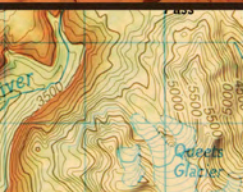




# Every Man's A Bible for Every Battle Every Man Faces **BIBLE**



YOUR  
WORD  
IS A  
LAMP  
TO GUIDE  
MY FEET  
AND A  
LIGHT  
FOR  
MY  
PATH.

PRESENTED TO

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BY

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DATE

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# **Every Man's Bible**

NEW LIVING TRANSLATION

# Every Man's BIBLE

Tyndale House Publishers, Inc.  
Carol Stream, Illinois



New Living  
Translation®

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ISBN 978-1-4143-8104-6 Hardcover

ISBN 978-1-4143-8106-0 Softcover

ISBN 978-1-4143-8107-7 LeatherLike Deluxe Explorer Edition

ISBN 978-1-4143-8108-4 LeatherLike Deluxe Messenger Edition

Printed in China

20 19 18 17 16 15  
7 6 5 4 3 2

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# INTRODUCTION TO THE EVERY MAN'S BIBLE

You are holding in your hands the most important—and best-selling—book of all time. The Holy Bible is God's Word. It is how God chose to reveal himself to humanity. And we live in a time when we desperately need to hear what God has to say. Most important of all, the Bible tells the story of humanity's sin and God's incredible plan for redemption through his Son, Jesus Christ. We present this special edition of the Bible with the great hope that it will help you develop a fuller and more enriching relationship with Jesus.

Though God's Word is relevant to men and women of all ages, throughout all of history, the *Every Man's Bible* is intended for men. Men face different challenges than women do, and it is important for men to have a deep understanding of the Holy Scriptures. So the features and notes of this edition were written specifically for men. God created men and women with different strengths and different roles. Our desire in presenting the *Every Man's Bible* is that it will help you better understand God's general plan for masculinity as well as the special and unique role God has for you.



## Book Introductions

A brief introduction precedes each book of the Bible. This feature will help you get acquainted with the writer, message, and purpose of the book. It also contains recommended verses to memorize and includes one or more “masculine perspectives”—short insights on the book you are about to read.



## Study Notes

Short study notes interspersed throughout the Bible will help you gain a better perspective on a particular verse or passage.



## Men, Women, and God

All men struggle in the area of relationships. This feature focuses on two of the most important relationships in every man's life: his relationship with God and his relationship with his wife—or with women in general.



## Someone You Should Know

Have you ever wanted to meet one of your heroes from the Bible? This feature is your chance to do just that—get acquainted with one of the men whose stories are told in this book. You'll meet 98 men of renown. Some loved God and

serve as role models for us; some didn't and, because of their lack of faith, can teach us valuable lessons about the importance of faith in our own lives.



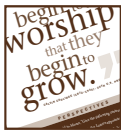
### **What the Bible Says About . . .**

What does the Bible have to say about ambition? What about drinking? Or sports? These 50 features will give you insight into the Bible's vital message on all kinds of topics for daily living.



### **Spotlight**

These 43 charts were created from a uniquely male perspective and are designed to help you visualize important truths presented in God's Word.



### **Perspectives**

All successful men understand the value of learning from others who have had similar experiences. This feature allows you to glean bits of insight from great men who have lived through many of the same issues and struggles that you face. Each of the 26 perspectives is tied to a Bible verse. Want a challenge? Try memorizing all the quotes, their source, and the verse they are identified with.



### **Personal Gold**

This feature consists of "snapshots" taken from books that were written by Christian men about living the Christian life. It is one of the most exciting features in the *Every Man's Bible*. You may recognize many of these authors' names. Some of these men have already finished their earthly race; many others are still alive. All of them will help you as you continue in your quest to become the man God wants you to be.



### **What's the Point**

One thing most men have in common is a desire to get right to the bottom of any issue. We want to get straight to the point. We like to know the bottom line. That's why you'll find a one-sentence summary of each book's message on the page following that book's introduction.

These features were designed to help guide you in your exciting journey through the most important book of all time. Our prayer is that the *Every Man's Bible* will serve as a tool to help you increase your knowledge of the Bible, deepen your relationships with those around you, and gain new insights into your life, your work, and your relationship with God.

*The Publishers*

## CONTRIBUTORS

### *Executive Editor*

Stephen Arterburn

### *General Editor*

Dean Merrill

### *Tyndale House Editor*

Jeremy Taylor

### *Copy Editors*

Leanne Rolland

Jason Driesbach

Marj Walton

### *Revision Editor*

Timothy Belcher

### *Proofreading*

Peachtree Editorial Services

### *Design*

Dan Farrell

Dean Renninger

Ruth Berg

### *Typesetting*

Sandy Jurca

### *Publisher*

Douglas R. Knox

### *Associate Publisher*

Blaine A. Smith

### *Brand Manager*

Brian Gee

### *Features*

#### **BOOK INTRODUCTIONS**

John Conaway

#### **SOMEONE YOU SHOULD KNOW**

Steve Halliday

#### **MEN, WOMEN, AND GOD**

Steve and Lois Rabey

#### **PERSPECTIVES**

Bob Kelly

#### **PERSONAL GOLD**

John Dunham

Keith Williams

#### **WHAT THE BIBLE SAYS ABOUT . . .**

John Conaway

## **BAND OF BROTHERS**

### **How to Lead a Men's Bible Study**

Guys—for all our supposed independence and isolation—do a lot of things together. We hike or ride bikes together. We compete on the basketball court. We tell each other the jokes we like. We watch sports together, offering our commentary along the way. We fix malfunctioning appliances, car engines, or software together. In the business world, we work at building stronger companies that will make more money. In other words, we're not the "lone rangers" many women think we are.

And men all across the nation are finding value in opening the Bible together on a regular basis. After all, it's clearly a "guy book," with males taking up at least 90 percent of the spotlight, from Adam to Noah to Moses to Samson to David to Daniel to Jesus, Peter, and Paul. It speaks to the real issues that guys face in our contemporary world. When men bring those issues into a small group of friends they can trust, great things happen.

If you'd like to form such a band of brothers, here are the practical steps to take:

#### **Recruiting and Organizing**

**Write a list of possible participants.** Go through the Contacts list in your phone or on your computer; think about guys you've met on the job, in the community, at church—and imagine what would happen if you said, "Hey, I'm thinking about getting a group together to dig into *Every Man's Bible* and see how it can help us be better Christ-followers. Would you be interested in giving it a try?" Then start making phone calls.

Don't be discouraged by "Yeah, well, but I'm awfully busy" (which may or may not be the real reason for staying away). Take what you can get. As few as three recruits (plus yourself) is enough to move forward.

**Settle the logistics—time, place, frequency, and duration.** Ask everyone for input: What day of the week would work best? What time of day—early morning? Over lunch? An evening or a weekend afternoon? Can you make this happen on a weekly basis (the best option), or would it have to be biweekly?

Where's a good place to meet—a coffee shop? Somebody's office or lunchroom? Somebody's home? Even outdoors?

What about a trial period of, say, six meetings, so guys don't feel pressure to commit to "forever"? You can evaluate at the end of the period and see if your group wants to keep going.

**Set the first meeting time (with adequate advance notice).** Be prepared that not everyone who sounded positive will actually show up. It will take a few weeks for the group to sort itself out and settle into a committed core.

# TYNDALE BIBLE VERSE FINDER

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# ONE YEAR READING PLAN

## January 1

Genesis 1:1–2:25  
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## January 2

Genesis 3:1–4:26  
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## January 3

Genesis 5:1–7:24  
Matthew 3:7–4:11  
Psalm 3:1–8  
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## January 4

Genesis 8:1–10:32  
Matthew 4:12–25  
Psalm 4:1–8  
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## January 5

Genesis 11:1–13:4  
Matthew 5:1–26  
Psalm 5:1–12  
Proverbs 1:24–28

## January 6

Genesis 13:5–15:21  
Matthew 5:27–48  
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## January 7

Genesis 16:1–18:15  
Matthew 6:1–24  
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Genesis 18:16–19:38  
Matthew 6:25–7:14  
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## January 9

Genesis 20:1–22:24  
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Psalm 9:1–12  
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## January 10

Genesis 23:1–24:51  
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Psalm 9:13–20  
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## January 11

Genesis 24:52–26:16  
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Proverbs 3:16–18

## January 16

Genesis 32:13–34:31  
Matthew 11:7–30  
Psalm 14:1–7  
Proverbs 3:19–20

## January 17

Genesis 35:1–36:43  
Matthew 12:1–21  
Psalm 15:1–5  
Proverbs 3:21–26

## January 18

Genesis 37:1–38:30  
Matthew 12:22–45  
Psalm 16:1–11  
Proverbs 3:27–32

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Genesis 39:1–41:16  
Matthew 12:46–13:23  
Psalm 17:1–15  
Proverbs 3:33–35

## January 20

Genesis 41:17–42:17  
Matthew 13:24–46  
Psalm 18:1–15  
Proverbs 4:1–6

## January 21

Genesis 42:18–43:34  
Matthew 13:47–14:12  
Psalm 18:16–36  
Proverbs 4:7–10

## January 22

Genesis 44:1–45:28  
Matthew 14:13–36  
Psalm 18:37–50  
Proverbs 4:11–13

## January 23

Genesis 46:1–47:31  
Matthew 15:1–28  
Psalm 19:1–14  
Proverbs 4:14–19

## January 24

Genesis 48:1–49:33  
Matthew 15:29–16:12  
Psalm 20:1–9  
Proverbs 4:20–27



**OLD TESTAMENT**

# Genesis

**WHAT'S THIS BOOK ABOUT?** Firsts—the universe, people, families, nations. Genesis means “beginning,” and the book of Genesis is the foundation for the rest of the Bible.

- + **WHO WROTE IT?** Christian and Jewish traditions say the author was Moses.
- + **WHEN DID IT HAPPEN?** This book covers from the beginning of time up through the 1400s B.C.
- + **WHERE DOES THIS BOOK FIT?** At the head of the line, both historically and spiritually.
- + **THE BREAKDOWN**
  - Chapters 1–3: Creation; Adam and Eve; sin
  - Chapters 4–5: Genealogies
  - Chapters 6–9: Noah
  - Chapters 10–11: Growth of nations; Tower of Babel
  - Chapters 12–23: Abraham
  - Chapters 24–26: Abraham and Isaac
  - Chapters 27–36: Jacob
  - Chapters 37–50: Joseph
- + **KEY CONCEPTS** The words *This is the account of . . .* are used often to mark off main sections of the book.
- + **SCORECARD**
  - **Adam:** The first man
  - **Eve:** The first woman
  - **Cain:** The first murderer
  - **Noah:** God used him to save humans and animals.
  - **Abraham:** God chose him to be the father of the Jewish people.
  - **Isaac:** Abraham's son
  - **Jacob:** Isaac's son; his name was changed to Israel
  - **Joseph:** Jacob's favorite son; God used him to save Jacob's family from famine

- + **READING TIME**  1:45  
IN HOURS :30 1:00 1:30 2:00 2:30

## WORTH MEMORIZING

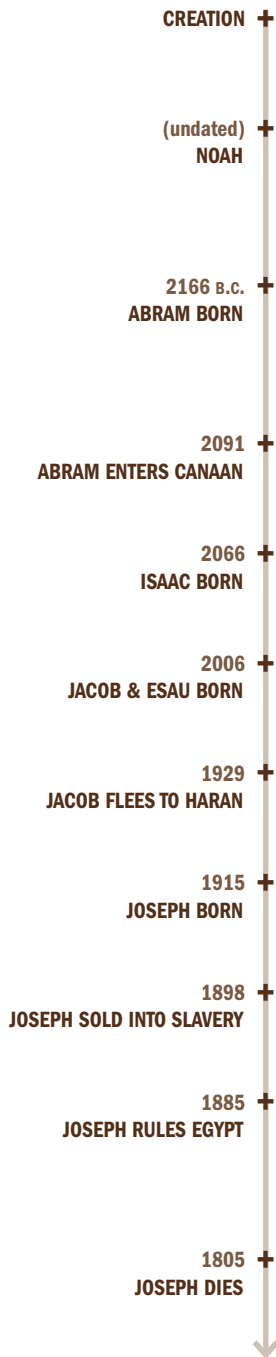
### • THE BIBLE'S OPENING WORDS IN 1:1.

In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.

- **JOSEPH'S WORDS IN 50:20.** “You intended to harm me, but God intended it all for good. He brought me to this position so I could save the lives of many people.”

## THE MASCULINE PERSPECTIVE

- **WORK IS A GOOD THING.** God gave Adam an important job to do, and Adam did it well. It's no accident that men find fulfillment in their work; God designed it that way.
- **MARRIAGE IS A GOOD THING.** Adam was, in a sense, incomplete until God created Eve.
- **SIN IS A REALITY EVERYONE MUST FACE.** Since Adam and Eve sinned, we're all corrupted. This means we can't always trust our instincts about what's right and what's wrong. Instead, we need an independent moral rudder—God's Word.



## 1 The Account of Creation

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

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

<sup>6</sup>Then God said, “Let there be a space between the waters, to separate the waters of the heavens from the waters of the earth.” <sup>7</sup>And that is what happened. God made this space to separate the waters of the earth from the waters of the heavens. <sup>8</sup>God called the space “sky.”

And evening passed and morning came, marking the second day.

<sup>9</sup>Then God said, “Let the waters beneath the sky flow together into one place, so dry ground may appear.” And that is what happened. <sup>10</sup>God called the dry ground “land” and the waters “seas.” And God saw that it was good. <sup>11</sup>Then God said, “Let the land sprout with vegetation—every sort of seed-bearing plant, and trees that grow seed-bearing fruit. These seeds

*1:1 Or In the beginning when God created the heavens and the earth, . . . Or When God began to create the heavens and the earth, . . .*

**1:1** The Hebrew name for God that is used here, *Elohim*, demonstrates the enormity of God’s power to transform lives. This name for God is in the plural form, signifying his strength and might. It also hints that God is in some sense plural—a community unto himself (see also 1:26; 3:22; 11:7). But though this name is plural, it is treated grammatically as singular, revealing God’s unified and personal nature. He is omnipotent in power but personal in his touch. He is able and willing to provide the help we need.

**1:2** This verse describes the earth before it was shaped by God’s creative hand. It was shapeless, chaotic, and dark. These three characteristics forebode nothing but trouble. But then we are told that “the Spirit of God was hovering over the surface of the waters.” This fourth characteristic is a source of hope and promises new life. The presence of the Holy Spirit was a necessary element in the events of all six days of creation. In the same way, his presence in our lives is necessary before any spiritual renewal can take place.

will then produce the kinds of plants and trees from which they came.” And that is what happened. <sup>12</sup>The land produced vegetation—all sorts of seed-bearing plants, and trees with seed-bearing fruit. Their seeds produced plants and trees of the same kind. And God saw that it was good.

<sup>13</sup>And evening passed and morning came, marking the third day.

<sup>14</sup>Then God said, “Let lights appear in the sky to separate the day from the night. Let them be signs to mark the seasons, days, and years. <sup>15</sup>Let these lights in the sky shine down on the earth.” And that is what happened. <sup>16</sup>God made two great lights—the larger one to govern the day, and the smaller one to govern the night. He also made the stars. <sup>17</sup>God set these lights in the sky to light the earth, <sup>18</sup>to govern the day and night, and to separate the light from the darkness. And God saw that it was good.

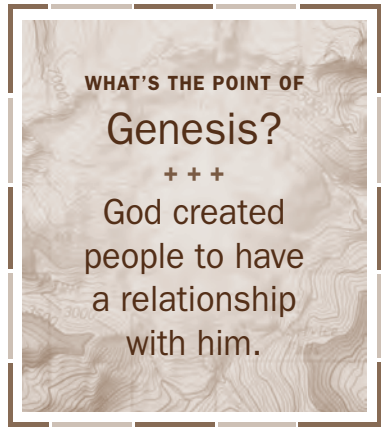
<sup>19</sup>And evening passed and morning came, marking the fourth day.

<sup>20</sup>Then God said, “Let the waters swarm with fish and other life. Let the skies be filled with birds of every kind.” <sup>21</sup>So God created great sea creatures and every living thing that scurries and swarms in the water, and every sort of bird—each producing offspring of the same kind. And God saw that it was good. <sup>22</sup>Then God blessed them, saying, “Be fruitful and multiply. Let the fish fill the seas, and let the birds multiply on the earth.”

<sup>23</sup>And evening passed and morning came, marking the fifth day.

<sup>24</sup>Then God said, “Let the earth produce every sort of animal, each producing offspring of the same kind—livestock, small animals that scurry along the ground, and wild animals.” And that is what happened. <sup>25</sup>God made all sorts

1:26a Or *man*; Hebrew reads *adam*. 1:26b As in Syriac version; Hebrew reads *all the earth*. 1:27 Or *the man*; Hebrew reads *ha-adam*.



of wild animals, livestock, and small animals, each able to produce offspring of the same kind. And God saw that it was good.

<sup>26</sup>Then God said, “Let us make human beings\* in our image, to be like us. They will reign over the fish in the sea, the birds in the sky, the livestock, all the wild animals on the earth,\* and the small animals that scurry along the ground.”

<sup>27</sup> So God created human beings\* in his own image.

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

<sup>28</sup>Then God blessed them and said, “Be fruitful and multiply. Fill the earth and govern it. Reign over the fish in the sea, the birds in the sky, and all the animals that scurry along the ground.”

<sup>29</sup>Then God said, “Look! I have given you every seed-bearing plant throughout the earth and all the fruit trees for your food. <sup>30</sup>And I have given every green plant as food for all the wild animals, the birds in the sky, and the small animals that

**1:24** The phrase “And that is what happened” (also in 1:9-11, 14-15) shows us that God’s creative activity was done in complete conformity to the specifications he had originally intended. God accomplishes his will with certainty and precision. It should reassure us to know that God’s good desires for us can be accomplished with the same certainty.

**1:26-27** People were created to be like God. Oceans of ink have been used attempting to explain what this means. One characteristic that all the writers agree upon is the ability of people to make moral decisions. We have the power of choice, and we are accountable to God and to others for the choices we make. To continue growing spiritually we must take responsibility for this aspect of God’s nature that is alive and well in each of us.

# Time

## + GOD OUTLASTS TIME

You must not forget this one thing, dear friends: A day is like a thousand years to the Lord, and a thousand years is like a day. 2 PETER 3:8

## + GOD CREATED TIME

God said, "Let lights appear in the sky to separate the day from the night. Let them be signs to mark the seasons, days, and years."

GENESIS 1:14

## + GOD IS WITH US THROUGHOUT TIME

Lord, through all the generations you have been our home!

PSALM 90:1

+ + +

[Jesus:] "And be sure of this: I am with you always, even to the end of the age."

MATTHEW 28:20

## + OUR TIME IS LIMITED

Seventy years are given to us!  
Some even live to eighty.

But even the best years are filled with pain and trouble;  
soon they disappear, and we fly away.

PSALM 90:10

+ + +

Teach us to realize the brevity of life,  
so that we may grow in wisdom.

PSALM 90:12

+ + +

Our days on earth are like grass;  
like wildflowers, we bloom and die.

The wind blows, and we are gone—  
as though we had never been here.

PSALM 103:15-16

## + TIME: USE IT WISELY

Be careful how you live. Don't live like fools, but like those who are wise. Make the most of every opportunity in these evil days.

EPHESIANS 5:15-16

scurry along the ground—everything that has life.” And that is what happened.

<sup>31</sup>Then God looked over all he had made, and he saw that it was very good!

And evening passed and morning came, marking the sixth day.

**2** So the creation of the heavens and the earth and everything in them was completed. <sup>2</sup>On the seventh day God had finished his work of creation, so he rested\* from all his work. <sup>3</sup>And God blessed the seventh day and declared it holy, because it was the day when he rested from all his work of creation.

<sup>4</sup>This is the account of the creation of the heavens and the earth.

### The Man and Woman in Eden

When the LORD God made the earth and the heavens, <sup>5</sup>neither wild plants nor grains were growing on the earth. For the LORD God had not yet sent rain to water the earth, and there were no people to cultivate the soil. <sup>6</sup>Instead, springs\* came up from the ground and watered all the land. <sup>7</sup>Then the LORD God formed the man from the dust of the ground. He breathed the breath of life into the man’s nostrils, and the man became a living person.

<sup>8</sup>Then the LORD God planted a garden in Eden in the east, and there he placed the man he had made. <sup>9</sup>The LORD God made all sorts of trees grow up from the ground—trees that were beautiful and that produced delicious fruit. In the middle of the garden he placed the tree of life and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.

<sup>10</sup>A river flowed from the land of Eden,

2:2 Or *ceased*; also in 2:3. 2:6 Or *mist*. 2:19 Or *Adam*, and so throughout the chapter. 2:21 Or *took a part of the man’s side*.

watering the garden and then dividing into four branches. <sup>11</sup>The first branch, called the Pishon, flowed around the entire land of Havilah, where gold is found. <sup>12</sup>The gold of that land is exceptionally pure; aromatic resin and onyx stone are also found there. <sup>13</sup>The second branch, called the Gihon, flowed around the entire land of Cush. <sup>14</sup>The third branch, called the Tigris, flowed east of the land of Asshur. The fourth branch is called the Euphrates.

<sup>15</sup>The LORD God placed the man in the Garden of Eden to tend and watch over it. <sup>16</sup>But the LORD God warned him, “You may freely eat the fruit of every tree in the garden—<sup>17</sup>except the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. If you eat its fruit, you are sure to die.”

<sup>18</sup>Then the LORD God said, “It is not good for the man to be alone. I will make a helper who is just right for him.” <sup>19</sup>So the LORD God formed from the ground all the wild animals and all the birds of the sky. He brought them to the man\* to see what he would call them, and the man chose a name for each one. <sup>20</sup>He gave names to all the livestock, all the birds of the sky, and all the wild animals. But still there was no helper just right for him.

<sup>21</sup>So the LORD God caused the man to fall into a deep sleep. While the man slept, the LORD God took out one of the man’s ribs\* and closed up the opening. <sup>22</sup>Then the LORD God made a woman from the rib, and he brought her to the man.

<sup>23</sup>“At last!” the man exclaimed.

“This one is bone from my bone,  
and flesh from my flesh!

She will be called ‘woman,’

because she was taken from ‘man.’”

**2:2-3** This is the first mention of Sabbath rest—one day of rest in seven. By his example, God encourages us to designate a portion of our lives to rest and spiritual rejuvenation. Without proper rest, it is very difficult to deal with the other matters in our lives and maintain the balance necessary to preserve spiritual gains.

**2:4** Here a new Hebrew name for God is introduced: “The LORD” (*Yahweh*). This is the personal name for God; it is his relationship name. It describes the God who chose Abram and established a covenant with him. It describes the God who chose to relate to the Israelites and make them his people. It is the name that reminds us that God wants to have a relationship with us.

**2:8-14** God provided a perfect environment for the first people. We often blame our outward circumstances for our difficulties. It is important to note here that in spite of their ideal surroundings, our first parents fell—they failed. Although the environment we live in can certainly add to our problems, it is never entirely at fault. We need to take responsibility for our own mistakes and failures.

**2:16-17** God forbade Adam and Eve to eat from a single tree. Why did he do this? Why didn’t God create a world where people couldn’t sin? Or why didn’t he make people so they couldn’t disobey his commands? The answer lies in the very nature of God. God is love and desires to have a loving relationship with his creatures. He wants us to respond to him with love in return. But a loving response is only possible when we have the choice to do otherwise. He wants us to obey because we love him, not because we have no other choice.

# Making a Man and a Woman

Genesis 1:27 and 2:15-25

**GOD MADE EVERYTHING** in the cosmos, from the microscopic amoeba and tiny insects to the vast planets and galaxies. But his work wasn't done until he had designed his most amazing creatures.

The first two chapters of Genesis give us two slightly different descriptions of the process God used to create humanity.

The sound bite in Genesis 1:27 tells us that people were created in God's own image. That doesn't mean humans are gods, but it does mean we have some of the Creator's characteristics—including our own kind of God-given creativity.

The longer Genesis 2 account provides more details about God's creation of Adam and Eve; Adam came first, and one of his ribs was used in the later creation of Eve.

People have argued about the Genesis creation stories for centuries. Skeptical scientists say the Bible is riddled with errors, but theologians say Genesis was never intended to be a science book.

Feminists and traditionalists have also fought bitter battles over these two brief passages. Feminists prefer Genesis 1, which supports their claims of gender equality, while those who support male leadership in the home and society prefer Genesis 2, which suggests women may have been dependent on men from the beginning of time.

These passages won't settle the raging scientific and moral debates, but they do make one thing perfectly clear: God created both the male and female and declared them "very good" (Genesis 1:31).

Adam was pretty pleased, too. "At last!" he exclaimed when he first saw Eve (2:23).

<sup>24</sup>This explains why a man leaves his father and mother and is joined to his wife, and the two are united into one.

<sup>25</sup>Now the man and his wife were both naked, but they felt no shame.

## 3 The Man and Woman Sin

The serpent was the shrewdest of all the wild animals the LORD God had made. One day he asked the woman, "Did God really say you must not eat the fruit from any of the trees in the garden?"

<sup>2</sup>"Of course we may eat fruit from the trees in the garden," the woman replied. <sup>3</sup>"It's only the fruit from the tree in the middle of the garden that we are not allowed to eat. God said, 'You must not eat it or even touch it; if you do, you will die.'"

<sup>4</sup>"You won't die!" the serpent replied to the woman. <sup>5</sup>"God knows that your eyes will be opened as soon as you eat it, and you will be like God, knowing both good and evil."

<sup>6</sup>The woman was convinced. She saw that the tree was beautiful and its fruit looked delicious, and she wanted the wisdom it would give her. So she took some of the fruit and ate it. Then she gave some to her husband, who was with her, and he ate it, too. <sup>7</sup>At that moment their eyes were opened, and they suddenly felt shame at their nakedness. So they sewed fig leaves together to cover themselves.

<sup>8</sup>When the cool evening breezes were blowing, the man\* and his wife heard the LORD God walking about in the garden. So they hid from the LORD God among the trees. <sup>9</sup>Then the LORD God called to the man, "Where are you?"

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

3:8 Or *Adam*, and so throughout the chapter.

**3:1-5** The account here pictures for us the process of temptation. The serpent offered as a very attractive option something that had been forbidden by God. The serpent also caused Eve to doubt God and the truth of his Word. During the debate, Eve offered some halfhearted opposition, but her growing doubt in God weakened her resolve. In the end, she gave in. Satan strengthened his temptation by weakening Eve's faith in God. Staying close to God and preserving our faith in him will weaken the power of temptation in our life.

**3:10** Adam admitted that he was hiding from God. One of the terrible consequences of our sin is the isolation that results. We want to hide from other people; we want to hide from God. Our failures will always make us want to hide. But we must bring our sin out into the open; this will then bring us back into our relationships—with others and with God—which helps us preserve our spiritual gains.

# Coming in First

MOST OF THE TIME, it's good to come in first.

It feels great when you're the first with a creative solution to a tough problem.

It feels great when you're the first to taste some fabulous new dish.

It feels great when you're the first to explore new territory, to harvest a unique plant, to watch a sunset from a breathtakingly beautiful perch.

Adam, the first human being ever to open his eyes, experienced all of these firsts, as well as countless more. As the original representative of a new race, Adam became the first to hold a steady job (Genesis 2:15), to play the name game (2:19-20), to enjoy a dynamic relationship with God (2:15ff), and to get married (2:21-25). God had created Adam to reflect something of his own divine magnificence (1:26-27), and as a result, this first man and his wife enjoyed a unique role as rulers over every other creature living on earth (1:26). Had the *Guinness Book of World Records* existed in Adam's day, he would have filled it with a dazzling multitude of exploits.

Too bad he didn't stop while he was ahead.

Most of us would like to forget the one first for which Adam is most remembered.

But we can't, since the results of *that* first continue to harass us to this day. Adam

chose to disobey the explicit instructions of God—and as a consequence, he earned himself and his posterity the death penalty (2:16-17; 3:17-19).

While the Bible fingers Adam as the one responsible for bringing sin and chaos into the world, some guys would rather blame Eve, Adam's wife, who did in fact break God's command before her husband did. They wonder, *Why does the Bible lay the fault squarely at Adam's feet?* Scripture offers two primary answers: First, God gave his commandment directly to Adam, not to Eve; and second, while a devilish deception hoodwinked Eve into disobedience, Adam consciously and willingly *decided* to disobey (1 Timothy 2:14). For this reason, the apostle Paul

says, "When Adam sinned, sin entered the world. Adam's sin brought death, so death spread to everyone, for everyone sinned" (Romans 5:12).

We'll never know what might have happened had Adam chosen God over sin. In the end, Adam returned to the ground from which he was taken after his death at a whopping 930 years of age (Genesis 3:19; 5:5).

And yet, was it really "the end"? No. The Bible is nothing if not a book of hope, and it tells us of a "last Adam," Jesus Christ, who through a first of his own has undone for us what Adam did to us: "Just as everyone dies because we all belong to Adam, everyone who belongs to Christ will be given new life" (1 Corinthians 15:22). As "the first to rise from the dead," Christ proclaims "light to Jews and Gentiles alike" (Acts 26:23)—a light that allows us, through faith in him, to enter a kind of life superior even to that which Adam forfeited so long ago.

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**THE POINT: It's good to be first—but only in the right things.**

# Naked and Unashamed

Genesis 2:25

**THE EARLY DAYS** in the Garden of Eden were a time of innocence and joy for humanity's first husband and wife. Wouldn't it be nice if we could bottle some of their happiness and pour it all over our own sex-saturated, love-starved world?

Here's how British thinker C. S. Lewis once described the problem of runaway sexual appetites:

"You can get a large audience together for a strip-tease act. Now suppose you came to a country where you could fill a theater by simply bringing a covered plate onto the stage and then slowly lifting the cover so as to let everyone see, just before the lights went out, that it contained a mutton chop or a bit of bacon, would you not think that in that country something had gone wrong with the appetite for food? And would not anyone who had grown up in a different world think there was something equally queer about the state of the sex instinct among us?"

That was half a century ago. Today, technology has accelerated the sale of sex, especially on the Internet, where anyone can view material once considered illegal or unthinkable.

Sex is the means by which humans and other creatures reproduce. But it's obvious that when God designed human sexuality, he added lots of interesting extra features. That's because there's more to human sexuality than breeding.

God created sex as a means for a man and a woman to experience a kind of soul-to-soul intimacy that can't be known any other way. Sex was also designed to make men and women praise God.

For Adam and Eve, sexuality was innocent and joyful. What would it take for us to experience sex in that way today?

11 "Who told you that you were naked?" the LORD God asked. "Have you eaten from the tree whose fruit I commanded you not to eat?"

12 The man replied, "It was the woman you gave me who gave me the fruit, and I ate it."

13 Then the LORD God asked the woman, "What have you done?"

"The serpent deceived me," she replied. "That's why I ate it."

14 Then the LORD God said to the serpent,

"Because you have done this, you are cursed

more than all animals, domestic and wild.

You will crawl on your belly, groveling in the dust as long as you live.

15 And I will cause hostility between you and the woman, and between your offspring and her offspring.

He will strike\* your head, and you will strike his heel."

16 Then he said to the woman,

"I will sharpen the pain of your pregnancy, and in pain you will give birth.

And you will desire to control your husband, but he will rule over you.\*"

17 And to the man he said,

"Since you listened to your wife and ate from the tree whose fruit I commanded you not to eat,

the ground is cursed because of you. All your life you will struggle to scratch a living from it.

18 It will grow thorns and thistles for you, though you will eat of its grains.

19 By the sweat of your brow will you have food to eat until you return to the ground from which you were made. For you were made from dust, and to dust you will return."

3:15 Or *bruise*; also in 3:15b. 3:16 Or *And though you will have desire for your husband, / he will rule over you.*

**3:15** In his grace, God promised that the offspring of the woman would defeat Satan. He promised that he would take charge of the redemption of their lives and overcome the enemy. This is good news—the first mention of the gospel of grace that would eventually be fulfilled by the coming of Jesus, the Messiah.

## Paradise Lost: God's Judgment

<sup>20</sup> Then the man—Adam—named his wife Eve, because she would be the mother of all who live.\* <sup>21</sup> And the LORD God made clothing from animal skins for Adam and his wife.

<sup>22</sup> Then the LORD God said, “Look, the human beings\* have become like us, knowing both good and evil. What if they reach out, take fruit from the tree of life, and eat it? Then they will live forever!” <sup>23</sup> So the LORD God banished them from the Garden of Eden, and he sent Adam out to cultivate the ground from which he had been made.

<sup>24</sup> After sending them out, the LORD God stationed mighty cherubim to the east of the Garden of Eden. And he placed a flaming sword that flashed back and forth to guard the way to the tree of life.

## 4 Cain and Abel

Now Adam\* had sexual relations with his wife, Eve, and she became pregnant. When she gave birth to Cain, she said, “With the LORD’s help, I have produced\* a man!” <sup>2</sup> Later she gave birth to his brother and named him Abel.

When they grew up, Abel became a shepherd, while Cain cultivated the ground. <sup>3</sup> When it was time for the harvest, Cain presented some of his crops as a gift to the LORD. <sup>4</sup> Abel also brought a gift—the best portions of the firstborn lambs from his flock. The LORD accepted Abel and his gift, <sup>5</sup> but he did not accept Cain and his gift. This made Cain very angry, and he looked dejected.

**3:20** *Eve* sounds like a Hebrew term that means “to give life.” **3:22** *Or the man*; Hebrew reads *ha-adam*. **4:1a** *Or the man*; also in 4:25. **4:1b** *Or I have acquired*. *Cain* sounds like a Hebrew term that can mean “produce” or “acquire.” **4:8** As in Samaritan Pentateuch, Greek and Syriac versions, and Latin Vulgate; Masoretic Text lacks “*Let’s go out into the fields.*” **4:13** *Or My sin*. **4:16** *Nod* means “wandering.”

<sup>6</sup> “Why are you so angry?” the LORD asked Cain. “Why do you look so dejected?” <sup>7</sup> You will be accepted if you do what is right. But if you refuse to do what is right, then watch out! Sin is crouching at the door, eager to control you. But you must subdue it and be its master.”

<sup>8</sup> One day Cain suggested to his brother, “Let’s go out into the fields.”\* And while they were in the field, Cain attacked his brother, Abel, and killed him.

<sup>9</sup> Afterward the LORD asked Cain, “Where is your brother? Where is Abel?”

“I don’t know,” Cain responded. “Am I my brother’s guardian?”

<sup>10</sup> But 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 cursed and banished from the ground, which has swallowed your brother’s blood. <sup>12</sup> No longer will the ground yield good crops for you, no matter how hard you work! From now on you will be a homeless wanderer on the earth.”

<sup>13</sup> Cain replied to the LORD, “My punishment\* is too great for me to bear! <sup>14</sup> You have banished me from the land and from your presence; you have made me a homeless wanderer. Anyone who finds me will kill me!”

<sup>15</sup> The LORD replied, “No, for I will give a sevenfold punishment to anyone who kills you.” Then the LORD put a mark on Cain to warn anyone who might try to kill him. <sup>16</sup> So Cain left the LORD’s presence and settled in the land of Nod,\* east of Eden.

**3:20** There was no reason for Adam and Eve to expect to live on after their failure. God had clearly stated that the consequences of their sin would be death (see 2:17). Yet Adam displayed his faith in our gracious God by naming his wife Eve, which sounds like a Hebrew word that means “to give life.” He believed that she would live to be the mother of the human race. Adam’s faith in God gave him hope for the future, even when his past gave him little reason to hope.

**4:4** Abel killed an innocent substitute as his offering, and God accepted his offering. Abel was obedient to God’s instructions. Our relationship with God can be established by accepting God’s gracious forgiveness and allowing the innocent sacrifice of his Son to stand in our place. Abel’s sacrifice of one of his lambs was the second death mentioned in the Bible.

**4:6-8** When God rejected Cain’s offering, Cain reacted first with disappointment, then with anger. God did not reject Cain for his strong feelings but offered him an opportunity for a new start. How sad that Cain refused this second chance and went out instead to kill his brother. We need to be careful when we face obstacles in life. We need to carefully weigh the strong feelings we encounter before acting on them. If we don’t, we may be passing up an excellent opportunity for a fresh start. God is not put off by our strong feelings. Our spiritual renewal is based on God’s grace, which always offers us an opportunity to begin again.

**4:15** The mark on Cain was not, as some have taught, a badge of guilt. It was a sign that God gave Cain for his protection. Even after Cain’s great failure, God desired to protect him from harm. Many of us look back and marvel at how God protected us before we began seeking him. He wants us to be restored and often protects us in the midst of evil so that we are not destroyed. Even after our greatest failures, our gracious God desires only our healing and restoration.

# Passing the Buck

Genesis 3:8-13

**THIRTY YEARS AGO**, the conversation went like this:

"Tommy, where's your math assignment?"

"Uh, I think my dog ate it."

Today, it may be more like this:

"Honey, where are the car keys?"

"Uh, I think the baby must have hidden them somewhere."

Passing the buck has been a popular guy tradition for a long time. In fact, the origins of buck passing go back to the dawn of human history. Adam, the first man God created, was also the first man to avoid taking responsibility for his failures.

After God created the earth, he told Adam and Eve not to eat the fruit from the tree in the middle of the garden. "If you eat its fruit, you are sure to die," said God (Genesis 2:17).

But the serpent enticed Eve into eating the fruit. Then Eve persuaded Adam. This was the beginning of sin and disobedience on earth. Theologians call this event the Fall.

When God asked what happened, he was given history's first buck-passing session.

"Eve gave it to me," said Adam.

"The serpent deceived me," said Eve.

We can only imagine what might have happened if Adam had said, "God, I confess. I messed up. I'm sorry." He didn't, and he paid the price. So do we.

## The Descendants of Cain

<sup>17</sup> Cain had sexual relations with his wife, and she became pregnant and gave birth to Enoch. Then Cain founded a city, which he named Enoch, after his son. <sup>18</sup> Enoch had a son named Irad. Irad became the father of\* Mehujael. Mehujael became the father of Methushael. Methushael became the father of Lamech.

<sup>19</sup> Lamech married two women. The first was named Adah, and the second was Zillah.

<sup>20</sup> Adah gave birth to Jabal, who was the first of those who raise livestock and live in tents.

<sup>21</sup> His brother's name was Jubal, the first of all who play the harp and flute. <sup>22</sup> Lamech's other wife, Zillah, gave birth to a son named Tubal-cain. He became an expert in forging

tools of bronze and iron. Tubal-cain had a sister named Naamah. <sup>23</sup> One day Lamech said to his wives,

"Adah and Zillah, hear my voice;  
listen to me, you wives of Lamech.

I have killed a man who attacked me,  
a young man who wounded me.

<sup>24</sup> If someone who kills Cain is punished seven times,  
then the one who kills me will be punished seventy-seven times!"

## The Birth of Seth

<sup>25</sup> Adam had sexual relations with his wife again, and she gave birth to another son. She named him Seth,\* for she said, "God has granted me another son in place of Abel,

<sup>4:18</sup> Or the ancestor of, and so throughout the verse. <sup>4:25</sup> Seth probably means "granted"; the name may also mean "appointed."

**4:19-24** Some people insist that the human race is developing and becoming better and better. When we compare Lamech with his ancestor Cain, it is obvious that the trend has usually gone in the opposite direction. Without God's help, we only get worse. It is only by following God's plan and receiving his grace that we can hope to escape the natural slide toward pain and destruction.

whom Cain killed.”<sup>26</sup> When Seth grew up, he had a son and named him Enosh. At that time people first began to worship the LORD by name.

## 5 The Descendants of Adam

This is the written account of the descendants of Adam. When God created human beings,\* he made them to be like himself.<sup>2</sup> He created them male and female, and he blessed them and called them “human.”

<sup>3</sup>When Adam was 130 years old, he became the father of a son who was just like him—in his very image. He named his son Seth.<sup>4</sup> After the birth of Seth, Adam lived another 800 years, and he had other sons and daughters.<sup>5</sup> Adam lived 930 years, and then he died.

<sup>6</sup>When Seth was 105 years old, he became the father of\* Enosh.<sup>7</sup> After the birth of\* Enosh, Seth lived another 807 years, and he had other sons and daughters.<sup>8</sup> Seth lived 912 years, and then he died.

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

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

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

<sup>18</sup>When Jared was 162 years old, he became the father of Enoch.<sup>19</sup> After the birth of Enoch, Jared lived another 800 years, and

he had other sons and daughters.<sup>20</sup> Jared lived 962 years, and then he died.

<sup>21</sup>When Enoch was 65 years old, he became the father of Methuselah.<sup>22</sup> After the birth of Methuselah, Enoch lived in close fellowship with God for another 300 years, and he had other sons and daughters.

<sup>23</sup>Enoch lived 365 years,<sup>24</sup> walking in close fellowship with God. Then one day he disappeared, because God took him.

<sup>25</sup>When Methuselah was 187 years old, he became the father of Lamech.<sup>26</sup> After the birth of Lamech, Methuselah lived another 782 years, and he had other sons and daughters.<sup>27</sup> Methuselah lived 969 years, and then he died.

<sup>28</sup>When Lamech was 182 years old, he became the father of a son.<sup>29</sup> Lamech named his son Noah, for he said, “May he bring us relief\* from our work and the painful labor of farming this ground that the LORD has cursed.”<sup>30</sup> After the birth of Noah, Lamech lived another 595 years, and he had other sons and daughters.<sup>31</sup> Lamech lived 777 years, and then he died.

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

## 6 A World Gone Wrong

Then the people began to multiply on the earth, and daughters were born to them.<sup>2</sup> The sons of God saw the beautiful women\* and took any they wanted as their wives.<sup>3</sup> Then the LORD said, “My Spirit will not put up with\* humans for such a long time, for they are only mortal flesh. In the future, their normal lifespan will be no more than 120 years.”

<sup>4</sup>In those days, and for some time after, giant Nephilites lived on the earth, for whenever the sons of God had intercourse with women, they gave birth to children who became the heroes and famous warriors of ancient times.

5:1 Or *man*; Hebrew reads *adam*; similarly in 5:2. 5:6 Or *the ancestor of*; also in 5:9, 12, 15, 18, 21, 25. 5:7 Or *the birth of this ancestor of*; also in 5:10, 13, 16, 19, 22, 26. 5:29 *Noah* sounds like a Hebrew term that can mean “relief” or “comfort.” 6:2 Hebrew *daughters of men*; also in 6:4. 6:3 Greek version reads *will not remain in*.

**5:1-32** This chapter has often been called the obituary column. Its recurring refrain is, “And then he died.” Although Adam’s physical death did not occur on the day he sinned, it did eventually come. Adam had reestablished his relationship with God, but the physical consequences of his sin could not be avoided forever. We may hope that after reestablishing our relationship with God, our troubles will be over. But a relationship with God rarely frees us from the consequences of past sin. The consequences will catch up with us sooner or later. But if we suffer for past mistakes, we can know that God will be with us each step of the way.

**5:21-24** Little is said about the spiritual state of these patriarchs of the human race. But the account of Enoch’s life provides us with a bright spot in this otherwise dismal chapter. Enoch was said to have “lived in close fellowship with God.” His life should give us hope. He wasn’t trapped by the mistakes or apathy of his peers and ancestors. Instead, he constantly walked with God.

# Work

## + CHANGING COURSE

If you are a thief, quit stealing. Instead, use your hands for good hard work, and then give generously to others in need.

EPHESIANS 4:28

## + THE REAL BOSS

Work willingly at whatever you do, as though you were working for the Lord rather than for people. Remember that the Lord will give you an inheritance as your reward, and that the Master you are serving is Christ.

COLOSSIANS 3:23-24

## + THE FIRST "JOB DESCRIPTION"

Then God blessed them and said, "Be fruitful and multiply. Fill the earth and govern it. Reign over the fish in the sea, the birds in the sky, and all the animals that scurry along the ground."

GENESIS 1:28

+ + +

The LORD God placed the man in the Garden of Eden to tend and watch over it. GENESIS 2:15

## + HOW WORK GOT TO BE A WHOLE LOT TOUGHER

And to the man he said,

"Since you listened to your wife and ate from the tree whose fruit I commanded you not to eat,

the ground is cursed because of you.

All your life you will struggle to scratch a living from it.

It will grow thorns and thistles for you, though you will eat of its grains.

By the sweat of your brow will you have food to eat

until you return to the ground from which you were made." GENESIS 3:17-19

## + WORK HABITS

Jeroboam was a very capable young man, and when Solomon saw how industrious he was, he put him in charge of the labor force from the tribes of Ephraim and Manasseh, the descendants of Joseph.

1 KINGS 11:28

+ + +

Make it your goal to live a quiet life, minding your own business and working with your hands, just as we instructed you before. Then people who are not believers will respect the way you live, and you will not need to depend on others.

1 THESSALONIANS 4:11-12

## + PRAYING ABOUT YOUR JOB

May the Lord our God show us his approval and make our efforts successful. Yes, make our efforts successful!

PSALM 90:17

## + SLACKING OFF

A lazy person is as bad as someone who destroys things.

PROVERBS 18:9

<sup>5</sup>The LORD observed the extent of human wickedness on the earth, and he saw that everything they thought or imagined was consistently and totally evil. <sup>6</sup>So the LORD was sorry he had ever made them and put them on the earth. It broke his heart. <sup>7</sup>And the LORD said, “I will wipe this human race I have created from the face of the earth. Yes, and I will destroy every living thing—all the people, the large animals, the small animals that scurry along the ground, and even the birds of the sky. I am sorry I ever made them.” <sup>8</sup>But Noah found favor with the LORD.

### The Story of Noah

<sup>9</sup>This is the account of Noah and his family. Noah was a righteous man, the only blameless person living on earth at the time, and he walked in close fellowship with God. <sup>10</sup>Noah was the father of three sons: Shem, Ham, and Japheth.

<sup>11</sup>Now God saw that the earth had become corrupt and was filled with violence. <sup>12</sup>God observed all this corruption in the world, for everyone on earth was corrupt. <sup>13</sup>So God said to Noah, “I have decided to destroy all living creatures, for they have filled the earth with violence. Yes, I will wipe them all out along with the earth!

<sup>14</sup>“Build a large boat\* from cypress wood\* and waterproof it with tar, inside and out. Then construct decks and stalls throughout its interior. <sup>15</sup>Make the boat 450 feet long, 75 feet wide, and 45 feet high.\* <sup>16</sup>Leave an 18-inch opening\* below the roof all the way around the boat. Put the door on the side, and build three decks inside the boat—lower, middle, and upper.

<sup>17</sup>“Look! I am about to cover the earth with

a flood that will destroy every living thing that breathes. Everything on earth will die. <sup>18</sup>But I will confirm my covenant with you. So enter the boat—you and your wife and your sons and their wives. <sup>19</sup>Bring a pair of every kind of animal—a male and a female—into the boat with you to keep them alive during the flood. <sup>20</sup>Pairs of every kind of bird, and every kind of animal, and every kind of small animal that scurries along the ground, will come to you to be kept alive. <sup>21</sup>And be sure to take on board enough food for your family and for all the animals.”

<sup>22</sup>So Noah did everything exactly as God had commanded him.

### 7 The Flood Covers the Earth

When everything was ready, the LORD said to Noah, “Go into the boat with all your family, for among all the people of the earth, I can see that you alone are righteous. <sup>2</sup>Take with you seven pairs—male and female—of each animal I have approved for eating and for sacrifice,\* and take one pair of each of the others. <sup>3</sup>Also take seven pairs of every kind of bird. There must be a male and a female in each pair to ensure that all life will survive on the earth after the flood. <sup>4</sup>Seven days from now I will make the rains pour down on the earth. And it will rain for forty days and forty nights, until I have wiped from the earth all the living things I have created.”

<sup>5</sup>So Noah did everything as the LORD commanded him.

<sup>6</sup>Noah was 600 years old when the flood covered the earth. <sup>7</sup>He went on board the boat to escape the flood—he and his wife and his sons and their wives. <sup>8</sup>With them were all the

6:14a Traditionally rendered *an ark*. 6:14b Or *gopher wood*. 6:15 Hebrew *300 cubits [138 meters] long, 50 cubits [23 meters] wide, and 30 cubits [13.8 meters] high*. 6:16 Hebrew *an opening of 1 cubit [46 centimeters]*. 7:2 Hebrew *of each clean animal*; similarly in 7:8.

**6:5-6** After years of patience, God saw that the human race still refused to live according to his plan. Here we see that things were getting worse, not better. This broke God’s heart because of the great love he had for his creation. It should encourage us to know that God doesn’t punish us simply out of anger. He loves us very much and desires that we should follow him.

**6:7** God promises to judge his fallen and sinful creation. Even though God is patient with us and gives us many chances to change our ways, we cannot act with impunity. God is righteous, and he judges sin.

**6:8-10** God did not destroy the righteous with the wicked. These verses are another statement of God’s grace. God extended grace to Noah and his family. Noah knew Enoch’s secret. He lived his life in constant fellowship with God. He broke the mold set by his ancestors and neighbors by drawing close to God. As a result, Noah lived through the Flood and became the second father of the human race.

**6:22** One has to wonder whether God’s instructions made any sense to Noah. God told him to build a gigantic boat far from the nearest body of navigable water. But here we see that Noah was obedient even though God’s instructions were hard to understand. This is one of the secrets of success in life. We may not understand how everything works, but we must always be faithful to do what God tells us to do. When we walk by faith as Noah did, God will watch over us.

various kinds of animals—those approved for eating and for sacrifice and those that were not—along with all the birds and the small animals that scurry along the ground. <sup>9</sup>They entered the boat in pairs, male and female, just as God had commanded Noah. <sup>10</sup>After seven days, the waters of the flood came and covered the earth.

<sup>11</sup>When Noah was 600 years old, on the seventeenth day of the second month, all the underground waters erupted from the earth, and the rain fell in mighty torrents from the sky. <sup>12</sup>The rain continued to fall for forty days and forty nights.

<sup>13</sup>That very day Noah had gone into the boat with his wife and his sons—Shem, Ham, and Japheth—and their wives. <sup>14</sup>With them in the boat were pairs of every kind of animal—domestic and wild, large and small—along with birds of every kind. <sup>15</sup>Two by two they came into the boat, representing every living thing that breathes. <sup>16</sup>A male and female of each kind entered, just as God had commanded Noah. Then the LORD closed the door behind them.

<sup>17</sup>For forty days the floodwaters grew deeper, covering the ground and lifting the boat high above the earth. <sup>18</sup>As the waters rose higher and higher above the ground, the boat floated safely on the surface. <sup>19</sup>Finally, the water covered even the highest mountains on the earth, <sup>20</sup>rising more than twenty-two feet\* above the highest peaks. <sup>21</sup>All the living things on earth died—birds, domestic animals, wild animals, small animals that scurry along the ground, and all the people. <sup>22</sup>Everything that breathed and lived on dry land died. <sup>23</sup>God wiped out every living thing on the earth—people, livestock, small animals that scurry along the ground, and the birds of the sky. All were destroyed. The only people who survived were Noah and those with him in the boat. <sup>24</sup>And the floodwaters covered the earth for 150 days.

## 8 The Flood Recedes

But God remembered Noah and all the wild animals and livestock with him in the boat. He sent a wind to blow across the earth, and the floodwaters began to recede.

*7:20 Hebrew 15 cubits [6.9 meters]. 8:4 Hebrew on the seventeenth day of the seventh month; see 7:11. 8:5 Hebrew On the first day of the tenth month; see 7:11 and note on 8:4. 8:13 Hebrew On the first day of the first month; see 7:11. 8:14 Hebrew The twenty-seventh day of the second month arrived; see note on 8:13. 8:20 Hebrew every clean animal and every clean bird.*

<sup>2</sup>The underground waters stopped flowing, and the torrential rains from the sky were stopped. <sup>3</sup>So the floodwaters gradually receded from the earth. After 150 days, <sup>4</sup>exactly five months from the time the flood began,\* the boat came to rest on the mountains of Ararat. <sup>5</sup>Two and a half months later,\* as the waters continued to go down, other mountain peaks became visible.

<sup>6</sup>After another forty days, Noah opened the window he had made in the boat <sup>7</sup>and released a raven. The bird flew back and forth until the floodwaters on the earth had dried up. <sup>8</sup>He also released a dove to see if the water had receded and it could find dry ground. <sup>9</sup>But the dove could find no place to land because the water still covered the ground. So it returned to the boat, and Noah held out his hand and drew the dove back inside. <sup>10</sup>After waiting another seven days, Noah released the dove again. <sup>11</sup>This time the dove returned to him in the evening with a fresh olive leaf in its beak. Then Noah knew that the floodwaters were almost gone. <sup>12</sup>He waited another seven days and then released the dove again. This time it did not come back.

<sup>13</sup>Noah was now 601 years old. On the first day of the new year, ten and a half months after the flood began,\* the floodwaters had almost dried up from the earth. Noah lifted back the covering of the boat and saw that the surface of the ground was drying. <sup>14</sup>Two more months went by,\* and at last the earth was dry!

<sup>15</sup>Then God said to Noah, <sup>16</sup>“Leave the boat, all of you—you and your wife, and your sons and their wives. <sup>17</sup>Release all the animals—the birds, the livestock, and the small animals that scurry along the ground—so they can be fruitful and multiply throughout the earth.”

<sup>18</sup>So Noah, his wife, and his sons and their wives left the boat. <sup>19</sup>And all of the large and small animals and birds came out of the boat, pair by pair.

<sup>20</sup>Then Noah built an altar to the LORD, and there he sacrificed as burnt offerings the animals and birds that had been approved for that purpose.\* <sup>21</sup>And the LORD was pleased with the aroma of the sacrifice

**8:1** Noah had listened to God and obeyed all his requests. Now the boat was floating over the earth on the floodwaters—not an ideal situation to be in. But God didn’t forget about Noah. It is comforting to know that when we obey God, he will not forget us. He will stand by us until his plans for us are complete.

# Trouble in Paradise

A JOKE PRINTED in the *St. Louis Pennant* back in 1840 serves as the first known record of a phrase still in use today.

"Why have we every reason to believe that Adam and Eve were both rowdies?" asked the editors.

"Because . . . they both raised Cain."

Today the phrase "raise Cain" means to cause a lot of trouble—as the biblical Cain surely did. This first human baby, the eldest child of Adam and Eve, grew up to become the world's first cold-blooded murderer (Genesis 4:1-8).

What drove Cain to kill his younger brother, Abel? Uncontrolled anger. And what caused his anger? The Bible gives a surprising answer: religion.

Scripture tells us that while Cain raised crops, his brother managed livestock. At some point both men wanted to offer the results of their labor as a sacrifice to God. But while God accepted Abel's offering, he rejected Cain's—an event that led directly to the world's first homicide.

Why did God reject Cain's sacrifice? Apparently it had little to do with the actual items offered. Rather, it came down to the watershed issue that always separates true religion from its deadly counterfeit: faith in God versus confidence in self. The book of Hebrews tells us that Abel offered a better sacrifice than Cain "by faith" (Hebrews 11:4). His genuine faith prompted him to give to God not second-rate leftovers but the very first and best of his flocks (Genesis 4:4). Cain, meanwhile, hoped to impress God and to earn divine favor with his own gifts, but discovered that God cannot be bought. The divine rejection made him so angry that he took out his rage on his brother, then lied about his crime (4:8-9).

Manmade religion—that is, trying to impress God by what we have done—always ends in disaster. We all have a choice when God warns us against trying to impress him with our puny efforts. Will we listen to him, trust him instead of trying to wow him, and do things his way? Or will we insist on our own plans, get angry when they don't work, blame God for our failures, and then strike out at others?

Make no mistake: We face this choice every day. The New Testament writer Jude warned his readers against following "in the footsteps of Cain" (Jude 1:11). He meant that we always face the temptation of choosing self-aggrandizing effort over genuine faith. Every one of us must repeatedly make scores of decisions about whether to trust God and follow his instructions, or depend on ourselves and our ability to get God to stand and applaud.

Some time before Cain struck down his brother, God advised him to do what was right and warned him that he stood in a precarious place. Cain ignored the warning and wound up a murderer. If we ignore similar warnings, do we really think we'll wind up any better?

Cain hoped to  
impress God,  
but discovered  
that God  
cannot be  
bought.

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**THE POINT: Nothing impresses God except genuine faith.**

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## PERSONAL GOLD: ABOUT THE AUTHORS

**Stephen Arterburn** is founder and chairman of New Life Ministries and host of the daily *New Life Live!* national radio program.

**Henry Blackaby** is the well-known author of *Experiencing God*.

**Stuart Briscoe** is minister-at-large for Elmbrook Church outside Milwaukee, where he served as senior pastor for thirty years.

**Stephen Broyles** taught English composition, philosophy, literature, Greek, Hebrew, and theology at the college level for seventeen years.

**Tony Dungy** was the first African American NFL head coach to win the Super Bowl, which he did with the Indianapolis Colts in 2007. He is now a studio analyst for NBC's *Football Night in America*.

**Tony Evans** is pastor of Oak Cliff Fellowship in Dallas, Texas and president of the Urban Alternative, a teaching ministry targeting the inner city.

**Don Everts** specializes in speaking to college students as part of InterVarsity Christian Fellowship.

**John Fischer** has been mixing his unique combination of singing, speaking, and writing for over twenty-five years.

**Leighton Ford**, who has spent a lifetime in evangelism, seeks to help young leaders worldwide to lead more *like* Jesus and more *to* Jesus.

**Ken Gire** is the award-winning author of more than a dozen books, including *The Weathering Grace of God* and *Windows of the Soul*.

**Bill Hybels** is pastor of Willow Creek Community Church in South Barrington, Illinois.

**David Jeremiah** is senior pastor of Shadow Mountain Community Church in El Cajon, California, and chancellor of Christian Heritage College.

**Greg Laurie** is senior pastor of Harvest Christian Fellowship in Riverside, California, and an active evangelist.

**Bill McCartney**, former head football coach at the University of Colorado, is the founder and president of Promise Keepers.

**Gordon MacDonald** is editor-at-large of *Leadership Journal* and board chairman of World Relief.

**Josh McDowell** is one of America's best-known youth speakers as part of Campus Crusade for Christ.

**J. I. Packer** is a theologian who teaches at Regent College in Vancouver, British Columbia.

**James Robison** is president of Life Outreach International in Fort Worth, Texas.

**Gary Rosberg** is a marriage and family counselor and frequent conference speaker from Des Moines, Iowa.

**Chuck Smith Jr.** is senior pastor of Capo Beach Calvary Chapel in Capistrano Beach, California.

**Joe Stowell** is president of Cornerstone University in Grand Rapids, Michigan.

**Chuck Swindoll** is pastor of Stonebriar Community Church in Frisco, Texas, as well as a radio speaker (*Insight for Living*) and chancellor of Dallas Theological Seminary.

**Dallas Willard** taught philosophy at the University of Southern California.

**Michael Youssef** is founding rector of The Church of the Apostles, an evangelical Anglican congregation in Atlanta, Georgia.

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## WHAT'S THE POINT QUICK REFERENCE LIST

- Genesis** God created people to have a relationship with him.
- Exodus** God loves his people enough to demand holiness.
- Leviticus** God pays attention to detail.
- Numbers** The road to God's best may not be short.
- Deuteronomy** On your way to a great future, don't ignore the past.
- Joshua** To be a winner, listen to God and show a lot of courage because God is with you.
- Judges** Without the Lord, today's victory won't last long.
- Ruth** God reverses tragedy for his people.
- 1 Samuel** God blesses the man who serves him 100 percent.
- 2 Samuel** Even a superstar can shoot himself in the foot.
- 1 Kings** If leaders don't listen to God, they'll wish they had.
- 2 Kings** Men become like what they worship.
- 1 Chronicles** A godly man can achieve much.
- 2 Chronicles** Those who rely on the Lord make a huge difference in life.
- Ezra** Time in the Word and in prayer is time well spent.
- Nehemiah** Starting all over is hard—but not impossible.
- Esther** God enjoys setting up dramatic results.
- Job** When your life explodes, trust is more important than logic.
- Psalms** God deserves our greatest passion.
- Proverbs** Life is complex—play it smart.
- Ecclesiastes** The externals aren't as great as they look.
- Song of Songs** The love of a good woman is worth cultivating.
- Isaiah** Sin is serious, but God will forgive and restore.
- Jeremiah** When nothing goes right, keep doing right.
- Lamentations** It's no fun to be humbled.
- Ezekiel** When God's favor is squandered, the result is not pretty.
- Daniel** A godly man can thrive under pressure.
- Hosea** God goes the extra mile to rescue his own.
- Joel** Judgment is coming—but so is the Holy Spirit.
- Amos** It takes more than "religion" to impress God.
- Obadiah** Grudges eventually backfire.
- Jonah** It's not smart to dodge God's directive.
- Micah** God is not a soft touch in the face of disobedience.
- Nahum** One generation's revival guarantees nothing for the next.
- Habakkuk** God's justice system can get a little complicated—but it's always perfect.
- Zephaniah** Actions lead to consequences.
- Haggai** God isn't content to play second string.

- Zechariah** The coming Messiah gave Israel a reason for hope.
- Malachi** Don't "play games" with God.
- Matthew** God kept his many promises to send us a Savior.
- Mark** Jesus does more than talk; he makes things happen.
- Luke** Jesus cares about the individual.
- John** This Man is like no other. What will you do with him?
- Acts** The unstoppable grace of God in Christ Jesus is for every race and nation.
- Romans** Everybody has offended God—but God has a solution.
- 1 Corinthians** Sex, money, and power—they all must yield to God's control.
- 2 Corinthians** A tough man can endure tough times.
- Galatians** Working to impress God doesn't work.
- Ephesians** Your potential is huge. Reach for it.
- Philippians** Run for the highest prize.
- Colossians** Christ is Number One—so live like it.
- 1 Thessalonians** Hang tough; your Master is coming back.
- 2 Thessalonians** While you're waiting for the Second Coming . . . get to work!
- 1 Timothy** Character is more important than talent.
- 2 Timothy** Run a strong race and finish well.
- Titus** Give the gospel a good name in the world.
- Philemon** Take time to help the guy who's messed up.
- Hebrews** Jesus is the best. Never take your eyes off of him.
- James** Real Christians don't just stand around.
- 1 Peter** God's people won't always be popular—and that's okay.
- 2 Peter** Don't yield to critics and con men.
- 1 John** Love God intensely, and the rest of life straightens out.
- 2 John** Not every polished speaker knows what he's talking about.
- 3 John** Be a gracious, yet discerning, host.
- Jude** Don't put up with sloppy teaching.
- Revelation** In the end, the Great One wins.