



*The  
Old Testament*





# Genesis

## TITLE

Genesis (Heb. *Bere'shith*, lit. “in the beginning”) is the first book of the Pentateuch or *Torah* (a designation for the first five books of the Old Testament). The title “Genesis” was first used in the Septuagint (a Greek translation of the Old Testament).

## AUTHOR

Though Genesis has no explicit authorship statement, its inclusion in the Pentateuch suggests Mosaic authorship. Other books—Exodus, Numbers and Deuteronomy—all assert Mosaic authorship (Ex 17:14; 24:4–8; 34:27; Nu 33:1–2; Dt 31:9,22). In the rest of the Old Testament, the Pentateuch is referred to collectively as “the Book of the Law of Moses” (Jos 8:31; 2Ki 14:6; Ne 13:1). The New Testament confirms this authorship (Mt 19:8; Lk 24:27; Jn 5:45–47; Ac 3:22; Ro 10:5; Rev 15:3). The familiarity of the writer of Genesis with Egyptian geography (Ge 45:10; 47:11) confirms that the author was well acquainted with Egyptian culture, as would have been Moses, who was reared in the household of Pharaoh. Some short sections of Genesis, such as the list of kings from the period of the Israelite monarchy, may have been added during the time of the divided kingdom (Ge 36); in the same way, cities are often given the names they bore during the time of the monarchy rather than their patriarchal names. These scribal additions could well have been made in the process of copying manuscripts and do not affect the book’s message other than to improve the clarity of Genesis for contemporary readers.

## DATE

The book tells the story of mankind from creation to the death of Joseph. Dating the events that relate to the creation, the flood, and the repopulation of the earth is impossible (Ge 1–11), but the remainder of the book deals with the patriarchal age, which is roughly the same as the Middle Bronze Age (1950–1550 BC). The customs found in Genesis bear striking parallels to laws and customs recorded in other documents of the second millennium, most notably those found in tablets discovered at the Hurrian city of Nuzi in northeastern Mesopotamia.

The Pentateuch as a whole was written between the exodus and the death of Moses (Dt 34). The exodus is variously dated, with 1445 BC as the earliest date. If this date is assumed, the death of Moses would fall around 1400 BC. Genesis was thus produced sometime in the late fifteenth century BC, several centuries after the patriarchs whose lives it describes.



## BACKGROUND

### *Setting*

The setting is vast in scope since the book opens with the creation of the universe and closes with the small but growing number of the descendants of Jacob, now identified as Israel, who settled in the choice land of the Nile delta of Egypt. In between, the action focuses on the entire Fertile Crescent from the universal flood (which ended on the mountains of Ararat) and the tower of Babel (in the land of Shinar) to Abraham's journeys throughout Canaan.

### *Purpose*

Genesis answers the question, "Who are we, and where did we come from?" God as the only Creator presented himself to a people about to enter a land filled with false idols. God confirmed his selection and sovereign preservation of this nation facing hardships in a new land. Most importantly, Genesis reveals that Israel was set apart by God from the very beginning of creation. This knowledge provided a motivation for Israel to remain free from the idolatry and paganism surrounding the nation.

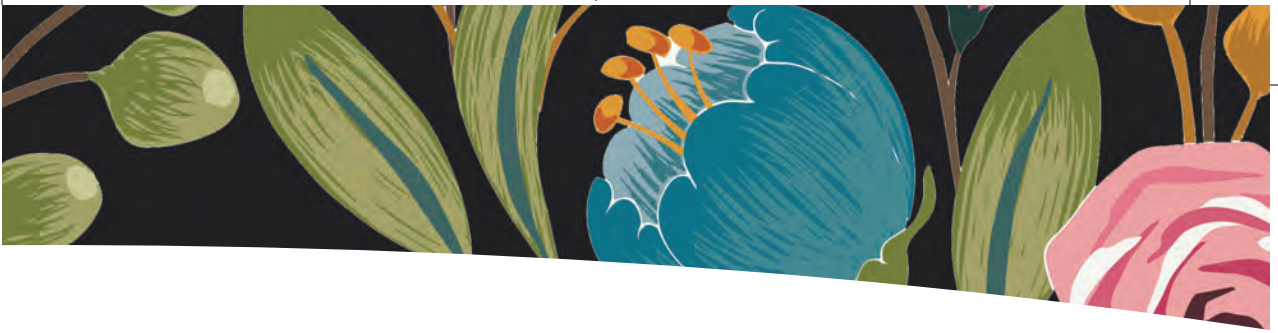
### *Audience*

The Israelites were about to enter Canaan. Since the older generation (except Joshua and Caleb) had died in the desert, no others were left with a personal memory of God's miraculous deliverance from the Egyptians. The young nation entering the promised land would be faced with an immense temptation to assimilate the idolatry, intermarriage and customs of the pagan nations around them. This same temptation faces God's people in every generation; Genesis reveals that God's plan for setting apart his people stretches back to creation.

### *Literary Characteristics*

Genesis is a carefully structured book; its literary structure reinforces its explicit message. The first section, the story of creation (Ge 1:1–2:3), is set up in two segments of three days each. The creative works of the first and the fourth days are parallel, since during the first day God created light and darkness, while on the fourth day he created the sun and moon to govern the periods of light and darkness. On the second day, the firmament divided the waters; on the fifth day, the inhabitants of the sky and water were created. The third day dry land and vegetation appeared; the sixth day land-dwellers were created to consume the vegetation. The structure emphasizes God's plan and control over all aspects of creation.

After the introductory section, the book is divided by the recurrent phrase "This is the account of" (Heb. *toledoth*). Each occurrence of this phrase marks a new stage in God's development of a chosen people. The story of mankind is presented as a whole (Ge 2:4—4:26). After the judgment of mankind, the phrase appears repeatedly as a reminder that God chooses one man from each family (for example, Seth, Noah, Shem, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob) to lead in preserving and carrying on the godly line. Also clear are the partnerships the patriarchs enjoyed with their wives—Abraham and



Sarah, Isaac and Rebekah, and Jacob and Rachel were part of God's plan as well. The passing of God's covenant promises from one generation to the next is emphasized by the parallel structure of the stories themselves. Abraham, Isaac and Jacob all traveled to Egypt; all three endured tests followed by covenant renewals. Sarah, Rebekah and Rachel all suffered from barrenness, but each experienced God's grace in bearing children who would play a major role in the building of a nation.

The primary theme of Genesis is God's formation of the nation and his providential protection of a special people for himself. The methods God used to call out and shape this nation form the minor themes of the book.

*God's Sovereignty*—God appears first as sovereign Creator and Ruler; his power over history and the actions of his people reappears throughout the book in his preservation of his chosen ones.

*God's Covenant*—God uses the “covenant” (Heb. *berith*) continually to separate one man from the rest of mankind. The first covenant is made with Adam in the Garden of Eden (Ge 2:16–17; see chart, The Covenants of Genesis). After the fall, God continues to make covenants with each subsequent generation, selecting one man from each family to continue godly seed for the next generation. Covenants are made with Noah (Ge 9:9), Abraham (Ge 12:1–3), Isaac (Ge 26:2–5) and Jacob (Ge 28:13–15).

*God's Redemption*—The story of the formation of the chosen people is the story of redemption. The “offspring,” the godly line of those faithful to the Lord, will eventually crush the “offspring” of the serpent, the wicked who live in rebellion against God (Ge 3:14–15). This prophecy was ultimately fulfilled in the coming of Christ. Since Israel was God's chosen nation from whom the Messiah was to come, Israel's story reveals God's redemptive action in human history.

## THEMES

*The Threat to God's Plan*—The fourth theme of Genesis is the struggle of the serpent and his offspring to destroy the chosen family. Sin, famine, war and the threat of national assimilation into the surrounding Canaanite culture conspired to block the fulfillment of God's covenant promises. These threats are continually diverted by God's sovereign, preserving power.

## OUTLINE

- I. **Introduction: The Origins of the Heavens and the Earth (1:1–2:3)**
  - A. **The first day: light and darkness (1:1–5)**
  - B. **The second day: firmament (1:6–8)**
  - C. **The third day: seas and earth, vegetation (1:9–13)**
  - D. **The fourth day: sun, moon and stars (1:14–19)**
  - E. **The fifth day: sea creatures and birds (1:20–23)**
  - F. **The sixth day: land animals and mankind (1:24–31)**
  - G. **The seventh day: God's rest (2:1–3)**



- II. The Generations of the Heavens and the Earth: The Entry of Man (2:4—4:26)**
  - A. The placement of man in the garden (2:4–17)**
  - B. The creation of woman (2:18–25)**
  - C. The sin of the primal couple (3:1–7)**
  - D. The pronouncement of God’s judgment (3:8–24)**
  - E. The introduction of the family of Adam (4:1–26)**
- III. The Generations of Adam: The Chosen Line (5:1—6:8)**
  - A. The godly line of Seth (5:1–32)**
  - B. The great wickedness of the earth (6:1–8)**
- IV. The Generations of Noah: Judgment on the Earth (6:9—9:29)**
  - A. The pronouncement of God’s judgment (6:9—7:6)**
  - B. The preservation of Noah by the ark (7:7—8:19)**
  - C. The making of a covenant with Noah (8:20—9:29)**
- V. The Generations of Noah’s Sons: The Spread of Mankind (10:1—11:9)**
  - A. The descendants of Noah (10:1–32)**
  - B. God’s division of the nations (11:1–9)**
- VI. The Generations of Shem: God’s Choice of Abram (11:10—25:11)**
  - A. The godly line of Shem (11:10–32)**
  - B. God’s choice of Abram (12:1–9)**
  - C. Abram’s journey from his homeland (12:10—14:24)**
  - D. The miraculous birth of Isaac (15:1—21:7)**
  - E. The extension of God’s grace to Isaac (21:8—25:11)**
- VII. The Generations of Ishmael and Isaac: The Blessing of Abraham (25:12—35:29)**
  - A. The sons of Ishmael (25:12–18)**
  - B. God’s choice of Jacob (25:19—28:22)**
  - C. Jacob’s journey from his homeland (29:1—33:17)**
  - D. Jacob’s sojourn in Canaan (33:18—35:29)**
- VIII. The Generations of Esau: The Edomites (36:1–43)**
- IX. The Generations of Jacob: The Saving of Israel by Joseph (37:1—50:26)**
  - A. The conflict among the sons of Jacob (37:1—38:30)**
  - B. Joseph’s slavery in Egypt (39:1—40:23)**
  - C. Joseph’s rise to power (41:1–57)**
  - D. Joseph’s encounter with his brothers (42:1—45:28)**
  - E. Jacob’s journey with his household to Egypt (46:1—47:26)**
  - F. Jacob’s blessing on his descendants (47:27—49:28)**
  - G. The deaths of Jacob and Joseph in Egypt (49:29—50:26)**

### The Beginning

**1** In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. <sup>2</sup>Now the earth was formless and empty, darkness was over the surface of the deep, and the Spirit of God was hovering over the waters.

<sup>3</sup>And God said, “Let there be light,” and there was light. <sup>4</sup>God saw that the light was good, and he separated the light from the darkness. <sup>5</sup>God called the light “day,” and the darkness he called “night.” And there was evening, and there was morning—the first day.

<sup>6</sup>And God said, “Let there be a vault between the waters to separate water from water.” <sup>7</sup>So God made the vault and separated the water under the vault from the water above it. And it was so. <sup>8</sup>God called the vault “sky.” And there was evening, and there was morning—the second day.

<sup>9</sup>And God said, “Let the water under the sky be gathered to one place, and let dry ground appear.” And it was so. <sup>10</sup>God called the dry ground “land,” and the gathered waters he called “seas.” And God saw that it was good.

<sup>11</sup>Then God said, “Let the land produce vegetation: seed-bearing plants and trees on the land that bear fruit with seed in it, according to their various kinds.” And it was so. <sup>12</sup>The land produced vegetation: plants bearing seed according to their kinds and trees

bearing fruit with seed in it according to their kinds. And God saw that it was good. <sup>13</sup>And there was evening, and there was morning—the third day.

<sup>14</sup>And God said, “Let there be lights in the vault of the sky to separate the day from the night, and let them serve as signs to mark sacred times, and days and years,

<sup>15</sup>and let them be lights in the vault of the sky to give light on the earth.” And it was so. <sup>16</sup>God made two great lights—

the greater light to govern the day and the lesser light to govern the night. He also made the stars. <sup>17</sup>God set them in

the vault of the sky to give light on the earth, <sup>18</sup>to govern the day and the night, and to separate light from darkness.

And God saw that it was good. <sup>19</sup>And there was evening, and there was morning—the fourth day.

<sup>20</sup>And God said, “Let the water teem with living creatures, and let birds fly above the

I COULD WISH THAT ALL YOUNG  
PERSONS MIGHT BE EXHORTED TO . . .  
READ THE GREAT BOOK OF NATURE, WHEREIN  
THEY MAY SEE THE WISDOM AND POWER  
OF THE CREATOR, IN THE ORDER OF THE  
UNIVERSE, AND IN THE PRODUCTION  
AND PRESERVATION OF ALL THINGS.

*Anne Baynard, 1697*

**1:1** The first verse of Genesis reveals the book’s vital underlying assumption: God is the ultimate Creator of everything. The verb “created” (Heb. *bara*, lit. “to make from nothing,” vv. 1,21,27; Ge 2:4) is used almost exclusively of divine activity (see Isa 43:15). The other verbs used for God’s creative activity are “made” (Heb. *asah*, vv. 16,25–26; Ge 2:18; Heb. *banah*, lit. “built,” Ge 2:22) and “formed” (Heb. *yatsar*, Ge 2:7,19). The first chapter of Genesis uses the Hebrew word *Elohim* for God, emphasizing God’s character and power as the true and only God, the sole actor in creation. Though plural in form, the reference in number is to one and thus is used with a singular verb. This plural of majesty expresses honor and power.

**1:2** This formlessness describes an earth wrecked by divine judgment (Isa 34:11; Jer 4:23). Some have theorized that the creation of the heavens and earth described in verse 1 was destroyed in the judgment of Lucifer (see Isa 14; Eze 23). This “Gap Theory” assumes a stretch of time between verses 1 and 2; verse 2 then begins the story of the re-creation. More likely, Jeremiah and Ezekiel simply used the phrase as descriptive of utter desolation. According to this view, verse 1 describes

God’s first creative act, while verses 2–31 follow with a detailed description of his creative work with an interlude of unfinished business between verses 1 and 2. Here God is depicted as having a “Spirit” (Heb. *ruach*, lit. “wind” or “breath”) who acts as his agent in creation, although the Spirit is not revealed as a separate member of the Trinity until the NT (see Jn 3:1–21; 14:16–17,26; 16:5–14; 20:22). “Hovering” implies “brooding” in the sense of a mother bird nurturing life.

**1:5** The first day. The word “day” (Heb. *yom*) is somewhat ambiguous. It may refer to the 24-hour period of darkness and light (see Ex 12:18) or simply to a specific period of time: for example, the “day of the LORD” is a time of judgment (Isa 13:6). “Day” is further defined as “evening” and “morning” (see Ps 55:17).

**1:11** The order of creation demanded that reproduction only occur within certain limits. Although it is impossible to determine the exact boundaries of “kinds,” divisions existed between types of plants (v. 12), types of sea creatures and birds (v. 21), and different species of earth animals (v. 25). Man is sharply separated from animals (v. 26).

## Theological Foundations for Headship

THEOLOGICAL TRUTH	REFERENCE
The priority of Adam's creation.	Ge 2:7
The use of the name "Adam" for the entire race.	Ge 2:20
The investiture of Adam with authority prior to Eve's creation.	Ge 2:15
The assignment to the man of the responsibility for provision and protection.	Ge 2:15–17
The responsibility of the man in naming the animals.	Ge 2:20
The designation of the woman as the man's helper.	Ge 2:18,20
The naming of the woman by the man.	Ge 2:23; 3:20
The recognition of the man as leader and spokesman.	Ge 3:9,11

earth across the vault of the sky.”<sup>21</sup> So God created the great creatures of the sea and every living thing with which the water teems and that moves about in it, according to their kinds, and every winged bird according to its kind. And God saw that it was good.<sup>22</sup> God 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.”

<sup>23</sup> And there was evening, and there was morning—the fifth day.

<sup>24</sup> And God said, “Let the land produce living creatures according to their kinds: the livestock, the creatures that move along the ground, and the wild animals, each according to its kind.” And it was so.<sup>25</sup> God made the wild animals according to their kinds, the livestock according to their kinds, and all the creatures that move along the ground according to their kinds. And God saw that it was good.

<sup>26</sup> Then God said, “Let us make mankind in our image, in our likeness, so that they may rule over the fish in the sea and the birds in the sky, over the livestock and all the wild animals,<sup>a</sup> and

over all the creatures that move along the ground.”

<sup>27</sup> So God created mankind in his own image,

in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them.

<sup>28</sup> God blessed them and said to them, “Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it. Rule over the fish in the sea and the birds in the sky and over every living creature that moves on the ground.”

<sup>29</sup> Then 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.<sup>30</sup> And 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 in it—I give every green plant for food.” And it was so.

<sup>31</sup> God saw all that he had made, and it was very good. And there was evening, and there was morning—the sixth day.

<sup>a</sup> 26 Probable reading of the original Hebrew text (see Syriac); Masoretic Text *the earth*

**1:26** The plurality used by God in reference to himself does not detract from his unity (see v. 1, note). “Mankind” (Heb. *Adam*) is obviously a generic reference to both man and woman. The text of Scripture does not use gender-inclusive language and often lets the masculine serve for both mascu-

line and feminine, as here (see also chart, Female Metaphors for God). The passage does not specify in what way mankind bears God's image. “Image” (representation) and “likeness” (similarity) are synonymous—both referring to something made after the pattern of something else.



## HEADSHIP

### SERVANT LEADERSHIP

Headship is a responsibility to assume with humility and not a right to demand with pride. As defined in Scripture, it is first assigned to the husband during the act of creation as part of the pre-fall perfection. The man was created first (Ge 2:7), and the woman was created as his helper so that he would not be alone in his dominion over the world (Ge 2:18). She was always part of the divine plan for fellowship, continuing the generations, and doing the work assigned by God (Ge 1:26–28). This is further verified when Adam is vested with the ultimate responsibility for disobedience because he received the directive concerning the forbidden fruit from God himself (Ge 2:15–17). Eve was only aware of the command through her husband.

The apostle Paul further clarified how headship was established as he reiterated the order of creation and stated that the woman was created for the man and not vice versa (1Co 11:2–12). Paul did not appeal to the curse on man or the fall as a reason for man's headship; rather, he appealed to the act of and purpose for the woman's creation before the fall.

Marriage was designed by God, before there was any creative activity, to be a picture of his own relationship with his people, then to pattern the relationship between Christ and his church. The fall introduced sin, and the relationship between husbands and wives was distorted: loving servant headship was replaced by tyranny and a desire for power or by an indifference and unwillingness to offer spiritual leadership.

In Biblical headship, the husband is assigned the primary responsibility for Christlike, servant leadership in the home (Eph 5:23–29). The wife is then expected to respond in honoring and affirming her husband's leadership (Eph 5:21–22,33; 1Pe 3:1–4). A balance between leadership and servanthood is necessary. Our Lord is a pattern for such leadership. Jesus' servanthood did not cancel his leadership. His servanthood defined leadership (Lk 22:26; Heb 13:17).

Headship should not merely prescribe who does what but rather should be a basis for moving forward the goals of a family in an orderly manner. The husband is not Christ; however, he should encourage his wife and children to give allegiance to and depend on Christ.

The husband is to lead his wife in a partnership that glorifies God. In loving headship, the husband humbles himself to meet the needs of his wife—loving, nourishing, and cherishing her as a treasure (Eph 5:25–29; 1Pe 3:7).

*See also Ge 3:1–20; Col 3:18–19; Heb 13:7; chart on Biblical Manhood and Womanhood (Job 31); notes on Authority (Jn 19); Femininity (Ps 144); Husbands (Job 31; 2Co 6); Marriage (Ge 2; 2Sa 6; Pr 5; Hos 2; Am 3; 2Co 13; Heb 12); Masculinity (Ge 2); Patriarchy (Ge 28); Submission (1Pe 3); Wives (Pr 31)*

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

<sup>2</sup>By the seventh day God had finished the work he had been doing; so on the sev-

enth day he rested from all his work.

<sup>3</sup>Then God blessed the seventh day and made it holy, because on it he rested from all the work of creating that he had done.

**2:2** The word “Sabbath” (Heb. *shabbath*, lit. “cease”) is reserved for the seventh day, during which there is cessation from labor. The author of Hebrews links God’s rest at creation with the gospel. Believing the gospel is entering his rest (Heb 4:3), and God’s day of rest at creation is like the rest we have from our works when we believe in Jesus for salvation (Heb 4:10). God modeled this rest at creation and gives instructions to his children to do the same (Ex 20:8–11).

**2:3** Making the Lord’s day holy is to separate it from the rest by dedicating it to God. God set this day apart after creation and reminds us through the Sabbath that we have rest from our works through him (Heb 4:1–10). Unlike the other six days of creation, the record of the seventh day is not recorded with the “evening and morning” formula, perhaps suggesting the continuing observance of the Sabbath throughout the history of Israel.



## MASCULINITY

## THE NATURE OF A MAN

God has gifted men with great capacities for responsible leadership. This can be channeled positively into the church and all walks of life through teaching, leading by moral example and supporting righteous causes (1Ti 2:8). Masculine power when sanctified can be used in a positive way, such as in the lives of great men through whom God provides leadership. Abraham showed us the trait of “adventure” with God by taking steps of faith where no man had gone (Ge 12–18). We see vision in Moses (Exodus) and faithfulness in Joshua, even when he was in the minority (Dt 31:6–8). David showed courage to fight against incredible odds (1Sa 17), and Nehemiah had initiative as a builder, organizing men to rebuild a wall and a city (Ne 1–8). By contrast, men like Nebuchadnezzar used their power for destruction and cruelty in war (2Ki 24:10–17). How wonderful that God balances this image of dominant masculine strength and power with the example of the Lord Jesus who was moved by compassion (Mt 20:34), loved little children (Mk 10:14), cried at the death of his friend (Jn 11:35), and gave his life so that others might live (Jn 3:16). The “man of integrity” (Job 31) finds a parallel in the “woman of strength” (Pr 31:10–31).

See also Eph 5:25–33; 6:4; chart on *Biblical Manhood and Womanhood* (Job 31); notes on *Biblical Equality* (Eph 5); *Fatherhood* (Eph 5); *Femininity* (Ps 144); *Husbands* (Job 31; 2Co 6)

*Adam and Eve*

<sup>4</sup>This is the account of the heavens and the earth when they were created, when the LORD God made the earth and the heavens.

<sup>5</sup>Now no shrub had yet appeared on the earth<sup>a</sup> and no plant had yet sprung up, for the LORD God had not sent rain on the earth and there was no one to work the ground, <sup>6</sup>but streams<sup>b</sup> came up from the earth and watered the whole surface of the ground. <sup>7</sup>Then the LORD God formed a man<sup>c</sup> from the dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man became a living being.

<sup>8</sup>Now the LORD God had planted a garden in the east, in Eden; and there he put the man he had formed. <sup>9</sup>The LORD God made all kinds of trees grow out of the ground—trees that were pleasing to the eye and good for food. In the middle of the garden were the tree of life and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.

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

<sup>15</sup>The LORD God took the man and put him in the Garden of Eden to work it and

<sup>a</sup> <sup>5</sup> Or *land*; also in verse 6 <sup>b</sup> <sup>6</sup> Or *mist* <sup>c</sup> <sup>7</sup> 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).

<sup>d</sup> <sup>12</sup> Or *good*; *pearls* <sup>e</sup> <sup>13</sup> Possibly southeast Mesopotamia

**2:4** The account of the heavens and the earth. Some scholars have suggested that Genesis 1 and 2 are different creation stories placed side by side. The structure of chapter 2 does not support this theory. Verses 1–3 complete the recounting of the seven days of creation; verses 4–7 in Hebrew are one long sentence summarizing God’s creative activity. A more detailed description follows of the creation of the man (vv. 7,15–17), of the garden in which the man and woman would live (vv. 8–14), and of the woman who was to be his “helper” (vv. 18–25). The word “account” (lit. “generations”) is elsewhere used to introduce genealogical lines (Ge 5:1; 10:1). The name of the Creator (Heb. *Elohim*) is here joined to his covenant name (Heb. *Yahweh*) and translated “Lord God,” making clear that the great Sovereign of the universe and the covenant God of Israel are one.

**2:8** The garden in Eden (perhaps meaning “delight”). This original habitat (Heb. *gan*, lit. “a place hedged round” or “a

protected place”) was a delightful shelter, containing everything the man and woman needed: food (v. 9), beauty (v. 9), water (v. 10), fellowship with God (v. 16; see also Ge 3:8) and human companionship (Ge 2:22–25).

**2:11–14** Two rivers may have connected the Tigris and Euphrates, which run parallel. The Pishon (v. 11) and the Gihon (v. 13) may also have been tributaries of the Nile. Havilah was probably in Armenia or Mesopotamia. The name is preceded by the definite article in this verse, distinguishing it from the territory mentioned in Genesis 25:18 and 1 Samuel 15:7. Cush is traditionally Ethiopia or Nubia but may also refer to Kassite territory east of the Tigris. “Ashur” was probably a city.

**2:15** Labor was instituted before the fall, not as a result of the curse. “To work it” carries the idea of service; to “take care of it” (Heb. *shamar*) is to “guard” and “preserve” (a word used in reference to the cherubim who guard the tree of life, Ge 3:24).



## MARRIAGE

## GOD'S PLAN FOR MARRIAGE

God's plan for marriage is introduced here (Ge 2:24) and repeated in the Gospels (Mt 19:5) and in the New Testament letters (Eph 5:31). Marriage was perfect in its establishment: one man and one woman in a lifetime commitment.

God never intended for man to be alone (Ge 2:18). The very bone from which woman was crafted came from man (Ge 2:23). Woman was taken out of man and then presented to man in order to complete him. God created the man and the woman in his image (Ge 1:26) with physical and emotional needs that only another human being could meet (Ge 2:18).

No parents were in Eden, but God's plan extended to the future with his formula for oneness in marriage. The partners are to "leave" their parents and "be united" (KJV "cleave") in order to become one (Ge 2:24). They are to be willing to lay aside all that pertains to their old loyalties and lifestyles of separate goals and plans and be united to one another. This "uniting" refers to a strong, enduring bond—making one unit bound together by unconditional commitment, love and acceptance—resulting in a combined unit much stronger than either individual had been separately (Ecc 4:9–12).

No other human relationship, not with parent or child, is to supersede the bond between husband and wife. Marriage is a covenant commitment—a vow made to God and the partner, not only to love but also to be faithful and to endure in this lifelong exclusive relationship (Mt 19:6).

Marriage is a threefold miracle. It is a biological miracle by which two people actually become one flesh; it is a social miracle through which two families are grafted together; it is a spiritual miracle in that the marriage relationship pictures the union of Christ and his bride, the church (Eph 5:23–27). God clearly intended transparency and openness as part of his plan for the marriage relationship—vulnerability without shame (Ge 2:25).

*See also notes on Biblical Equality (Eph 5); Family (Ge 32; 1Sa 3; Ps 78; 127); Husbands (Job 31; 2Co 6); Marriage (2Sa 6; Pr 5; Hos 2; Am 3; 2Co 13; Heb 12); Wives (Pr 31)*

take care of it. <sup>16</sup>And the LORD God commanded the man, "You are free to eat from any tree in the garden; <sup>17</sup>but you must not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, for when you eat from it you will certainly die."

<sup>18</sup>The LORD God said, "It is not good for the man to be alone. I will make a helper suitable for him."

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

the livestock, the birds in the sky and all the wild animals.

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

<sup>23</sup>The man said,

"This is now bone of my bones  
and flesh of my flesh;

<sup>a</sup> 20 Or *the man*    <sup>b</sup> 21 Or *took part of the man's side*

<sup>c</sup> 22 Or *part*

**2:18** The word for "helper" (Heb. *'ezer*) is a strong term. It can also mean to "nourish" or "sustain." The term is used for God himself throughout the Old Testament (see Dt 33:29; Ps 33:20; 70:5; 121:1–2). The woman was created in the image of God (Ge 1:27), and her creation as a "helper" to the man reflects

aspects of the character of God, particularly related to his nourishing, sustaining and protecting care of his children.

**2:19** The word "man" referred to man and woman collectively and revealed their origin (v. 7, *adamah*, Heb., lit. "ground" or "earth"; see Ge 1–5).



## THE CREATION OF THE WOMAN

God identified himself as a “helper” (Heb. *‘ezer*) to Israel (Ex 18:4; Dt 33:7). The word does not imply inferiority. It describes function rather than worth. No one loses value in humbly assuming the role of helper. As a “helper” to the man, the woman became his partner spiritually in the overwhelming task of obedience to God and dominion over the earth. She was also to be a vital part of extending the generations (Ge 1:28). The woman, as ultimate friend to the man, would bring him comfort and fellowship (Ge 2:23–24). No one else could encourage and inspire him as she was created to do. The phrase “suitable to him” (Heb. *kenegdo*, lit. “corresponding to what is in front of him”) occurs only in verses 18 and 20, emphasizing the commonality of the man and the woman. Designed as the perfect counterpart for the man, the woman was neither inferior nor superior, but she was alike and equal to the man in her personhood while different and unique in her function.

Man and woman were both created in God’s image. Just as man was formed from earth, woman was formed from man. She corresponds perfectly to the man, the same flesh and blood, and in “the image of God” just as the man, equal to him in every way (Ge 1:27). By the creative act itself, she is inseparably linked to the man. The unity of the race is assured (Ge 1:27–28); the woman’s dignity and worth is affirmed (Ge 2:22); the foundation for Christian marriage is set forth in a memorable way (v. 24).

The woman was not an afterthought. The man was designed and created physically, emotionally, socially, and spiritually with her coming creation planned and assured. In fact, God said that the man “alone” was not good; he needed the woman (v. 18). God made man from “the dust of the ground,” but he made the woman from “one of the man’s ribs” (Heb. *tsela’*, lit. “side”).

God uses Adam to express the uniqueness of the woman in a unique play on words. Even the language itself reflects the unity God planned between the man (Heb. *‘ish*) and the woman (Heb. *‘ishshah*). The expression “bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh” occurs elsewhere in the Old Testament as an expression of blood relationship. Though Adam’s naming of the woman does not in itself require his authority over her, the act of assigning a name in the Oriental culture—even to now—is significant and in most cases does imply both authority and responsibility. Note, for example, the naming of the animals (vv. 19–20), Pharaoh’s renaming of Joseph (Ge 41:45), the renaming of Mattaniah by Nebuchadnezzar (2Ki 24:17), and the renaming of Daniel and his friends by Nebuchadnezzar’s eunuch (Da 1:6–7). The woman’s name is a recognition of her origins, in the same way that Adam’s name acknowledges his creation from the earth (Ge 2:19, note).

See also Ge 1:27; 24:67; chart on God’s Plan for Marriage; portrait of Eve (Ge 3)

she shall be called ‘woman,’  
for she was taken out of man.”

<sup>24</sup>That is why a man leaves his father and mother and is united to his wife, and they become one flesh.

<sup>25</sup>Adam and his wife were both naked, and they felt no shame.

### The Fall

**3** Now the serpent 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?’”

<sup>2</sup>The woman said to the serpent, “We may

**2:24** The marriage covenant has three parts (see chart, God’s Plan for Marriage):

- 1) to leave father and mother, a reference to the wedding ceremony or time of public commitment,
- 2) to be “united,” suggesting tender affection and faithful commitment in a permanent relationship of growing love, and

3) to “become one flesh” in physical union, which notes the deepest and most exclusive intimacy.

The Hebrew verbs translated here as “leaves” and “is united” are used elsewhere in Scripture to describe covenant relationships (see Dt 4:4; Jer 1:16).

**3:1** Satan chose to disguise himself as a “crafty” (lit. “shrewd” or “clever”) creature. The text does not comment on why the



## THE FALL OF CREATION

### REJECTION OF THE CREATOR'S PLAN

The sentences passed on man and woman at the time of the fall affected their relationships to God, nature, and each other. The judgment that followed is not necessarily related to the nature of the sin committed. However tragic and far-reaching the consequences, sin does not force the Creator to cancel his plan. Rather, sin perverts and hinders our response to his plan. As a result of the fall, pain has been added to childbirth, tyranny to headship, rebellion to submission, and problems to work, as well as separation to the fellowship of union.

Of particular interest to women is the twofold judgment of Genesis 3:16. Women were assigned “pains in childbearing.” Childbearing itself is not the judgment. Children are a heritage and reward from the Lord (Ps 127:3), and giving birth is a woman’s opportunity to link hands with the Creator to continue the generations (Ge 1:28). Imagining a pain-free childbirth experience is difficult, but this is apparently the original plan of the Creator.

The second part of the judgment—“your desire will be for your husband, and he will rule over you”—described the painful consequences of sin in the male-female relationship. Both the man and woman chose to ignore the Creator’s plan and do things their own way. The complementary roles of man and woman, which had originally functioned to produce unity and harmony, would henceforth be a source of friction. God’s plan did not change. However, woman would have a sin tendency to disrespect man’s role of leadership, and man in his sinfulness would tend to abuse his authority and even crush the woman.

Christian men and women are given clear principles to counteract these effects of sin and are reminded of their equality as persons (1Pe 3:7) and of the complementary, harmonious relationship for which they were created (Eph 5:21–33; Col 3:18–19).

*See also notes on Biblical Equality (Eph 5); Marriage (Ge 2; 2Sa 6; Pr 5; Hos 2; Am 3; 2Co 13; Heb 12); Submission (1Pe 3)*

eat fruit from the trees in the garden, <sup>3</sup>but 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.’”

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

<sup>6</sup>When the woman saw that the fruit of the tree was good for food and pleasing to the eye, and also desirable for gaining wis-

dom, she took some and ate it. She also gave some to her husband, who was with her, and he ate it. <sup>7</sup>Then the eyes of both of them were opened, and they realized they were naked; so they sewed fig leaves together and made coverings for themselves.

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

serpent approached the woman—perhaps because she, unlike Adam, did not receive this prohibition directly from God (see Ge 2:16–17).

**3:3** Satan began his conversation with the woman by questioning God (v. 1). The woman distorted God’s command by adding her own interpretation, “and you must not touch it, or you will die” (v. 3). Either she was exaggerating in hopes of making God’s directive so restrictive as to appear unjust, or Adam did not properly convey the prohibition to her.

**3:5** The serpent contradicted God, using the phrasing of the

divine command (v. 4). The temptation to disobedience involved gaining knowledge without first learning obedience. Ultimately, every temptation is to go your own way instead of God’s way (Pr 14:12; 22:6, note).

**3:6** The tree is pleasing to the eye, good for food, and desirable for gaining wisdom. Both the man and the woman sinned through listening to another created being rather than to God (see Jas 1:15; charts, The Results of Sin; Temptation: The Analysis of a Successful Trap).



## THE CURSE

The curse is not just a judgment rendered but is also an explanation of the relationship between the man and the woman after the fall. Alienation is now present between the man and the woman, and between the couple and God, and that means a distortion of God's plan, but there is no indication in the text that he has eliminated the headship of the man in marriage. God does not make his plans dependent upon perfect people or the right circumstances. The curse offers a vivid description of the conditions that exist in a fallen world: pain in childbirth, abuse of headship, and defiance rather than submission. Childbirth could not be a curse because that has always been God's plan for producing the next generation. Nevertheless, pain and suffering now accompany the experience. Work is not a curse since that, too, was part of the Creator's plan. The man needed a helper for his responsibilities of dominion. Sin made the work difficult. Some suggest that the woman assumed leadership and ignored the directive that came to her through her husband (Ge 3:6), and the man listened to his wife, abandoning his own responsibility for leadership (v. 17). In any case, both the woman and the man determined to go their own ways rather than going God's way, and this act of disobedience is what broke their fellowship with God.

*See also Pr 22:6, note; charts on The Results of Sin; Theological Foundations for Headship; Role Relationship Between Men and Women; note on Headship (Ge 1)*

<sup>10</sup>He answered, "I heard you in the garden, and I was afraid because I was naked; so I hid."

<sup>11</sup>And he said, "Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten from the tree that I commanded you not to eat from?"

<sup>12</sup>The man said, "The woman you put here with me — she gave me some fruit from the tree, and I ate it."

<sup>13</sup>Then the LORD God said to the woman, "What is this you have done?"

The woman said, "The serpent deceived me, and I ate."

<sup>14</sup>So the LORD God said to the serpent, "Because you have done this,

"Cursed are you above all livestock  
and all wild animals!

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

<sup>15</sup>And I will put enmity  
between you and the woman,  
and between your offspring<sup>a</sup> and hers;  
he will crush<sup>b</sup> your head,  
and you will strike his heel."

<sup>16</sup>To the woman he said,

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

Your desire will be for your husband,  
and he will rule over you."

<sup>17</sup>To 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,'

<sup>a</sup> <sup>15</sup> Or seed      <sup>b</sup> <sup>15</sup> Or strike

**3:12** Adam's response indicates his refusal to take responsibility for his own actions. The woman copied this typical response to sin (v. 13).

**3:14** God's judgment on the serpent does not distinguish between the earthly creature and Satan, who is later revealed as the animal's motivating intelligence (Rev 12:9). The serpent is charming but deadly (Nu 21:6; Ecc 10:11) and represents opposition to God (Job 26:13; Isa 27:1).

**3:15** The first prophecy of the coming of the Messiah is known as the *protevangelium* (Lat., lit. "the first preaching of the gospel"). In the OT, "offspring" is used to refer both to individual offspring and to descendants in general. The woman plays a key role not only because she was approached and entrapped by Satan but also because she is "the mother of all the living" (v. 20), for through her the Savior would come (Gal 4:4).

Whereas in human reproduction the sperm is delivered to the womb of the woman by the man, in the miraculous conception of Jesus the Messiah, the offspring came to the woman as a result of the Holy Spirit's overshadowing her (Lk 1:35; see Isa 7, The Virgin Birth). A messianic interpretation is justified since the crushing of the serpent's head implies a mortal wound. On the other hand, the striking of the "heel" is not fatal, a reference ultimately to the Savior's sufferings, which were only preparatory to his victorious resurrection (see Isa 53:5).

**3:16** The woman's judgment. Unlike his words to the serpent and the man, God did not use the verb "cursed" (Heb. *rur*) in passing judgment on the woman. The first part of the judgment can also be translated "your sorrow in conception"; the blessing of fertility still exists but has been distorted. The Hebrew word for "sorrow" is a form of the word translated "pain"

## Eve: THE MOTHER OF ALL LIVING

Adam was given supervision over the creation, but God declared that for him to live his life alone was not good. From the man's rib God created a woman and presented her as a wife to Adam, climaxing his creative work (Ge 2:18–24). Eve was not an afterthought or happenstance but an indispensable part of God's plan. Both Adam and Eve, made "in the image of God," stood as his representatives in the world to care for all he put under their dominion.

Purity and innocence were shattered, however, when the serpent entered the scene. Eve chose to believe Satan's lie. She was free to put her will above God's will, and she did. When she offered the fruit to her husband, he, too, disobeyed. In the New Testament, Paul clarified their actions, saying that Eve was deceived; whereas Adam ate with full knowledge of wrongdoing (2Co 11:3; 1Ti 2:14). Then, filled with guilt, the couple hid from God, fashioning fig leaf coverings to hide their shame. Not only had they broken their relationship with God, but also they had broken their relationship with one another and with all the generations to come and even with the world and nature over which they were to rule.

God cursed the serpent and the ground for man's sake, and he prophesied sorrow, toil and death for the first couple. Pain for the woman would come in giving birth and rearing children and in her relationship to her husband. She would resist his leadership just as his rule over her would be distorted (Ge 3:16).

Evicted from her lovely home, Eve conceived and bore two sons, although her joy at their birth was changed by the heartache predicted by God. Cain murdered his brother in defiance of God's command concerning sacrifices, and God banished him. Eve was left childless until God's grace once again appeared in the form of another son, Seth, who became an ancestor of the Messiah.

Eve stands as an archetype of womanhood. Although created in God's image (Ge 1:27), she exercised her will to disobey the Creator (Ge 3:6), daring to challenge his authority. Disobedience was not in itself a motive but presupposed the motive. Her temptation was not merely to disobey but ultimately to have her own way or to get possession of what she wanted. As her daughter, every woman bears her likeness. Eve voices an early warning to every woman to follow the path of obedience and a resounding note of hope for women when they fail; she encountered God's justice, but she also experienced his grace (see Ro 5:18–19).

See also Ge 2:18—4:25; 2Co 11:3; 1Ti 2:13–14; notes on Marriage (Ge 2; 2Sa 6; Pr 5; Hos 2; Am 3; 2Co 13; Heb 12); Motherhood (1Sa 1; Isa 49; Eze 16); Obedience (Phm)

"Cursed is the ground because of you;  
through painful toil you will eat food  
from it  
all the days of your life.

<sup>18</sup>It will produce thorns and thistles for  
you,  
and you will eat the plants of the  
field.

<sup>19</sup>By the sweat of your brow  
you will eat your food

until you return to the ground,  
since from it you were taken;  
for dust you are  
and to dust you will return."

<sup>20</sup>Adam<sup>a</sup> named his wife Eve,<sup>b</sup> because she  
would become the mother of all the living.

<sup>21</sup>The LORD God made garments of skin  
for Adam and his wife and clothed them.

<sup>a</sup>20 Or *The man*    <sup>b</sup>20 Eve probably means *living*.

in this verse, implying hard labor and appearing again as "toil" (v. 17). The word "desire" (Heb. *teshuqah*) appears only twice more in the OT (Ge 4:7, where sin "desires" Cain; SS 7:10, where the man's longing for his beloved is described).

**3:20** Adam's naming of Eve (Heb., lit. "life" or "living") was an act of faith in God's promise (v. 15). After the sentence of

death, before any children are born, Adam affirmed the woman and her role in producing future generations, providing a counterbalance of hope.

**3:21** Garments of skin. The contrast is to the inadequate coverings of verse 7. God, not man, is able to cover shame and guilt. This reference is often seen as a prefigurement of

## The Results of Sin

VERSE	RESULT
3:7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The experiential knowledge of evil.</li> <li>• The shame and guilt.</li> <li>• The search for clothing to cover.</li> </ul>
3:8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The desire for concealment.</li> <li>• The fear of God's presence.</li> <li>• The loss of fellowship with God.</li> </ul>
3:12	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The refusal of personal responsibility.</li> <li>• The shifting of blame from self to others.</li> </ul>

<sup>22</sup>And the LORD God said, “The man has now become like one of us, knowing good and evil. He must not be allowed to reach out his hand and take also from the tree of life and eat, and live forever.”<sup>23</sup>So the LORD God banished him from the Garden of Eden to work the ground from which he had been taken.<sup>24</sup>After he drove the man out, he placed on the east side<sup>a</sup> of the Garden of Eden cherubim and a flaming sword flashing back and forth to guard the way to the tree of life.

### Cain and Abel

**4** Adam<sup>b</sup> made love to his wife Eve, and she became pregnant and gave birth to Cain.<sup>c</sup> She said, “With the help of the LORD I have brought forth<sup>d</sup> a man.”<sup>2</sup>Later she gave birth to his brother Abel.

Now Abel kept flocks, and Cain worked the soil.<sup>3</sup>In the course of time Cain brought some of the fruits of the soil as an offering to the LORD.<sup>4</sup>And Abel also brought an offering—fat portions from some of the firstborn of his flock. The LORD looked with favor on Abel and his offering,<sup>5</sup>but on Cain and his offering he did not look with favor. So Cain was very angry, and his face was downcast.

<sup>6</sup>Then the LORD said to Cain, “Why are you angry? Why is your face downcast?<sup>7</sup>If you do what is right, will you not be accepted? But if you do not do what is right, sin is crouching at your door; it desires to have you, but you must rule over it.”

<sup>8</sup>Now Cain said to his brother Abel, “Let’s go out to the field.”<sup>e</sup> While they were in the field, Cain attacked his brother Abel and killed him.

<sup>9</sup>Then the LORD said to Cain, “Where is your brother Abel?”

“I don’t know,” he replied. “Am I my brother’s keeper?”

<sup>10</sup>The LORD said, “What have you done? Listen! Your brother’s blood cries out to me from the ground.<sup>11</sup>Now you are under a curse and driven from the ground, which opened its mouth to receive your brother’s blood from your hand.<sup>12</sup>When you work the ground, it will no longer yield its crops for you. You will be a restless wanderer on the earth.”

<sup>a</sup> <sup>24</sup> Or placed in front <sup>b</sup> <sup>1</sup> Or The man <sup>c</sup> <sup>1</sup> Cain sounds like the Hebrew for brought forth or acquired. <sup>d</sup> <sup>1</sup> Or have acquired <sup>e</sup> <sup>8</sup> Samaritan Pentateuch, Septuagint, Vulgate and Syriac; Masoretic Text does not have “Let’s go out to the field.”

Christ’s atonement on the cross, which required the shedding of blood to cover guilt (Heb 9:22) and pictured the death of the innocent for the guilty (2Co 5:21; Ro 5:6–11).

**3:24** Expulsion from the garden. Adam and Eve were sent from the garden. Thus, God’s action mingled justice and mercy, which had been central to their fellowship with God and a privilege the two were now unable to enjoy (v. 8). The gate to the garden, apparently in the east like the temple gate, would be guarded by cherubim, representing God’s presence and his separation from unholy man (see 2Ki 19:15; Ps 80:1).

**4:4** Abel presented the firstborn of his flock—a lamb—as

his offering to God, and in so doing he honored the Lord’s Word (Heb 11:4). God accepted that offering and commended Abel. Cain chose his own offering, which was rejected by God. Abel also included “fat” pieces, which, coupled with the reference to “firstborn,” indicated that he gave God his best. Cain, on the other hand, presented his offering “in the course of time” or simply because it was time to give. God demands his requirements be met in his way. Ritual in itself never satisfies God and is an abomination to him. Above all, Abel presented his sacrifice with the right heart, while Cain did not (vv. 4–5).



## EUTHANASIA

## GOD'S TIMING IN DEATH

In a jealous rage, Cain killed his brother, Abel. God cursed Cain and sent him away. Fearing his own murder, Cain begged God for safety. God responded that whoever killed Cain would receive vengeance from him. God then set a “mark” on Cain to protect his life and make a statement to all: life comes from God (Ge 4:1–15). Not only does God prohibit vengeful killing, but he makes clear that life and death are solely in his domain. Life is sacred. God alone is responsible for the termination of life.

Euthanasia (Gk.) is defined as terminating life in order to achieve some concept of good, such as putting an end to physical suffering. It may include death by the individual's choice or by the choice of others. It also includes several other concepts, such as “death with dignity,” “mercy killing” and even “death selection.” Euthanasia covers a wide range and may be either active or passive. It may involve actions to produce death or could merely be the withholding of life-extending supports. Whereas extraordinary life-prolonging measures are praiseworthy and noble for those who can and choose to do so, there is no moral obligation to pursue this course. God has ordained a natural process for ending this life and beginning the next. However, in every case, euthanasia involves human decision to determine the manner and timing of death for some supposed good.

Christians should entrust mortality to God. Life is not something we own. Rather, the opportunity to experience life is a gift from our Creator, and the possession of life is a stewardship trust. God always remains the true “Owner” of life, so it is never ours to do with as we want. Death's timing is God's choice, not that of an individual or society. Life is valuable to the Lord, and even the life continuation of the murderer Cain was protected by the Creator of life.

See also Ge 1:27; notes on Aging (Isa 46); Death (1Co 15); Disabilities (Mk 2); Pain (Job 7; 2Co 12); Sanctity of Life (Ge 9); Suffering (Ps 33; 113; Isa 43; 1Pe 5)

<sup>13</sup>Cain said to the LORD, “My punishment is more than I can bear. <sup>14</sup>Today you are driving me from the land, and I will be hidden from your presence; I will be a restless wanderer on the earth, and whoever finds me will kill me.”

<sup>15</sup>But the LORD said to him, “Not so<sup>a</sup>; anyone who kills Cain will suffer vengeance seven times over.” Then the LORD put a mark on Cain so that no one who found him would

kill him. <sup>16</sup>So Cain went out from the LORD's presence and lived in the land of Nod,<sup>b</sup> east of Eden.

<sup>17</sup>Cain made love to his wife, and she became pregnant and gave birth to Enoch. Cain was then building a city, and he named it after his son Enoch. <sup>18</sup>To Enoch was born Irad, and Irad was the father of Mehujael, and Mehujael was the father of Methushael, and Methushael was the father of Lamech.

<sup>19</sup>Lamech married two women, one named Adah and the other Zillah. <sup>20</sup>Adah gave birth to Jabal; he was the father of those who live in tents and raise livestock. <sup>21</sup>His brother's name was Jubal; he was the father of all who play stringed instruments and pipes. <sup>22</sup>Zillah

<sup>a</sup> 15 Septuagint, Vulgate and Syriac; Hebrew *Very well*

<sup>b</sup> 16 Nod means *wandering* (see verses 12 and 14).

WE CAN BE CONFIDENT THAT HIS DESIRE  
TO REVEAL WILL ALWAYS BE GREATER  
THAN OUR DESIRE TO KNOW.

*Carrie Anna Pearce*

**4:15** The mark on Cain, like Adam and Eve's clothing, was for protection, an act of mercy even in the midst of judgment (Ge 3:21). The “mark” (lit. “sign” or “pledge”) was the concrete proof of God's promise.

**4:19** Two genealogical lines run in parallel—the line in re-

bellion against God, as Cain's was, and the godly chosen line (v. 26). The rebellious line may be related to the offspring of the serpent (Ge 3:15). Lamech, by taking two wives, illustrated the ungodliness of his family as the first to break the Creator's one-man, one-woman pattern for marriage (Ge 2:24, note).

also had a son, Tubal-Cain, who forged all kinds of tools out of<sup>a</sup> bronze and iron. Tubal-Cain's sister was Naamah.

<sup>23</sup>Lamech said to his wives,

“Adah and Zillah, listen to me;  
wives of Lamech, hear my words.  
I have killed a man for wounding me,  
a young man for injuring me.”

<sup>24</sup>If Cain is avenged seven times,  
then Lamech seventy-seven  
times.”

<sup>25</sup>Adam made love to his wife again, and she gave birth to a son and named him Seth,<sup>b</sup> saying, “God has granted me another child in place of Abel, since Cain killed him.” <sup>26</sup>Seth also had a son, and he named him Enosh.

At that time people began to call on<sup>c</sup> the name of the LORD.

*From Adam to Noah*

**5** This is the written account of Adam's family line.

When God created mankind, he made them in the likeness of God. <sup>2</sup>He created them male and female and blessed them. And he named them “Mankind”<sup>d</sup> when they were created.

<sup>3</sup>When Adam had lived 130 years, he had a son in his own likeness, in his own image; and he named him Seth. <sup>4</sup>After Seth was born, Adam lived 800 years and had other sons and daughters. <sup>5</sup>Altogether, Adam lived a total of 930 years, and then he died.

<sup>6</sup>When Seth had lived 105 years, he became the father<sup>e</sup> of Enosh. <sup>7</sup>After he became the father of Enosh, Seth lived 807 years and had other sons and daughters. <sup>8</sup>Altogether,

Seth lived a total of 912 years, and then he died.

<sup>9</sup>When Enosh had lived 90 years, he became the father of Kenan. <sup>10</sup>After he became the father of Kenan, Enosh lived 815 years and had other sons and daughters. <sup>11</sup>Altogether, Enosh lived a total of 905 years, and then he died.

<sup>12</sup>When Kenan had lived 70 years, he became the father of Mahalalel. <sup>13</sup>After he became the father of Mahalalel, Kenan lived 840 years and had other sons and daughters. <sup>14</sup>Altogether, Kenan lived a total of 910 years, and then he died.

<sup>15</sup>When Mahalalel had lived 65 years, he became the father of Jared. <sup>16</sup>After he became the father of Jared, Mahalalel lived 830 years and had other sons and daughters. <sup>17</sup>Altogether, Mahalalel lived a total of 895 years, and then he died.

<sup>18</sup>When Jared had lived 162 years, he became the father of Enoch. <sup>19</sup>After he became the father of Enoch, Jared lived 800 years and had other sons and daughters. <sup>20</sup>Altogether, Jared lived a total of 962 years, and then he died.

<sup>21</sup>When Enoch had lived 65 years, he became the father of Methuselah. <sup>22</sup>After he became the father of Methuselah, Enoch walked faithfully with God 300 years and had other sons and daughters. <sup>23</sup>Altogether, Enoch lived a total of 365 years. <sup>24</sup>Enoch walked faithfully with God; then he was no more, because God took him away.

<sup>25</sup>When Methuselah had lived 187 years, he became the father of Lamech. <sup>26</sup>After he became the father of Lamech, Methuselah

<sup>a</sup> 22 Or *who instructed all who work in*    <sup>b</sup> 25 Seth probably means granted.    <sup>c</sup> 26 Or *to proclaim*    <sup>d</sup> 2 Hebrew *adam*    <sup>e</sup> 6 *Father* may mean *ancestor*; also in verses 7–26.

**4:25** Christ's ancestry is traced back to Seth (Lk 3:38). Since Adam was 130 when Seth was born (Ge 5:3), the narrative here skips back over the history in order to relate the emergence of the godly line (Ge 3:16–24). Seth (Heb., lit. “appointing” or “establishing”) establishes the line of the seed of the woman (Ge 3:15). This line is in opposition to Satan.

**4:26** The Lord (Heb. *Yahweh*) is revealed to be the most detailed, personal and powerful of God's names (Ex 3:14; see chart, The Names of God). God introduced his covenant name in the detailed description of the creation of the man and woman and the outlining of their relationship to one another (see Ge 2:4–22). Its use here is linked to the establishment of a godly, worshiping line.

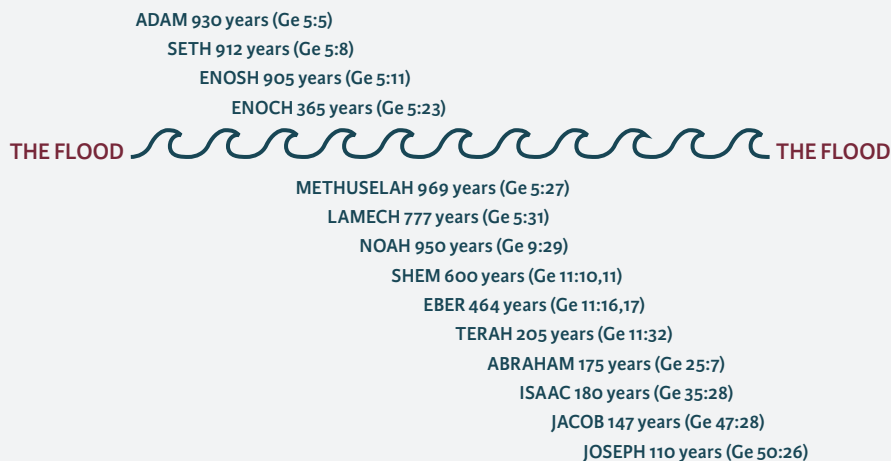
**5:3** “Had a son” can refer to immediate descent (father to son) but can also be used as reference to grandsons or more distant descendants. The age of each patriarch at the birth of

his first child, through whom the generations continue, as well as the number of years he lived after that birth and the entire length of his years is recorded (vv. 3–32; see chart, How Old Were the Patriarchs?).

**5:18** Enoch occupies the seventh place in this genealogy, a place often reserved for particularly significant individuals. Lamech, seventh from Cain, shows the growing violence of the ungodly line (Ge 4:23); Enoch, the seventh from Adam, is the most righteous of all men (v. 22). Only Enoch and Noah are recorded as having “walked . . . with God” (v. 22; Ge 6:9), describing the perfect fellowship of the Garden of Eden (Ge 3:8).

**5:24** God took him away. Enoch's righteousness resulted in God's sparing him from physical death, affirming God's power over death (see Ps 49:15; 73:24). Only the prophet Elijah shared this experience (2Ki 2:11).

## How Old Were the Patriarchs?



The patriarchs who lived before the flood had an average life span of about 900 years (Ge 5). The ages of post-flood patriarchs dropped rapidly and gradually leveled off (Ge 11). Some suggest that this was due to major environmental changes brought about by the flood.

lived 782 years and had other sons and daughters.<sup>27</sup> Altogether, Methuselah lived a total of 969 years, and then he died.

<sup>28</sup>When Lamech had lived 182 years, he had a son.<sup>29</sup> He named him Noah<sup>a</sup> and said, “He will comfort us in the labor and painful toil of our hands caused by the ground the LORD has cursed.”<sup>30</sup> After Noah was born, Lamech lived 595 years and had other sons and daughters.<sup>31</sup> Altogether, Lamech lived a total of 777 years, and then he died.

<sup>32</sup>After Noah was 500 years old, he became the father of Shem, Ham and Japheth.

### Wickedness in the World

**6** When human beings began to increase in number on the earth and daughters were born to them,<sup>2</sup> the sons of God saw that the daughters of humans were beautiful, and they married any of them they chose.<sup>3</sup> Then the LORD said, “My Spirit will not contend with<sup>b</sup> humans forever, for they are mortal<sup>c</sup>; their days will be a hundred and twenty years.”

<sup>4</sup>The Nephilim were on the earth in those days—and also afterward—when the sons

<sup>a</sup> <sup>29</sup> Noah sounds like the Hebrew for *comfort*. <sup>b</sup> <sup>3</sup> Or My spirit will not remain in <sup>c</sup> <sup>3</sup> Or corrupt

**5:29** A man of obedience. Noah (Heb., lit. “comfort”) helped fulfill prophecy (see Ge 3:15); God worked through Noah’s obedience to prevent the complete corruption of humanity (Ge 6:5,9).

**6:2** The sons of God. Three primary interpretations have been proposed for this phrase.

- 1) The “sons of God” were fallen angels who took human wives, a view based on the interpretation of this phrase as angels elsewhere in the OT (see Job 1:6; 38:7).
- 2) The “sons of God” were men from Cain’s line who took wives descended from Seth. Although this interpretation fits the context (Ge 1–11), “sons of God” does not elsewhere refer to men.
- 3) The “sons of God” were descendants of early pagan

kings who, like Lamech, sinned through polygamy. This accounts for “any of them they chose” but is open to the same objection as the second view.

While there is no way of determining the precise meaning of the story, clearly humanity was so close to total, irredeemable corruption that God sent the flood.

**6:3** God’s displeasure. God expressed his condemnation of the sin (vv. 5–6). “Contend” can also be translated “abide with.” God limited the time man could continue in sin. The 120 years refers either to the length of time before the flood or to the shortened human life span after the flood (see Ge 11:10–26).

**6:4** Giants on the earth appears only once more (Nu 13:33). However, the giants in Genesis (Heb. *Nephilim*) were destroyed

## The Faithful Remnant

THE REMNANT	THE CIRCUMSTANCES	REFERENCE
Noah	The whole earth was wicked.	Ge 6:5–8
Abram	His home country was given over to idolatry.	Ge 12:1–4
Isaac	He lived among Canaanites, who worshiped false gods.	Ge 24:3–4
Jacob	He lived in a land filled with hostile Canaanites and Perizzites.	Ge 34:30
Joseph	He was the only worshiper of God in the land of Egypt.	Ge 41:16

of God went to the daughters of humans and had children by them. They were the heroes of old, men of renown.

<sup>5</sup>The LORD saw how great the wickedness of the human race had become on the earth, and that every inclination of the thoughts of the human heart was only evil all the time. <sup>6</sup>The LORD regretted that he had made human beings on the earth, and his heart was deeply troubled. <sup>7</sup>So the LORD said, “I will wipe from the face of the earth the human race I have created—and with them the animals, the birds and the creatures that move along the ground—for I regret that I have made them.” <sup>8</sup>But Noah found favor in the eyes of the LORD.

### Noah and the Flood

<sup>9</sup>This is the account of Noah and his family.

Noah was a righteous man, blameless among the people of his time, and he walked faithfully with God. <sup>10</sup>Noah had three sons: Shem, Ham and Japheth.

<sup>11</sup>Now the earth was corrupt in God’s sight and was full of violence. <sup>12</sup>God saw how cor-

rupt the earth had become, for all the people on earth had corrupted their ways. <sup>13</sup>So God said to Noah, “I am going to put an end to all people, for the earth is filled with violence because of them. I am surely going to destroy both them and the earth. <sup>14</sup>So make yourself an ark of cypress<sup>a</sup> wood; make rooms in it and coat it with pitch inside and out. <sup>15</sup>This is how you are to build it: The ark is to be three hundred cubits long, fifty cubits wide and thirty cubits high. <sup>b</sup> <sup>16</sup>Make a roof for it, leaving below the roof an opening one cubit<sup>c</sup> high all around. <sup>d</sup> Put a door in the side of the ark and make lower, middle and upper decks. <sup>17</sup>I am going to bring floodwaters on the earth to destroy all life under the heavens, every creature that has the breath of life in it. Everything on earth will perish. <sup>18</sup>But I will establish my covenant with you, and you will enter the ark—you and your sons and your wife and your sons’ wives with you. <sup>19</sup>You are to bring into the ark two of all living creatures, male and female, to keep them

<sup>a</sup> <sup>14</sup> The meaning of the Hebrew for this word is uncertain.

<sup>b</sup> <sup>15</sup> That is, about 450 feet long, 75 feet wide and 45 feet high or about 135 meters long, 23 meters wide and 14 meters high

<sup>c</sup> <sup>16</sup> That is, about 18 inches or about 45 centimeters

<sup>d</sup> <sup>16</sup> The meaning of the Hebrew for this clause is uncertain.

in the flood. They were not offspring of the unions of verse 2, since they existed both before and afterward. The word might possibly mean “fallen ones”; the verb is passive and conveys the meaning “those who were cast down.” Thus the Nephilim appear to have been either giants or fallen angels. They are distinct from the “heroes of old, men of renown.”

**6:9** Noah’s genealogy (Heb., *toledoth*, lit. “these are the generations of”) marks the beginning of a new section in the book. The focus shifts from the history of humanity as a whole to that of the godly remnant miraculously preserved from judgment (see chart, The Faithful Remnant). “Righteous” refers to Noah’s actions toward other men. “Blameless” (Heb.

*tamim*, lit. “sound, wholesome, having integrity”) is later used to describe the perfection of sacrificial animals. Noah “walked faithfully” in his relationship to God.

**6:14** The Hebrew word for ark (Heb. *tebah*, lit. “box” or “chest”) appears also in Exodus 2:3–5, where Moses is placed in a “papyrus basket.” The choice of words emphasizes the ark’s character as a protection and hiding place.

**6:18** The covenant. This is the first Biblical mention of covenant (Heb. *berith*). Covenants are made by God with man for the purpose of salvation. God declares his commitment and demands a response from man (see chart, The Covenants of Genesis).

## The Chronology of the Flood

WHAT?	WHEN?	HOW LONG?
The rain began (Ge 7:11).	Noah's 600th year, 2nd month, 17th day	<i>RAIN</i> : 40 days and 40 nights
The water remained (Ge 7:24). The water decreased (Ge 8:3). The ark rested (Ge 8:4).	150 days At the end of 150 days Noah's 600th year, 7th month, 17th day	<i>LENGTH OF FLOOD</i> : 5 months of 30 days each
The tops of the mountains were visible (Ge 8:5).	10th month, 1st day	<i>ARK IN PLACE</i> : 2 months, 13 days
Noah sent out the raven (Ge 8:7).	40 days later	<i>ARK IN PLACE</i> : 3 months, 23 days
Noah sent out the dove (Ge 8:10).	7 days later	<i>ARK IN PLACE</i> : 4 months
Noah sent out the dove again (Ge 8:12).	7 days later	<i>ARK IN PLACE</i> : 4 months, 7 days
The waters dried up (Ge 8:13). The earth was now dry (Ge 8:14).	Noah's 601st year, 1st month, 1st day Noah's 601st year, 2nd month, 27th day	<i>TOTAL LENGTH OF FLOOD</i> : 365 days, 1 solar year

alive with you. <sup>20</sup>Two of every kind of bird, of every kind of animal and of every kind of creature that moves along the ground will come to you to be kept alive. <sup>21</sup>You are to take every kind of food that is to be eaten and store it away as food for you and for them.”

<sup>22</sup>Noah did everything just as God commanded him.

**7** The LORD then said to Noah, “Go into the ark, you and your whole family, because I have found you righteous in this generation. <sup>2</sup>Take with you seven pairs of every kind of clean animal, a male and its mate, and one pair of every kind of unclean animal, a male and its mate, <sup>3</sup>and also seven pairs of every kind of bird, male and female, to keep their various kinds alive throughout the earth. <sup>4</sup>Seven days from now I will send rain on the earth for forty days and forty nights, and I will wipe from the face of the earth every living creature I have made.”

<sup>5</sup>And Noah did all that the LORD commanded him.

<sup>6</sup>Noah was six hundred years old when the floodwaters came on the earth. <sup>7</sup>And Noah and his sons and his wife and his sons' wives entered the ark to escape the waters of the flood. <sup>8</sup>Pairs of clean and unclean animals, of birds and of all creatures that move along the ground, <sup>9</sup>male and female, came to Noah and entered the ark, as God had commanded Noah. <sup>10</sup>And after the seven days the floodwaters came on the earth.

<sup>11</sup>In the six hundredth year of Noah's life, on the seventeenth day of the second month — on that day all the springs of the great deep burst forth, and the floodgates of the heavens were opened. <sup>12</sup>And rain fell on the earth forty days and forty nights.

<sup>13</sup>On that very day Noah and his sons, Shem, Ham and Japheth, together with his wife and the wives of his three sons, entered

**7:1** The Lord. Genesis 6–9 alternates between use of God (Elohim) and the Lord (*Yahweh*). The more general name, Elohim, is used when the narrative relates the effect of the flood on the entire world; *Yahweh*, the covenant name, is used to record the Lord's dealings with his people.

**7:2** Rather than contradicting Genesis 6:19, this verse expands upon God's previous command. Two of every animal were to be taken. In addition, extra pairs of clean animals were to be taken (see Lev 10, Clean vs. Unclean).

**7:11** The coming of the flood, whether a natural catastrophe or miraculous event, was divinely directed. “The springs of the great deep” refers to the invasion of the land by the sea, possibly with volcanic activity as part of the upheaval. “The floodgates of the heavens were opened” is descriptive of torrential rain. The precise dating of the flood confirms that this judgment occurred in human history (see chart, The Chronology of the Flood).

the ark. <sup>14</sup>They had with them every wild animal according to its kind, all livestock according to their kinds, every creature that moves along the ground according to its kind and every bird according to its kind, everything with wings. <sup>15</sup>Pairs of all creatures that have the breath of life in them came to Noah and entered the ark. <sup>16</sup>The animals going in were male and female of every living thing, as God had commanded Noah. Then the LORD shut him in.

HONOUR TO WOMANKIND! IT NEEDS  
MUST BE THAT GOD LOVED WOMAN  
SINCE HE FASHIONED THEE.

*Christine de Pisan, 1429*

<sup>17</sup>For forty days the flood kept coming on the earth, and as the waters increased they lifted the ark high above the earth. <sup>18</sup>The waters rose and increased greatly on the earth, and the ark floated on the surface of the water. <sup>19</sup>They rose greatly on the earth, and all the high mountains under the entire heavens were covered. <sup>20</sup>The waters rose and covered the mountains to a depth of more than fifteen cubits.<sup>a,b</sup> <sup>21</sup>Every living thing that moved on land perished — birds, livestock, wild animals, all the creatures that swarm over the earth, and all mankind. <sup>22</sup>Everything on dry land that had the breath of life in its nostrils died. <sup>23</sup>Every living thing on the face of the earth was wiped out; people and animals and the creatures that move along the ground and the birds were wiped from the earth. Only Noah was left, and those with him in the ark.

<sup>24</sup>The waters flooded the earth for a hundred and fifty days.

**8** But God remembered Noah and all the wild animals and the livestock that were with him in the ark, and he sent a wind over the earth, and the waters receded. <sup>2</sup>Now the springs of the deep and the floodgates of the heavens had been closed, and the rain had

stopped falling from the sky. <sup>3</sup>The water receded steadily from the earth. At the end of the hundred and fifty days the water had gone down, <sup>4</sup>and on the seventeenth day of the seventh month the ark came to rest on the mountains of Ararat. <sup>5</sup>The waters continued to recede until the tenth month, and on the first day of the tenth month the tops of the mountains became visible.

<sup>6</sup>After forty days Noah opened a window he had made in the ark <sup>7</sup>and sent out a raven, and it kept flying back and forth until the water had dried up from the earth. <sup>8</sup>Then he sent out a dove to see if the water had receded from the surface of the ground. <sup>9</sup>But the dove could find nowhere to perch because there was water over all the surface of the earth; so it returned to Noah in the ark. He reached out his hand and took the dove and brought it back to himself in the ark. <sup>10</sup>He waited seven more days and again sent out the dove from the ark. <sup>11</sup>When the dove returned to him in the evening, there in its beak was a freshly plucked olive leaf! Then Noah knew that the water had receded from the earth. <sup>12</sup>He waited seven more days and sent the dove out again, but this time it did not return to him.

<sup>13</sup>By the first day of the first month of Noah's six hundred and first year, the water had dried up from the earth. Noah then removed the covering from the ark and saw that the surface of the ground was dry. <sup>14</sup>By the twenty-seventh day of the second month the earth was completely dry.

<sup>15</sup>Then God said to Noah, <sup>16</sup>"Come out of the ark, you and your wife and your sons and their wives. <sup>17</sup>Bring out every kind of living creature that is with you — the birds, the animals, and all the creatures that move along the

<sup>a</sup> <sup>20</sup> That is, about 23 feet or about 6.8 meters <sup>b</sup> <sup>20</sup> Or rose more than fifteen cubits, and the mountains were covered

TO POSSESS IS THE SAME THING AS TO KNOW:  
THE BIBLE IS ALWAYS RIGHT.

*Marguerite Yourcenar, 1935*

**8:1** God's remembrance in Scripture is a determined action rather than a mental process; when he remembers, he acts mercifully to save (see Ge 30:22). God sends the wind (Heb. *ruach*), the same word used for the Spirit (Ge 1:2). After destruction, God re-creates, just as he created from chaos.

**8:4** Ararat, lying in modern eastern Armenia, was also known as Uratu in ancient times. The country itself is mountainous with a general elevation of 6,000 feet. Ararat is its highest peak at nearly 17,000 feet, but this verse does not specify upon which mountain the ark finally rested.

## The Covenants of Genesis

COVENANT	REFERENCE	TERMS
Edenic	Ge 2:15–17	<i>GOD:</i> Provides for all man's needs. <i>HUMANKIND:</i> Forbidden to eat from the tree of knowledge of good and evil.
Adamic	Ge 3:14–21	<i>GOD:</i> Gives promise of the Messiah. <i>HUMANKIND:</i> No requirements, but humanity will suffer consequences of sin until coming of the Messiah.
Noahic	Ge 9:1–19	<i>GOD:</i> Will never flood the earth again. <i>HUMANKIND:</i> No requirements. <i>SIGN:</i> Rainbow (vv. 12,13).
Abrahamic	Ge 15:3–21	<i>GOD:</i> Will make a mighty nation of Abraham's descendants and give them the land of Canaan. <i>ABRAHAM:</i> Will walk before God and be blameless (Ge 17:1,2). <i>SIGN:</i> Circumcision (Ge 17:10–14).

ground—so they can multiply on the earth and be fruitful and increase in number on it.”

<sup>18</sup>So Noah came out, together with his sons and his wife and his sons' wives. <sup>19</sup>All the animals and all the creatures that move along the ground and all the birds—everything that moves on land—came out of the ark, one kind after another.

<sup>20</sup>Then Noah built an altar to the LORD and, taking some of all the clean animals and clean birds, he sacrificed burnt offerings on it. <sup>21</sup>The LORD smelled the pleasing aroma and said in his heart: “Never again will I curse the ground because of humans, even though<sup>a</sup> every inclination of the human heart is evil from childhood. And never again will I destroy all living creatures, as I have done.

<sup>22</sup>“As long as the earth endures,  
seedtime and harvest,  
cold and heat,  
summer and winter,  
day and night  
will never cease.”

### God's Covenant With Noah

**9** Then God blessed Noah and his sons, saying to them, “Be fruitful and increase in number and fill the earth. <sup>2</sup>The fear and dread of you will fall on all the beasts of the earth, and on all the birds in the sky, on every creature that moves along the ground, and on all the fish in the sea; they are given into your hands. <sup>3</sup>Everything that lives and moves about will be food for you. Just as I gave you the green plants, I now give you everything.

<sup>4</sup>“But you must not eat meat that has its lifeblood still in it. <sup>5</sup>And for your lifeblood I will surely demand an accounting. I will demand an accounting from every animal. And from each human being, too, I will demand an accounting for the life of another human being.

<sup>6</sup>“Whoever sheds human blood,  
by humans shall their blood be shed;  
for in the image of God  
has God made mankind.

<sup>a</sup> <sup>21</sup> Or *humans, for*

**8:20** Noah's altar is the first mentioned in Scripture. Noah, acting as did Adam, is given the task of repopulating a re-created earth. His first act is to worship God. Noah's sacrifice was a burnt offering in which the entire animal was consumed. In the covenant relationship between God and man, the primary purpose of this whole burnt offering was atonement (Lev 1:4), symbolizing the complete consecration of the worshiper to God (see chart, The Offerings of the Lord).

**8:21** An aroma pleasing to God is associated with burnt offerings (Lev 1:9,13) and indicates God's acceptance of the aton-

ing sacrifice. Although God recognized that the judgment of the flood had not changed individual hearts, he promised to exercise mercy. Thus, this is the first example of an OT sacrifice as propitiation for sin (i.e., satisfaction for the righteousness of God).

**9:5** Because the man and woman are made in God's image (v. 6), their lives belong to God. The divine image was not destroyed by the fall. God himself instituted the penalty of death for murder (v. 5), and civil authorities are to execute that penalty (v. 6).



## THE SANCTITY OF LIFE

### CREATED IN HIS IMAGE

God places special value on human life (Ge 1:26–27; Ps 8:4–6). Human life is sacred because the man and woman alone were created in the image of God, and that life deserves protection. God commands his people to protect and defend innocent human life (Eze 16:20–21,36,38). Under the Mosaic Law, the murder of another person deserved punishment by death *because* of the value of the life that was destroyed (Ge 9:6; Ex 20:13).

Scripture extends this special status and protection to human life in every stage of development and need (Isa 46:3–4). The unborn child shares in God’s image (Ps 139:13–16) and is protected under Old Testament law (Ex 21:22–25). Believers are exhorted to defend and care for the sick, the elderly, and the poor (Lev 19:32; Dt 15:7–8). *No one* is excluded from protection and care.

Throughout history this Biblical view of the sanctity of all human life has faced opposition—most notably from those who advocate a “quality of life” viewpoint, suggesting that human life must possess certain qualities and abilities before it can be considered truly valuable and worthy of life sustenance. According to this distorted humanistic view, if the unborn child, the handicapped infant or the elderly person does not possess these qualities, then that individual is not entitled to the protection that Scripture or the law would give.

The Bible rejects this “quality of life” view. The value of human life does not depend upon the person’s functional abilities or independent viability but is assured because of the image of God that is found in every human life. God does not measure the quality of a human being before he bestows his image. God calls upon us to extend our care and compassion to every life he has created, in every stage of development and in every need.

*See also Mt 18:3, note; notes on Abortion (Jer 1); Childbirth (Jn 16); Children (2Sa 21; Ps 128; Pr 22; Lk 15); Disabilities (Mk 2); Image of God (Ps 8); Pregnancy (Jdg 13)*

<sup>7</sup>As for you, be fruitful and increase in number; multiply on the earth and increase upon it.”

<sup>8</sup>Then God said to Noah and to his sons with him: <sup>9</sup>“I now establish my covenant with you and with your descendants after you <sup>10</sup>and with every living creature that was with you—the birds, the livestock and all the wild animals, all those that came out of the ark with you—every living creature on earth. <sup>11</sup>I establish my covenant with you: Never again will all life be destroyed by the waters of a flood; never again will there be a flood to destroy the earth.”

<sup>12</sup>And God said, “This is the sign of the covenant I am making between me and you and every living creature with you, a covenant for all generations to come: <sup>13</sup>I have set my rainbow in the clouds, and it will be the sign of the covenant between me and the earth. <sup>14</sup>Whenever I bring clouds over the earth and the rainbow appears in the clouds, <sup>15</sup>I will remember my covenant between me

and you and all living creatures of every kind. Never again will the waters become a flood to destroy all life. <sup>16</sup>Whenever the rainbow appears in the clouds, I will see it and remember the everlasting covenant between God and all living creatures of every kind on the earth.”

<sup>17</sup>So God said to Noah, “This is the sign of the covenant I have established between me and all life on the earth.”

### *The Sons of Noah*

<sup>18</sup>The sons of Noah who came out of the ark were Shem, Ham and Japheth. (Ham was the father of Canaan.) <sup>19</sup>These were the three sons of Noah, and from them came the people who were scattered over the whole earth.

<sup>20</sup>Noah, a man of the soil, proceeded<sup>a</sup> to plant a vineyard. <sup>21</sup>When he drank some of its wine, he became drunk and lay uncovered

<sup>a</sup> 20 Or *soil, was the first*

inside his tent. <sup>22</sup>Ham, the father of Canaan, saw his father naked and told his two brothers outside. <sup>23</sup>But Shem and Japheth took a garment and laid it across their shoulders; then they walked in backward and covered their father's naked body. Their faces were turned the other way so that they would not see their father naked.

<sup>24</sup>When Noah awoke from his wine and found out what his youngest son had done to him, <sup>25</sup>he said,

“Cursed be Canaan!  
The lowest of slaves  
will he be to his brothers.”

<sup>26</sup>He also said,

“Praise be to the LORD, the God of Shem!  
May Canaan be the slave of Shem.

<sup>27</sup>May God extend Japheth's<sup>a</sup> territory;  
may Japheth live in the tents of Shem,  
and may Canaan be the slave of  
Japheth.”

<sup>28</sup>After the flood Noah lived 350 years.

<sup>29</sup>Noah lived a total of 950 years, and then he died.

### *The Table of Nations*

**10** This is the account of Shem, Ham and Japheth, Noah's sons, who themselves had sons after the flood.

#### *The Japhethites*

<sup>2</sup>The sons<sup>b</sup> of Japheth:  
Gomer, Magog, Madai, Javan, Tubal,  
Meshek and Tiras.

<sup>3</sup>The sons of Gomer:

Ashkenaz, Riphath and Togarmah.

<sup>4</sup>The sons of Javan:

Elishah, Tarshish, the Kittites and the Rodanites.<sup>c</sup> <sup>5</sup>(From these the maritime peoples spread out into their territories by their clans within their nations, each with its own language.)

#### *The Hamites*

<sup>6</sup>The sons of Ham:

Cush, Egypt, Put and Canaan.

<sup>7</sup>The sons of Cush:

Seba, Havilah, Sabtah, Raamah and Sabteka.

The sons of Raamah:

Sheba and Dedan.

<sup>8</sup>Cush was the father<sup>d</sup> of Nimrod, who became a mighty warrior on the earth. <sup>9</sup>He was a mighty hunter before the LORD; that is why it is said, “Like Nimrod, a mighty hunter before the LORD.” <sup>10</sup>The first centers of his kingdom were Babylon, Uruk, Akkad and Kalneh, in<sup>e</sup> Shinar.<sup>f</sup> <sup>11</sup>From that land he went to Assyria, where he built Nineveh, Rehoboth Ir,<sup>g</sup> Calah<sup>h</sup> and Resen, which is between Nineveh and Calah — which is the great city.

<sup>a</sup> <sup>27</sup> *Japheth* sounds like the Hebrew for *extend*. <sup>b</sup> <sup>2</sup> *Sons* may mean *descendants* or *successors* or *nations*; also in verses 3, 4, 6, 7, 20-23, 29 and 31. <sup>c</sup> <sup>5</sup> Some manuscripts of the Masoretic Text and Samaritan Pentateuch (see also Septuagint and 1 Chron. 1:7); most manuscripts of the Masoretic Text *Dodanites*. <sup>d</sup> <sup>8</sup> *Father* may mean *ancestor* or *predecessor* or *founder*; also in verses 13, 15, 24 and 26. <sup>e</sup> <sup>10</sup> Or *Uruk and Akkad* — *all of them in*. <sup>f</sup> <sup>10</sup> That is, Babylonia. <sup>g</sup> <sup>11</sup> Or *Nineveh with its city squares*.

**9:25** Noah's curse. The verb tenses of this curse suggest an appeal to God. The cursing of Canaan, Ham's son, implies an early understanding of the principle that the iniquities of the fathers would be visited on the children (Ex 34:7). The curse apparently is restricted to this single branch of Ham's descendants.

**9:26** Abraham was a direct descendant of Shem. The descendants of Canaan, Ham's son, included the Jebusites (Ge 10:6) and other Canaanite peoples later conquered by Israel. The curse was thus fulfilled in the taking of the promised land.

**9:27** Japheth's descendants were Gentiles west and north of Israel. Often called the “Sea Peoples,” the Japhethites, like the sons of Shem, took territory from the Canaanites. Peaceful relations between Japheth's descendants and those of Shem are predicted. Israel experienced times of peace with the Sea Peoples as well as occupation by the Greeks, who were descendants of Japheth.

**10:8** Nimrod (from Heb. *marad*, lit. “revolt”), whose name itself points to his rebellion, founded four cities in Shinar at the tip of the Persian Gulf (v. 10). Babel became the capital of

Babylonia; Erech was a Sumerian city; Accad was the capital of Sargon of Akkad, a prominent ruler of the 24th century BC. Kalneh may not be the name of a city, since it can also be translated “all of them.” Nimrod is the first kingdom-builder, as Cain was the first city-builder. He evidently distinguished himself with bold and daring deeds as the “mighty warrior” (Heb. *gibor*, lit. “hero” or “tyrant”), though he seemed more concerned with furthering his own interests than serving the Lord. All this he did “before” or under the watchful eye of *Yahweh*. Again, an ungodly line, whose genealogy will be continued, is emerging (Ge 11:1-9).

**10:11** Assyria. The subject of this verse is unclear. Either Nimrod built Assyria and the other cities, or “Ashur,” the ancestor of the Assyrians, built Nineveh, Rehoboth Ir, Calah, and Resen. Nineveh, east of the Tigris, and Calah both served as capitals of Assyria. Rehoboth Ir is unknown but may refer to a section of Nineveh. Resen, “the great city,” cannot be located and may allude to the total area covered by the previous three cities (see v. 12; Jnh 1:2; 3:2, “great city”).

<sup>13</sup>Egypt was the father of the Ludites, Anamites, Lehabites, Naphtuhites, <sup>14</sup>Pathrusites, Kasluhites (from whom the Philistines came) and Capthorites.

<sup>15</sup>Canaan was the father of Sidon his firstborn,<sup>a</sup> and of the Hitites, <sup>16</sup>Jebusites, Amorites, Girgashites, <sup>17</sup>Hivites, Arkites, Sinites, <sup>18</sup>Arvadites, Zemarites and Hamathites.

Later the Canaanite clans scattered <sup>19</sup>and the borders of Canaan reached from Sidon toward Gerar as far as Gaza, and then toward Sodom, Gomorrah, Admah and Zeboyim, as far as Lasha.

<sup>20</sup>These are the sons of Ham by their clans and languages, in their territories and nations.

#### The Semites

<sup>21</sup>Sons were also born to Shem, whose older brother was<sup>b</sup> Japheth; Shem was the ancestor of all the sons of Eber.

<sup>22</sup>The sons of Shem:  
Elam, Ashur, Arphaxad, Lud and Aram.

<sup>23</sup>The sons of Aram:  
Uz, Hul, Gether and Meshek.<sup>c</sup>

<sup>24</sup>Arphaxad was the father of<sup>d</sup> Shelah, and Shelah the father of Eber.

<sup>25</sup>Two sons were born to Eber:  
One was named Peleg,<sup>e</sup> because in his time the earth was divided; his brother was named Joktan.

<sup>26</sup>Joktan was the father of  
Almodad, Sheleph, Hazarmaveth,

Jerah, <sup>27</sup>Hadoram, Uzal, Diklah, <sup>28</sup>Obal, Abimael, Sheba, <sup>29</sup>Ophir, Havilah and Jobab. All these were sons of Joktan.

<sup>30</sup>The region where they lived stretched from Mesha toward Sephar, in the eastern hill country.

<sup>31</sup>These are the sons of Shem by their clans and languages, in their territories and nations.

<sup>32</sup>These are the clans of Noah's sons, according to their lines of descent, within their nations. From these the nations spread out over the earth after the flood.

#### The Tower of Babel

**11** Now the whole world had one language and a common speech. <sup>2</sup>As people moved eastward,<sup>f</sup> they found a plain in Shinar<sup>g</sup> and settled there.

<sup>3</sup>They said to each other, "Come, let's make bricks and bake them thoroughly." They used brick instead of stone, and tar for mortar. <sup>4</sup>Then they said, "Come, let us build ourselves a city, with a tower that reaches to the heavens, so that we may make a name for ourselves; otherwise we will be scattered over the face of the whole earth."

<sup>5</sup>But the LORD came down to see the city and the tower the people were building. <sup>6</sup>The LORD said, "If as one people speaking the

<sup>a</sup> <sup>15</sup> Or of the Sidonians, the foremost <sup>b</sup> <sup>21</sup> Or Shem, the older brother of <sup>c</sup> <sup>23</sup> See Septuagint and 1 Chron. 1:17; Hebrew Mash. <sup>d</sup> <sup>24</sup> Hebrew; Septuagint father of Cainan, and Cainan was the father of <sup>e</sup> <sup>25</sup> Peleg means division. <sup>f</sup> <sup>2</sup> Or from the east; or in the east <sup>g</sup> <sup>2</sup> That is, Babylonia

**10:19** The land of Canaan included not just the territory of Israel but also the land east of the Jordan. The inhabitants of Canaan are thought to have migrated from Arabia, where Ham had settled.

**10:21** The sons of Shem were selected to be the godly seed that God would sovereignly protect. From Shem's descendants came the three monotheistic religions—Islam, Judaism and Christianity. Shem's great-grandson Eber (Heb.), transliterated to "Hebrew," the ancestor of Abraham, is singled out for special mention (see Ge 11:10–26). Of Shem's five sons, Elam sired the Elamites, east of the Tigris; Lud is probably connected to the Lydians of Asia Minor; Aram founded the Syrian people known in the OT as Arameans. Ashur may have been involved with Nimrod in the building of Assyria, since both Hamitic and Semitic artifacts have been found in Assyrian ruins. The genealogy of Arphaxad, the ancestor of the Israelites, reappears (vv. 24–29; Ge 11:10–26).

**11:1** Since mention of separate languages has already been made (Ge 10:5,20,31), these events must occur soon after the

flood (vv. 1–9). Moses lists the table of nations before he tells the story of the events that divide them.

**11:4** The city and tower. This is the first reference to city building since Cain's project (Ge 4:17). These settlers seemingly belonged to the ungodly, rebellious line. This is confirmed by the word for tower (Heb. *migdāl*), appearing elsewhere in Scripture as a symbol of pride that displeased God (Isa 2:15–17). The purpose of the builders in remaining together and aspiring toward the heavens is in direct contrast to God's command to move throughout the earth and cultivate it (Ge 1:28; 9:1). "That reaches to the heavens" is figuratively suggesting great size and godless ambition (see Dt 1:28; 9:1; Jer 51:53).

**11:6** Unbridled ambition. The Hebrew verbs translated "plan," "to do," and "be impossible" are used together elsewhere only when God describes his own purposes (Job 42:2). As in the Garden of Eden, mankind was attempting to usurp divine prerogatives and would thus suffer judgment (Ge 3:1–6; see chart, The Results of Sin).



## INFERTILITY

### CHILDLESS IS NOT LESS

Most couples anticipate children after marriage. Indeed, children are a part of God's plan for a man and woman united in marriage since God instructed Adam and Eve to "be fruitful and increase in number" (Ge 1:28). Scripture teaches that children are a heritage from the Lord, a reward from God (Ps 127:3–5). Therefore, it can become very confusing and disconcerting to a married couple when children are not conceived as planned or desired. This was especially true in Bible times.

Barrenness is not merely a personal pain in the Bible. Children were a sign of material blessing (Ps 127:3–5). They provided caregivers for older family members. Offspring were a sign of spiritual blessing: the "family line" continued because there were family representatives in the land of the living. A person lived on through her descendants. Barrenness, then, carried with it a sense of termination.

Infertility is defined by the medical community as the inability to achieve pregnancy after a year or more of regular sexual relations without contraception or the inability to carry repeated pregnancies to live birth. About 15 percent of all married couples today are infertile. Although there are numerous causes of infertility in women and men, medical advances have made it possible to diagnose and treat many of them. Still, some couples remain childless despite years of treatment. A couple's decision to manage the timing of conception, pursue fertility measures, or adopt a child is a responsibility they share before God, the Author of life. "Childless" is not "less" if that is God's perfect will for a couple. Infertile couples have not been abandoned by God.

Couples who face infertility can experience a wide range of emotions. Like Sarai (Ge 11:30), Rachel (Ge 30:1), Hannah (1Sa 1:2), and Elizabeth (Lk 1:36), a childless woman often feels a wide range of emotions: disappointment, helplessness, anger, self-pity, grief, low self-esteem or guilt. Regardless of how infertility impacts the couple, the personal pain is often great. Fellow Christians can help heal this pain by offering encouragement and understanding, by respecting the couple's efforts to explore their options and by talking freely about infertility when the subject is introduced. Most importantly, the church needs to accept childless couples and encourage them to discover and pursue outlets for ministry.

God does not give children to every couple. God may have other blessings in store for the childless. Though we can only speculate as to their family lives, none of these notable women in the Bible are associated with the bearing of children: Miriam, Esther, Priscilla, Mary and Martha, and Mary Magdalene. Once a woman realizes that the rearing of children is not the only responsibility God assigns to Christian couples, she often finds true joy in embracing her personal assignment from God.

*See also Ge 16:1–2; Ps 113:9; Mt 18:3; Lk 2:36–38; notes on Bitterness (Heb 12); Marriage (Ge 2; 2Sa 6; Pr 5; Hos 2; Am 3; 2Co 13; Heb 12); Miscarriage (Ex 21); Motherhood (1Sa 1; Isa 49; Eze 16); Pregnancy (Jdg 13); Self-Esteem (2Co 10); Pain (Job 7); portraits of Hannah (1Sa 1); Rachel (Ge 29); Sarai (Ge 11); Elizabeth (Lk 1:5–25)*

same language they have begun to do this, then nothing they plan to do will be impossible for them. <sup>7</sup>Come, let us go down and confuse their language so they will not understand each other."

<sup>8</sup>So the LORD scattered them from there over all the earth, and they stopped build-

ing the city. <sup>9</sup>That is why it was called Babel<sup>a</sup>—because there the LORD confused the language of the whole world. From there the LORD scattered them over the face of the whole earth.

<sup>a</sup> <sup>9</sup> That is, Babylon; *Babel* sounds like the Hebrew for *confused*.

**11:9** Babel (perhaps from Heb. *balal*, lit. "to confuse") is later associated with Babylon, used throughout Scripture as a symbol of pride and rebellion against God.