;
Eph 5:31*
2:25 ^dGe 3:7,
10-11; Isa 47:3;
La 1:8
^eJob 1:7;
2:2; 2Co 11:3;
Rev 12:9; 20:2
^fS Ge 2:17
3:2 ^gGe 2:16
3:3 ^hS Ge 2:17
3:4 ⁱS Jn 8:44;
2Co 11:3
3:5 ^jS Ge 1:26;
14:18, 19; Ps 7:8;
Isa 14:14;
Eze 28:2

she shall be called^z ‘woman,’
for she was taken out of man.^{a”}

²⁴That is why a man leaves his father and mother and is united^b to his wife, and they become one flesh.^c

²⁵Adam and his wife were both naked,^d and they felt no shame.

The Fall

3 Now the serpent^e was more crafty than any of the wild animals the LORD God had made. He said to the woman, “Did God really say, ‘You must not eat from any tree in the garden?’^{f”}

²The woman said to the serpent, “We may eat fruit from the trees in the garden,^g ³but God did say, ‘You must not eat fruit from the tree that is in the middle of the garden, and you must not touch it, or you will die.’^h”

⁴“You will not certainly die,” the serpent said to the woman.ⁱ ⁵“For God knows that when you eat from it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God,^j knowing good and evil.”

⁶When the woman saw that the fruit of the tree was good for food and pleasing

^a 20 Or *the man* ^b 21 Or *took part of the man’s side* ^c 22 Or *part*

2:15–17 After the brief digression regarding the rivers, the scene refocuses on the man God placed in the garden. In this place from which life in all of its fullness dwells, God gives the man the responsibility to “work” the land and to “take care of” it (v. 15). These two terms indicate the farmer’s important task of tilling the ground and taking care of it, but they also suggest a sacred function for the man, for these verbs also appear together in texts describing the duties of priests and Levites in the tabernacle (Nu 3:7–8, 38). The man is to enjoy the fruit of all the trees of the garden, but he must not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil or else he will suffer death. God issues this negative command to protect the man. This forbidden tree probably represents moral autonomy. By eating from this tree and disobeying God, humanity will decide for itself what is good and evil. **2:18–25** God addresses the one “not good” of creation: the man is without the woman—thus showing the complementarity of Genesis 1 and 2. Human sexuality is an essential aspect of God’s creative design for humanity. To rectify the man’s loneliness, God first creates animals. After the man names the animals, thereby exercising dominion over them, God says they are an unsuitable solution for the man’s lack of companionship. They are decidedly *not* like him. God then puts the man to sleep and takes from his side a rib, from which he crafts a partner *like* him. When the man awakens, he sings to his new bride a song that names her “woman” but also shows her likeness to him. She is his God-given complement. The final verse of the passage provides an explanation for the institution of marriage. Marriage is not a social construction but a divine creation that explains the wonder and power of sexuality and the magnetism

between the sexes. The conclusion of the story emphasizes the complete openness and transparency between the first couple: they were naked and not ashamed. **3:1** This chapter shows how a deliberate act of human rebellion sundered the harmony between God and the human couple, with catastrophic consequences. A new character enters the scene: the serpent. By means of wordplay, the author alerts the reader to a potentially ominous development. The serpent is “crafty,” a pun on the word for “naked” that appears in Genesis 2:25. This shrewd serpent will cause the couple see their nudity as shameful. Moreover, the serpent *speaks*. This animal is much more than meets the eye. The content of the speech reveals the serpent’s maligned character. In the following verses, the serpent distorts God’s word and authority and questions his character. **3:2–3** The woman corrects the serpent’s misquote of God’s order. However, she goes on to add a further prohibition to the divine word: that God forbade the couple from even touching the tree. Additionally, she does not call the tree by its proper name. Perhaps this is an indication that the woman is subtly questioning God’s goodness and his seriousness in punishing sin. **3:4–5** The serpent reveals his true colors and boldly lies to the woman, telling her in the strongest possible terms that the divine penalty of death for eating the forbidden fruit is a lie, and that God is intent on forbidding people from enjoying life to the full. The serpent thus slanders God’s character by implying that God would be jealous of the human couple becoming like him. **3:6–7** Up to this point God has defined what is good. Now the woman sees that the fruit is good. It is good in three

to the eye, and also desirable^k for gaining wisdom, she took some and ate it. She also gave some to her husband,^l who was with her, and he ate it.^m ⁷Then the eyes of both of them were opened, and they realized they were naked;ⁿ so they sewed fig leaves together and made coverings for themselves.^o

⁸Then the man and his wife heard the sound of the LORD God as he was walking^p in the garden in the cool of the day, and they hid^q from the LORD God among the trees of the garden. ⁹But the LORD God called to the man, “Where are you?”^r

¹⁰He answered, “I heard you in the garden, and I was afraid^s because I was naked;^t so I hid.”

¹¹And he said, “Who told you that you were naked?^u Have you eaten from the tree that I commanded you not to eat from?”^v

¹²The man said, “The woman you put here with me^w — she gave me some fruit from the tree, and I ate it.”

¹³Then the LORD God said to the woman, “What is this you have done?”

The woman said, “The serpent deceived me,^x and I ate.”

¹⁴So the LORD God said to the serpent, “Because you have done this,

“Cursed^y are you above all livestock and all wild animals!

You will crawl on your belly and you will eat dust^z all the days of your life.

3:6^k Jas 1:14-15; 1Jn 2:16
 1Nu 30:7-8;
 Jer 44:15, 19, 24, ^m2Co 11:3;
 1Ti 2:14
 3:7ⁿ Ge 2:25
^o ver 21
 3:8^p Lev 26:12;
 Dt 23:14
^q Job 13:16;
 23:7; 31:33;
 34:22, 23;
 Ps 5:5; 139:7-12; Isa 29:15;
 Jer 16:17;
 23:24; 49:10;
 Rev 6:15-16
 3:9^r Ge 4:9;
 16:8; 18:9;
 1Ki 19:9, 13
 3:10^s Ex 19:16;
 20:18; Dt 5:5;
 1Sa 12:18
^t Ge 2:25
 3:11^u Ge 2:25
^v S Ge 2:17
 3:12^w Ge 2:22
 3:13^x Ro 7:11;
 2Co 11:3;
 1Ti 2:14
 3:14^y Dt 28:15-20
^z Ps 72:9;
 Isa 49:23;
 65:25; Mic 7:17
 3:15^{aa} Jn 8:44;
 Ac 13:10;
 1Jn 3:8
^b Ge 16:11;
 Jdg 13:5;
 Isa 7:14; 8:3;
 9:6; Mt 1:23;
 Lk 1:31; Gal 4:4;
 Rev 12:17
^c Ro 16:20;
 Heb 2:14
 3:16^{ab} Ps 48:5-6;
 Isa 13:8; 21:3;
 26:17; Jer 4:31;
 6:24; Mic 4:9;
 1Ti 2:15

¹⁵And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring^{aa} and hers;^b

he will crush^b your head,^c and you will strike his heel.”

¹⁶To the woman he said,

“I will make your pains in childbearing very severe; with painful labor you will give birth to children.^d

Your desire will be for your husband, and he will rule over you.^e”

¹⁷To Adam he said, “Because you listened to your wife and ate fruit from the tree about which I commanded you, ‘You must not eat from it,’^f

“Cursed^g is the ground^h because of you; through painful toilⁱ you will eat food from it all the days of your life.^j

¹⁸It will produce thorns and thistles^k for you, and you will eat the plants of the field.^l

^a 15 Or seed ^b 15 Or strike

^e 1Co 11:3; Eph 5:22 ^{3:17} ^f S Ge 2:17 ^g Ge 5:29; Nu 35:33; Ps 106:39; Isa 24:5; Jer 3:1; Ro 8:20-22 ^h Ge 6:13; 8:21; Isa 54:9; ⁱ Ge 29:32; 31:42; Ex 3:7; Ps 66:11; 127:2; Ecc 1:13 ^j Ge 47:9; Job 5:7; 14:1; Ecc 2:23; Jer 20:18 ^{3:18} ^k Job 31:40; Isa 5:6; Heb 6:8 ^l Ps 104:14

ways: for satisfying physical pleasure (eating), for satisfying physical desires (seeing), and for becoming wise (power). First John 2:16 echoes this trio of seductive temptations when it speaks of “the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life.” Once the woman yields to these desires, she quickly gives the fruit to her husband, who is with her. Her husband has probably been mesmerized by the scene and so eats the fruit passively. The consequence is immediate. Their eyes are opened as the serpent promised. They see their nakedness and must hide it from one another by making clothing. They also must hide from God in the midst of the garden. There will be a long history before the resurrected Jesus breaks bread, representing his broken body, for his blind disciples to eat on the Emmaus Road, which causes them to truly see again (Lk 24:31).

3:8–13 God addresses the man first, using rhetorical questions to help him understand the gravity of his offense. The man expresses fear, speaks of the need to cover his nakedness, and fails to take responsibility, instead blaming the woman (and by implication God) for his transgression. His response demonstrates the consequences of the “fall” for humanity: fear, shame, and blame. God addresses the woman next. She does not accept responsibility either. She blames the serpent.

3:14–15 Significantly, God does not engage in a back-and-forth dialogue with the serpent. He simply curses it to a life of humiliation, where it will literally bite the dust. But

God promises that the woman, who was deceived first, will become the means by which the serpent and his strategy will be defeated. The woman’s offspring will engage in battle with and eventually defeat the serpent’s offspring. The woman’s offspring will be bruised on the heel—a nonlethal blow—and the serpent’s head will be crushed. Accordingly, subsequent chapters of Genesis focus on the man and woman’s human descendants. By the end of Genesis, there is an expectation of a royal figure from Judah who will rule the nations and transform nature (49:8–12). Genesis 3:15 is the fountainhead of messianic prophecy.

3:16 God declares that the woman will have pain in childbirth. There will also be strife between her and her husband. The unity and transparency between the man and woman has been broken. When the promised descendant of the woman comes, the original unity will be restored. There will no longer be Jew nor Gentile, slave nor free, male nor female (Gal 3:28). In Christ, all these judgments will be reversed.

3:17–19 God next judges the man, who is now alienated from the ground from which he came. Work, which was a divine mandate, becomes a struggle for existence. Adam also experiences pain as he labors to produce food. God further decrees that humans will die—they’ll return to the ground from which God created Adam. Death rules life. When the promised descendant of the woman finally comes, there will be a reversal, and life will rule death (Ro 5:21).