



JOURNALING STUDY BIBLE

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JOURNALING STUDY BIBLE

ENGLISH STANDARD VERSION



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ABBREVIATIONS

GENERAL

c.	about, approximately	KJV.	King James Version
ch., chs.	chapter(s)	NT	New Testament
d.	died	OT	Old Testament
e.g.	for example	p., pp.	page(s)
ESV	English Standard Version	v., vv.	verse(s)
etc.	and so on	vs.	versus

BOOKS OF THE BIBLE

Genesis	Gen.	Nahum	Nah.
Exodus	Ex.	Habakkuk	Hab.
Leviticus	Lev.	Zephaniah	Zeph.
Numbers	Num.	Haggai	Hag.
Deuteronomy	Deut.	Zechariah	Zech.
Joshua	Josh.	Malachi	Mal.
Judges	Judg.	Matthew	Matt.
Ruth	Ruth	Mark	Mark
1 Samuel	1 Sam.	Luke	Luke
2 Samuel	2 Sam.	John	John
1 Kings	1 Kings	Acts	Acts
2 Kings	2 Kings	Romans	Rom.
1 Chronicles	1 Chron.	1 Corinthians	1 Cor.
2 Chronicles	2 Chron.	2 Corinthians	2 Cor.
Ezra	Ezra	Galatians	Gal.
Nehemiah	Neh.	Ephesians	Eph.
Esther	Est.	Philippians	Phil.
Job	Job	Colossians	Col.
Psalms	Ps.	1 Thessalonians	1 Thess.
Proverbs	Prov.	2 Thessalonians	2 Thess.
Ecclesiastes	Eccles.	1 Timothy	1 Tim.
Song of Solomon	Song	2 Timothy	2 Tim.
Isaiah	Isa.	Titus	Titus
Jeremiah	Jer.	Philemon	Philem.
Lamentations	Lam.	Hebrews	Heb.
Ezekiel	Ezek.	James	James
Daniel	Dan.	1 Peter	1 Pet.
Hosea	Hos.	2 Peter	2 Pet.
Joel	Joel	1 John	1 John
Amos	Amos	2 John	2 John
Obadiah	Obad.	3 John	3 John
Jonah	Jonah	Jude	Jude
Micah	Mic.	Revelation	Rev.

BOOKS OF THE APOCRYPHA

1 Maccabees	1 Macc.	2 Maccabees	2 Macc.
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INTRODUCTION

A USER'S GUIDE TO THE ESV JOURNALING STUDY BIBLE

PURPOSE

The *ESV Journaling Study Bible* uses the notes from the *ESV Student Study Bible*, which was based on the original *ESV Study Bible*, first published in 2008. Study notes have been condensed and new supplementary features have been added to provide a concise but nonetheless extensive resource for the serious student of God's Word.

The *ESV Journaling Study Bible* was created to help people understand the Bible in a deeper way—that is, to encounter the timeless truth of God's Word as a powerful, compelling, life-changing reality. It combines the best and most recent evangelical scholarship with the ESV Bible text, which, as an “essentially literal” translation, is especially suited for Bible study.

The purpose of the *ESV Journaling Study Bible* is first and foremost to honor the Lord: (1) in terms of the excellence, beauty, and accuracy of its content and design, and (2) in terms of helping people come to a fuller understanding of the Bible, of the gospel, and of Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior. (For a complete list of contributors to the *ESV Journaling Study Bible*, see pp. 1851–1856.)

DIVINE WORDS AND MERELY HUMAN WORDS

The *ESV Journaling Study Bible* contains two kinds of words. First, there are the actual words of the Bible—the very words of God to us. These are printed in the larger font at the top of each page. Second, there are the study notes—merely human words. These are printed in the smaller font at the bottom of each page. The difference in font sizes serves to remind readers that the words of the Bible itself are infinitely more valuable than the words of the notes. The words of the Bible are the words of our Creator speaking to us. They are completely truthful (Ps. 119:160; Prov. 30:5; Titus 1:2; Heb. 6:18); they are pure (Ps. 12:6); they are powerful (Jer. 23:29; Heb. 4:12; 1 Pet. 1:23); and they are wise and righteous (Ps. 19:7–11). God's people should read these words with reverence and awe (Deut. 28:58; Ps. 119:74; Isa. 66:2), and with joy and delight (Ps. 19:7–11; 119:14, 97, 103; Jer. 15:16). Through these words God gives us eternal life (John 6:68; 1 Pet. 1:23) and daily nourishes our spiritual lives in this present world (Deut. 32:46; Matt. 4:4). The words of the study notes are useful because they help to explain the words of the Bible, but they must never become a substitute for the Bible itself.

The best way to use a study Bible, therefore, is always to begin and end with the words of the Bible. We should always begin by reading the Bible's actual words, seeking with our hearts and our minds to understand these words and apply them to our lives. Then, after starting with the words of the Bible itself, we can turn to the study notes and many other Bible study resources for information about the background to the text, for the meaning of puzzling words or phrases, and for connections to other parts of the Bible. These notes and resources have been prepared by godly teachers of the Bible and can be of great value as an aid to understanding the truth of God's Word to us as revealed in the words of Scripture. Finally, we should return again to the Bible itself, reading it with a new and deeper understanding, asking God to speak through his Word to our lives and to draw us near to himself.

THE UNDERSTANDING AND TEACHING OF GOD'S WORD

The *ESV Journaling Study Bible* carries forward a centuries-old tradition of “explaining,” “expounding,” or “teaching” the Word of God. This process of teaching God's Word is found even within the Bible itself. For example, when Moses spoke the words of Deuteronomy to the people of Israel, he told them, “You shall *teach* them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, and when you walk by the way, and when you lie down, and when you rise” (Deut. 6:7). Similarly, when Ezra and the Levites read the Book of the Law to the exiles

INTRODUCTION

who had returned from Babylon, they “helped the people to understand . . . and they gave the sense, so that the people understood . . .” (Neh. 8:7–8). In the early church, Philip was sent to the Ethiopian eunuch to help him understand what he was reading from Isaiah (Acts 8:26–40). And the apostle Paul, in city after city, spent his time “teaching the word of God” (Acts 18:11; compare 15:35; 20:20, 27). Likewise, throughout the history of the church, God has raised up people to teach the Word (see 1 Cor. 12:28; Eph. 4:11).

The *ESV Journaling Study Bible* stands within this tradition and was created specifically to provide *explanation* and *teaching*—to help people come to a better understanding of God’s Word and the gospel, and to provide a resource for the edification and strengthening of God’s people.

DOCTRINAL PERSPECTIVE

The doctrinal perspective of the *ESV Journaling Study Bible* is that of classic evangelical orthodoxy, in the historic stream of the Reformation. The notes are written from the perspective of confidence in the complete truthfulness of the Bible. In passages where errors or contradictions have been alleged, possible solutions to these challenges have been proposed. At times the notes also summarize interpretations that are inconsistent with classic evangelical orthodoxy, indicating how and why such views are in conflict with Scripture. Within that broad tradition of evangelical orthodoxy, the notes have sought to represent fairly the various evangelical positions on disputed topics such as baptism, the Lord’s Supper, spiritual gifts, the future of ethnic Israel, and questions concerning the millennium and other events connected with the time of Christ’s return.

SPECIAL FEATURES OF THE ESV JOURNALING STUDY BIBLE

As mentioned, the *ESV Journaling Study Bible* uses the notes from the *ESV Student Study Bible*, which are carefully condensed from the 2008 original *ESV Study Bible*. More specifically, the notes have been reduced to about half their original length to highlight the core insights in each text and to provide a concise survey of the Bible. Other features of this new *Journaling Study Bible* include:

- An essential theological “Overview of the Bible,” supplemented by more specific theological introductions to the Old and New Testaments.
- Timelines of the Old and New Testaments as well as “snapshot timelines” for each Bible book.
- Brief introductions and basic outlines for each Bible book, along with maps that help place each book in its geographical and historical setting.
- Interesting “Did You Know?” facts and observations about life in Bible times.
- Profiles of key people in the story of the Bible.
- Charts and diagrams giving visual summaries of important concepts.
- Carefully researched full-color illustrations, created specifically for the original *ESV Study Bible*, showing important biblical structures, cities, and objects in precise, accurate detail.
- Articles on topics such as the plan of salvation, the nature of the church, and the key issues of biblical doctrine and ethical teachings, written for readers of all ages.
- A glossary of more than 300 words and phrases created specifically for the *ESV Student Study Bible*.
- A special supplement of 15 full-color maps. All maps were created with the latest satellite imagery, digital technology, and cartographic techniques.
- Finally, journaling space throughout the Bible for note taking, reflection, and commenting.

The *ESV Journaling Study Bible* is unique in that it combines not only the Bible text and journaling space but also study notes written by scholars, which explain important words and tackle difficult concepts. Due to this innovative take on a standard journaling Bible, readers of this Bible can gain new insights through the interplay of Bible text (the actual words of the Bible) and scholarly help (the merely human words), comparing original context with clarifying material.

The *ESV Journaling Study Bible* can be used in many different ways. Taking advantage of the full list of features above, those who use this Bible for contemplative reflection and journaling will have a deep well from which to draw. Those who use it for in-depth, academic note-taking will have no shortage of resources to consult. Others

may choose to use the provided cross-references to write out cross-references in the journaling space, or some may want to use the timelines provided in the book introductions to keep track of the chronology of a story.

CROSS-REFERENCE SYSTEM AND CONCORDANCE

The *ESV Journaling Study Bible* includes 80,000 cross-references and an *extensive concordance*, which together encourage easy location of important words, passages, and biblical themes. There are several kinds of cross-references. References to specific words or phrases appear as, e.g., “ver. 7” (within the same chapter), “ch. 9:6” (within the same book), or “Heb. 4:2.” Brackets (e.g., “[ch. 9:6]”) denote passages with a similar theme. “See” directs readers to verses that contain a collection of related cross-references (e.g., “See Jn. 8:26”). The phrase “For . . . , see . . .” denotes longer passages that closely parallel the current passage (e.g., “For ver. 1–15, see Mark 4:1–12; Luke 8:4–10”). “See” paired with a verse range denotes passages that less closely parallel the current passage but still provide context and/or explanation (e.g., “See Ex. 7:17–24.”). “Cited” denotes passages quoted in or from other parts of Scripture. “(Heb.)” or “(Gk.)” indicates that the similarity of a cross-referenced passage is clearer in the original Hebrew or Greek than in English.

THE ESV BIBLE AND THE ESV JOURNALING STUDY BIBLE

Lastly, as noted above, the *ESV Journaling Study Bible* uses the “essentially literal” ESV (English Standard Version) Bible translation as the foundational text for creating the study Bible notes and other features. Emphasizing word-for-word accuracy, literary excellence, and depth of meaning, the ESV Bible is especially suited to be the basic text for a study Bible. First published in 2001, the ESV Bible translation work involved more than 100 Bible scholars and advisors, including: (1) the 14-member Translation Oversight Committee; (2) more than 50 leading Bible Scholars; and (3) a 50-plus-member Advisory Council—all of whom are committed to historic Christian orthodoxy. Many of the ESV translation team also participated in the creation of the original *ESV Study Bible* on which this *Journaling Study Bible* is based. The ESV Bible is available worldwide in more than 120 editions and bindings. (For more information, go to esv.org.)

GOAL AND VISION

As stated above, the goal and vision of the *ESV Journaling Study Bible* is to honor the Lord and his Word in terms of the excellence, beauty, and accuracy of its content and design, and in terms of helping people come to a deeper understanding of the Bible, of the gospel, and of Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior. Because Crossway is a not-for-profit publishing ministry, all receipts from the *ESV Journaling Study Bible* are used to further the support of this goal and vision.

We are very aware, however, that anything we do will always be less than perfect and subject to error. Yet we know that God still uses imperfect and inadequate things to his honor and praise. And so to our triune God (Father, Son, and Holy Spirit), and to his people, we offer our work of creating and publishing the *ESV Journaling Study Bible*—with the prayer that our Lord would guard and protect from any error or deficiency that may unintentionally be in these pages; and with the prayer that by God’s grace the *ESV Journaling Study Bible* may prove useful in bringing many to Christ and for the building up of his church worldwide, for this generation, for generations to come, and for eternity.

Soli Deo Gloria!—To God alone be the glory!

Dr. J. I. Packer
Theological Editor

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General Editor

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Executive Editor

PREFACE

TO THE ENGLISH STANDARD VERSION

THE BIBLE

"This Book [is] the most valuable thing that this world affords. Here is Wisdom; this is the royal Law; these are the lively Oracles of God." With these words the Moderator of the Church of Scotland hands a Bible to the new monarch in Britain's coronation service. These words echo the King James Bible translators, who wrote in 1611, "God's sacred Word . . . is that inestimable treasure that excelleth all the riches of the earth." This assessment of the Bible is the motivating force behind the publication of the English Standard Version.

TRANSLATION LEGACY

The English Standard Version (ESV) stands in the classic mainstream of English Bible translations over the past half-millennium. The fountainhead of that stream was William Tyndale's New Testament of 1526; marking its course were the King James Version of 1611 (KJV), the English Revised Version of 1885 (RV), the American Standard Version of 1901 (ASV), and the Revised Standard Version of 1952 and 1971 (RSV). In that stream, faithfulness to the text and vigorous pursuit of precision were combined with simplicity, beauty, and dignity of expression. Our goal has been to carry forward this legacy for this generation and generations to come.

To this end each word and phrase in the ESV has been carefully weighed against the original Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek, to ensure the fullest accuracy and clarity and to avoid under-translating or overlooking any nuance of the original text. The words and phrases themselves grow out of the Tyndale-King James legacy, and most recently out of the RSV, with the 1971 RSV text providing the starting point for our work. Archaic language has been brought into line with current usage and significant corrections have been made in the translation of key texts. But throughout, our goal has been to retain the depth of meaning and enduring quality of language that have made their indelible mark on the English-speaking world and have defined the life and doctrine of its church over the last five centuries.

TRANSLATION PHILOSOPHY

The ESV is an "essentially literal" translation that seeks as far as possible to reproduce the precise wording of the original text and the personal style of each Bible writer. As such, its emphasis is on "word-for-word" correspondence, at the same time taking full account of differences in grammar, syntax, and idiom between current literary English and the original languages. Thus it seeks to be transparent to the original text, letting the reader see as directly as possible the structure and exact force of the original.

In contrast to the ESV, some Bible versions have followed a "thought-for-thought" rather than "word-for-word" translation philosophy, emphasizing "dynamic equivalence" rather than the "essentially literal" meaning of the original. A "thought-for-thought" translation is of necessity more inclined to reflect the interpretive views of the translator and the influences of contemporary culture.

Every translation is at many points a trade-off between literal precision and readability, between "formal equivalence" in expression and "functional equivalence" in communication, and the ESV is no exception. Within this framework we have sought to be "as literal as possible" while maintaining clarity of expression and literary excellence. Therefore, to the extent that plain English permits and the meaning in each case allows, we have sought to use the same English word for important recurring words in the original; and, as far as grammar and syntax allow, we have rendered Old Testament passages cited in the New in ways that show their correspondence. Thus in each of these areas, as well as throughout the Bible as a whole, we have sought to capture all the echoes and overtones of meaning that are so abundantly present in the original texts.

As an essentially literal translation, taking into account grammar and syntax, the ESV thus seeks to carry over every possible nuance of meaning in the original words of Scripture into our own language. As such, the ESV is ideally suited for in-depth study of the Bible. Indeed, with its commitment to literary excellence, the ESV is equally well suited for public reading and preaching, for private reading and reflection, for both academic and devotional study, and for Scripture memorization.

TRANSLATION PRINCIPLES AND STYLE

The ESV also carries forward classic translation principles in its literary style. Accordingly it retains theological terminology—words such as grace, faith, justification, sanctification, redemption, regeneration, reconciliation, propitiation—because of their central importance for Christian doctrine and also because the underlying Greek words were already becoming key words and technical terms among Christians in New Testament times.

The ESV lets the stylistic variety of the biblical writers fully express itself—from the exalted prose that opens Genesis, to the flowing narratives of the historical books, to the rich metaphors and dramatic imagery of the poetic books, to the ringing rhetoric in the prophetic books, to the smooth elegance of Luke, to the profound simplicities of John, and the closely reasoned logic of Paul.

In punctuating, paragraphing, dividing long sentences, and rendering connectives, the ESV follows the path that seems to make the ongoing flow of thought clearest in English. The biblical languages regularly connect sentences by frequent repetition of words such as “and,” “but,” and “for,” in a way that goes beyond the conventions of current literary English. Effective translation, however, requires that these links in the original be reproduced so that the flow of the argument will be transparent to the reader. We have therefore normally translated these connectives, though occasionally we have varied the rendering by using alternatives (such as “also,” “however,” “now,” “so,” “then,” or “thus”) when they better express the linkage in specific instances.

In the area of gender language, the goal of the ESV is to render literally what is in the original. For example, “anyone” replaces “any man” where there is no word corresponding to “man” in the original languages, and “people” rather than “men” is regularly used where the original languages refer to both men and women. But the words “man” and “men” are retained where a male meaning component is part of the original Greek or Hebrew. Likewise, the word “man” has been retained where the original text intends to convey a clear contrast between “God” on the one hand and “man” on the other hand, with “man” being used in the collective sense of the whole human race (see Luke 2:52). Similarly, the English word “brothers” (translating the Greek word *adelphoi*) is retained as an important familial form of address between fellow-Jews and fellow-Christians in the first century. A recurring note is included to indicate that the term “brothers” (*adelphoi*) was often used in Greek to refer to both men and women, and to indicate the specific instances in the text where this is the case. In addition, the English word “sons” (translating the Greek word *huios*) is retained in specific instances because the underlying Greek term usually includes a male meaning component and it was used as a legal term in the adoption and inheritance laws of first-century Rome. As used by the apostle Paul, this term refers to the status of all Christians, both men and women, who, having been adopted into God’s family, now enjoy all the privileges, obligations, and inheritance rights of God’s children.

The inclusive use of the generic “he” has also regularly been retained, because this is consistent with similar usage in the original languages and because an essentially literal translation would be impossible without it.

In each case the objective has been transparency to the original text, allowing the reader to understand the original on its own terms rather than in the terms of our present-day Western culture.

THE TRANSLATION OF SPECIALIZED TERMS

In the translation of biblical terms referring to God, the ESV takes great care to convey the specific nuances of meaning of the original Hebrew and Greek words. First, concerning terms that refer to God in the Old Testament: God, the Maker of heaven and earth, introduced himself to the people of Israel with a special personal name, the consonants for which are YHWH (see Exodus 3:14–15). Scholars call this the “Tetragrammaton,” a Greek term referring to the four Hebrew letters YHWH. The exact pronunciation of YHWH is uncertain, because the Jewish people considered the personal name of God to be so holy that it should never be spoken aloud. Instead of reading the word YHWH, therefore, they would normally read the Hebrew word *’adonay* (“Lord”), and the ancient translations into Greek, Syriac, and Aramaic also followed this practice. When the vowels of the word *’adonay* are placed with the consonants of YHWH, this results in the familiar word *Jehovah* that was used in some earlier English Bible

translations. As is common among English translations today, the ESV usually renders the personal name of God (YHWH) by the word LORD (printed in small capitals). An exception to this is when the Hebrew word *ʾadonay* appears together with YHWH, in which case the two words are rendered together as “the Lord [in lowercase] God [in small capitals].” In contrast to the personal name for God (YHWH), the more general name for God in Old Testament Hebrew is *ʾelohim* and its related forms of *ʾel* or *ʾeloah*, all of which are normally translated “God” (in lowercase letters). The use of these different ways to translate the Hebrew words for God is especially beneficial to English readers, enabling them to see and understand the different ways that the *personal* name and the *general* name for God are both used to refer to the *One True God* of the Old Testament.

Second, in the New Testament, the Greek word *Christos* has been translated consistently as “Christ.” Although the term originally meant simply “anointed,” among Jews in New Testament times it had specifically come to designate the Messiah, the great Savior that God had promised to raise up. In other New Testament contexts, however, especially among Gentiles, *Christos* (“Christ”) was on its way to becoming a proper name. It is important, therefore, to keep the context in mind in understanding the various ways that *Christos* (“Christ”) is used in the New Testament. At the same time, in accord with its “essentially literal” translation philosophy, the ESV has retained consistency and concordance in the translation of *Christos* (“Christ”) throughout the New Testament.

Third, a particular difficulty is presented when words in biblical Hebrew and Greek refer to ancient practices and institutions that do not correspond directly to those in the modern world. Such is the case in the translation of *ʿebed* (Hebrew) and *doulos* (Greek), terms which are often rendered “slave.” These terms, however, actually cover a range of relationships that requires a range of renderings—“slave,” “bondservant,” or “servant”—depending on the context. Further, the word “slave” currently carries associations with the often brutal and dehumanizing institution of slavery particularly in nineteenth-century America. For this reason, the ESV translation of the words *ʿebed* and *doulos* has been undertaken with particular attention to their meaning in each specific context. Thus in Old Testament times, one might enter slavery either voluntarily (e.g., to escape poverty or to pay off a debt) or involuntarily (e.g., by birth, by being captured in battle, or by judicial sentence). Protection for all in servitude in ancient Israel was provided by the Mosaic Law, including specific provisions for release from slavery. In New Testament times, a *doulos* is often best described as a “bondservant”—that is, someone in the Roman Empire officially bound under contract to serve his master for seven years (except for those in Caesar’s household in Rome who were contracted for fourteen years). When the contract expired, the person was freed, given his wage that had been saved by the master, and officially declared a freedman. The ESV usage thus seeks to express the most fitting nuance of meaning in each context. Where absolute ownership by a master is envisaged (as in Romans 6), “slave” is used; where a more limited form of servitude is in view, “bondservant” is used (as in 1 Corinthians 7:21–24); where the context indicates a wide range of freedom (as in John 4:51), “servant” is preferred. Footnotes are generally provided to identify the Hebrew or Greek and the range of meaning that these terms may carry in each case. The issues involved in translating the Greek word *doulos* apply also to the Greek word *sundoulos*, translated in the text as “fellow servant.”

Fourth, it is sometimes suggested that Bible translations should capitalize pronouns referring to deity. It has seemed best not to capitalize deity pronouns in the ESV, however, for the following reasons: first, there is nothing in the original Hebrew and Greek manuscripts that corresponds to such capitalization; second, the practice of capitalizing deity pronouns in English Bible translations is a recent innovation, which began only in the mid-twentieth century; and, third, such capitalization is absent from the KJV Bible and the whole stream of Bible translations that the ESV carries forward.

A fifth specialized term, the word “behold,” usually has been retained as the most common translation for the Hebrew word *hinneh* and the Greek word *idou*. Both of these words mean something like “Pay careful attention to what follows! This is important!” Other than the word “behold,” there is no single word in English that fits well in most contexts. Although “Look!” and “See!” and “Listen!” would be workable in some contexts, in many others these words lack sufficient weight and dignity. Given the principles of “essentially literal” translation, it is important not to leave *hinneh* and *idou* completely untranslated and so to lose the intended emphasis in the original languages. The older and more formal word “behold” has usually been retained, therefore, as the best available option for conveying the original weight of meaning.

TEXTUAL BASIS AND RESOURCES

The ESV is based on the Masoretic text of the Hebrew Bible as found in *Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia* (5th ed., 1997), and on the Greek text in the 2014 editions of the *Greek New Testament* (5th corrected ed.), published by

the United Bible Societies (UBS), and *Novum Testamentum Graece* (28th ed., 2012), edited by Nestle and Aland. The currently renewed respect among Old Testament scholars for the Masoretic text is reflected in the ESV's attempt, wherever possible, to translate difficult Hebrew passages as they stand in the Masoretic text rather than resorting to emendations or to finding an alternative reading in the ancient versions. In exceptional, difficult cases, the Dead Sea Scrolls, the Septuagint, the Samaritan Pentateuch, the Syriac Peshitta, the Latin Vulgate, and other sources were consulted to shed possible light on the text, or, if necessary, to support a divergence from the Masoretic text. Similarly, in a few difficult cases in the New Testament, the ESV has followed a Greek text different from the text given preference in the UBS/Nestle-Aland 28th edition. Throughout, the translation team has benefited greatly from the massive textual resources that have become readily available recently, from new insights into biblical laws and culture, and from current advances in Hebrew and Greek lexicography and grammatical understanding.

TEXTUAL FOOTNOTES

The footnotes that are included in most editions of the ESV are therefore an integral part of the ESV translation, informing the reader of textual variations and difficulties and showing how these have been resolved by the ESV translation team. In addition to this, the footnotes indicate significant alternative readings and occasionally provide an explanation for technical terms or for a difficult reading in the text.

PUBLISHING TEAM

The ESV publishing team has included more than a hundred people. The fourteen-member Translation Oversight Committee benefited from the work of more than fifty biblical experts serving as Translation Review Scholars and from the comments of the more than fifty members of the Advisory Council, all of which was carried out under the auspices of the Crossway Board of Directors. This hundred-plus-member team shares a common commitment to the truth of God's Word and to historic Christian orthodoxy and is international in scope, including leaders in many denominations.

TO GOD'S HONOR AND PRAISE

We know that no Bible translation is perfect; but we also know that God uses imperfect and inadequate things to his honor and praise. So to our triune God and to his people we offer what we have done, with our prayers that it may prove useful, with gratitude for much help given, and with ongoing wonder that our God should ever have entrusted to us so momentous a task.

Soli Deo Gloria!—To God alone be the glory!

The Translation Oversight Committee

AN OVERVIEW OF THE BIBLE

How does the Bible as a whole fit together? The events recorded in the Bible took place over a span of thousands of years and in several different cultural settings. What is their unifying thread?

One unifying thread in the Bible is its divine authorship. *Every book of the Bible is God's word.* The events recorded in the Bible are there because God wanted them to be recorded, and he had them recorded with his people and their instruction in mind: "For whatever was written in former days was written for our instruction, that through endurance and through the encouragement of the Scriptures we might have hope" (Rom. 15:4).

GOD'S PLAN FOR HISTORY

God also has a *unified plan for history* (Eph. 1:10, 12). The work of Christ on earth, especially his crucifixion and resurrection, is the climax of history. It is the great turning point. The present era looks *back* on Christ's completed work but also *forward* to the consummation of his work when he will come again in the new heavens and earth.

GOD'S PROMISES AND PREDICTIONS

The Old Testament directly points forward to Christ through promises of God's salvation. God gave some *specific* promises in the Old Testament relating to the coming of Christ as the Messiah, the Savior in the line of David. But God often gives more *general* promises concerning a future great day of salvation, without spelling out all the details of how he will accomplish it. Sometimes the promises take *explicit* form (e.g., the coming of the Messiah), and sometimes they take *symbolic* form (e.g., the animal sacrifices). All of the OT promises find their "yes" in Jesus (2 Cor. 1:20).

GOD'S WARNINGS AND CURSES

God's relation to people also includes warnings, threatenings, and cursings, which anticipate and point forward to Christ in two distinct ways. First, *Christ is the Lamb of God* who bore the curse of sin on the cross (John 1:29; 2 Cor. 5:21; Gal. 3:13; 1 Pet. 2:24). Every instance of the wrath of God against sin, and his punishment of sin, looks forward to the wrath that was poured out on Christ on the cross. Second, *Christ will wage war against sin and exterminate it* at his second coming. All earlier judgments against sin anticipate the final judgment.

GOD'S COVENANT COMMITMENT AND INSTRUCTION

The promises of God in the Old Testament come in the context not only of God's *commitment* to his people but also of *instruction* about the people's commitment and obligations to God. When God makes a covenant with man, God is the sovereign, so he specifies the obligations on both sides. "I will be their God" is the fundamental obligation on God's side, while "they shall be my people" is the fundamental obligation on the human side.

For example, in the first call of Abram (Gen. 12:1–2) God's commitment takes the form of promises, blessings, and curses. The *promises and blessings* point forward to Christ, who is the fulfillment of the promises and the source of final blessings. The *curses* point forward to Christ both in his bearing the curse and in his execution of judgment and curse against sin, especially at the second coming.

Christ fulfilled the *obligations* of God's covenants through perfect obedience (Heb. 5:8), receiving the reward of obedience in his resurrection and ascension (Phil. 2:9–10). By dealing with God's wrath against sin, Christ reconciled believers to God, bringing about the intimacy with God that all of the OT covenants anticipated.

CHRIST IS THE OFFSPRING OF ABRAHAM AND THE LAST ADAM

God's promises to Abraham were the foundation for the nation of Israel. Abraham was obligated to walk blamelessly before God (Gen. 17:1). But only Christ is without sin (Heb. 4:15), making him the ultimate offspring to whom the other offspring all point (Gal. 3:16). Through Christ, believers are united to him and thereby themselves become "Abraham's offspring" (Gal. 3:29). Believers, Jews and Gentiles alike, become heirs to the promises of God made to Abraham and his offspring (Gal. 3:28–29).

Christ is not only the offspring of Abraham, but—reaching back farther in time to an earlier promise of God—the offspring of the woman: "I will put enmity between you [the serpent] and the woman, and between your offspring and her offspring; he shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise his heel" (Gen. 3:15). The conquest over the serpent, and therefore the conquest of evil and the reversal of its effects, is to take place through the offspring of the woman. One can trace this offspring down from Eve through Seth and his godly descendants, through Noah, and down to Abraham, where God's promise takes the specific form of offspring for Abraham. Thus Christ is not only the offspring of Abraham but the last Adam (1 Cor. 15:45–49). Like Adam, he represents all who belong to him. And he reverses the effects of Adam's fall.

SHADOWS, PREFIGURES, AND "TYPES" OF CHRIST

The Old Testament anticipates Christ the Savior by "shadows" and "types"—examples, symbols, pictures—of the things that were to come (see 1 Cor. 10:6, 11; Heb. 8:5). *Animal sacrifices* in the Old Testament prefigure the final sacrifice of Christ. The *temple*, as a dwelling place for God, prefigured Christ, who is the final "dwelling place" of God, and through whom God is with his people (Matt. 1:23; John 2:21). The OT *priests* were types of Christ, the final high priest (Heb. 7:11–8:7).

The fulfillment of all these OT shadows and types takes place preeminently in Christ (2 Cor. 1:20; Eph. 1:10). But in the New Testament those people who are "in Christ," who place their trust in him and experience fellowship with his person and his blessings, receive the benefits of what he has accomplished. Therefore one can also find anticipations or "types" in the Old Testament that point forward to the NT church, the people in the New Testament who belong to Christ.

Some OT symbols also may point forward especially to the consummation of salvation that takes place in the new heaven and the new earth yet to come (2 Pet. 3:13; Rev. 21:1–22:5). Old Testament Jerusalem prefigured the new Jerusalem that will come "down out of heaven from God" (Rev. 21:2).

CHRIST IS THE MEDIATOR

Sinful man needs a *mediator* who will approach God on his behalf. Jesus Christ, who is both God and man, and who is innocent of sin, is the only one who can mediate (1 Tim. 2:5–6) and the only one who can save (Acts 4:12).

All the instances of salvation and mediation in the Old Testament prefigure Christ. *Prophets* bring God's word to his people. Godly *kings* bring God's rule to bear on the people. *Priests* represent the people in coming before God's presence. Christ is the prophet, king, and priest who fulfills all three functions in a final way (Heb. 1:1–3).

We can also look at *wise men*, who bring God's wisdom to others; *warriors*, who bring God's deliverance from enemies; and *singers*, who bring praise to God on behalf of the people and speak of God to the people. *Covenants* bring God's word to the people. The *temple* brings God's presence to the people. *Animal sacrifices* bring God's forgiveness to the people. In reading the Bible, we should look for ways in which God brings his word and his presence to people through the *means* he establishes. All these means perform a mediatorial role, and because there is only one mediator, clearly they all point to Christ.

THE
OLD TESTAMENT

THE THEOLOGY AND DATES OF THE OLD TESTAMENT

THE ESSENTIAL COMPONENTS OF THE OLD TESTAMENT STORY

The Old Testament can be understood as an unfolding story with a number of basic components:

(1) *Monotheism*. There is only one true God, who made and rules heaven and earth and all mankind. The Old Testament invites Israel to commit themselves to him in exclusive loyalty and love (Deut. 6:4-9).

(2) *Creation and fall*. The one Creator God made Adam and Eve with dignity and purpose, calling them to live faithfully to God and to spread the blessings of Eden throughout the earth. Because they betrayed God's purpose, all people since the fall are beset with sins and weaknesses that only God's grace can redeem and heal.

(3) *Election and covenant*. The one true God chose a people for himself and bound himself to them by his covenant (Ex. 19:4-6; Deut. 7:6-11). This covenant expressed God's intention to save the people, and through them to bring light to the rest of the world, in order to restore all things to their proper functioning in the world God made. The land of Israel was to be a kind of reconstituted Eden, which would flourish as the people's faithfulness flourished (or languish if the people were unfaithful). God's covenants generally involve one person who represents the whole people (e.g., Adam, Noah, Abraham, David); the rest of the people experience the covenant by virtue of their inclusion in the community represented. The covenant representative was required to embody the ideal of covenant faithfulness as a model for those on whose behalf he had acted.

(4) *Covenant membership*. In his covenant, God offers his grace to his people: the forgiveness of their sins, the shaping of their lives in this world to reflect his own glory, and a part to play in bringing light to the Gentiles. The faithful are those covenant members who lay hold of this grace from the heart, enjoying the full benefits of God's love. Judgments upon the whole people often come because too many of them have been unfaithful; these judgments do not bring the story of God's people to an end but serve rather to purify and chasten that people (often by removing unbelieving members).

(5) *Eschatology*. The story of God's people is headed toward a glorious future in which all kinds of people will come to know the Lord and join his people. The promise of a lasting dynasty for David (2 Sam. 7:16) becomes the expectation that a final heir of his line will one day arise, take his Davidic throne, and lead his people in the great task of bringing light to the Gentiles.

THE PARTS OF THE OLD TESTAMENT IN RELATION TO THE STORY

The Old Testament is thus the story of the one true Creator God, who called the family of Abraham to be his remedy for the defilement that came into the world through the sin of Adam and Eve. God rescued Israel from slavery in Egypt in fulfillment of this plan, and established them as a theocracy for the sake of displaying his existence and character to the rest of the world. God sent his blessings and curses upon Israel in order to pursue that purpose. God never abandoned that purpose, even in the face of the most grievous unfaithfulness in Israel.

This overarching story serves as a grand narrative or worldview story for Israel: each member of the people was to see himself or herself as an heir of this story, with all its glory and shame; as a steward of the story, responsible to pass it on to the next generation; and as a participant, whose faithfulness could play a role, by God's mysterious wisdom, in the story's progress.

Some would say that we should read the entire Old Testament as a story. This does not help the reader, for the very obvious reason that not everything in the Old Testament is narrative or "story." For example, there are laws (in the Pentateuch), whose purpose was to maintain order by guiding judges in what penalties to impose and by specifying the minimum standard of behavior necessary to preserve the theocracy; there is wisdom (in the books of Job, Proverbs, and Ecclesiastes, as well as in the Psalms), which helps God's people live well daily; there are songs (especially the Psalms) that the people of God should sing in corporate worship; there are poems (especially

the Song of Solomon; compare Prov. 5:15–20) celebrating such wonders as romantic love; and lots more. Therefore it is better to speak of reading the parts of the Old Testament in relation to its overarching story. That is, we can see the parts in relation to the “Big Story” that unifies the whole. The Proverbs help people to live their little stories in such a way as to contribute to the Big Story. The Psalms—many of which explicitly recount parts of the Big Story—help people live as faithful members of the worshiping people of God. The Prophets keep recalling the Big Story, calling their audiences to live faithfully in its light. The Big Story tells us that God’s purpose is to restore our humanity to its proper function, and thus it reminds each person of the human nature he shares with every other human being, and of the duty and benefit of seeking the good of others. For example, enjoying the love of a faithful spouse is a way of experiencing renewed humanity—a way that displays God’s goodness to the rest of the world (as in the Song of Solomon).

All of these factors explain why it is possible for the NT authors both to say that the Sinai covenant is done away with and at the same time to affirm that this covenant includes principles that cannot pass away, because they are part of the larger story of which the Sinai covenant is one chapter.

THE OLD TESTAMENT AS CHRISTIAN SCRIPTURE

The Old Testament presents itself, then, as a story that is headed toward fulfillment. The Old Testament closes with both anxiety and hope under Persian rule (see Malachi). The NT authors, most of whom were Jewish Christians, saw themselves as heirs of the OT story, and as authorized to describe its proper completion in the death and resurrection of Jesus and the messianic era that this ushered in. These authors viewed and used the Old Testament as Christian Scripture, and they urged their audiences (many of whom were Gentile Christians) to do the same. They saw the Old Testament as constituting the earlier chapters of the story in which Christians are now participating.

By understanding that there are earlier and later chapters in the story of God’s work for his people, we can see how the OT era and the Christian era exhibit both continuity and discontinuity. The Old Testament had looked forward to an internationalized people of God, without explaining exactly how that would connect to the theocracy of Israel. The theocracy defined the people of God as predominantly coming from a particular ethnic group in a particular land; Gentile converts (“sojourners”) were protected (Ex. 12:49; 20:10; 22:21; Lev. 19:10) but could not be full-status members of the theocratic community. The New Testament abolishes the distinction (Eph. 2:19), because the theocracy as such is no longer in existence and many of its provisions are done away with (see Acts 10:34–35; Heb. 9:11–14). At the same time, the character of the one Creator God, and his interest in restoring the image of God in human beings, transcends the specific arrangements of the theocracy: hence the moral commands of God apply to Christians as they did to the faithful in Israel (see Rom. 13:8–10).

OLD TESTAMENT TIMELINE: AN OVERVIEW

The following page provides a concise OT timeline and overview. The dates (all B.C.) are either the exact year or a close approximation thereof, determined by correlating dates in the Bible with ancient Near Eastern sources (such as Assyrian accession lists, Babylonian king-lists, and Egyptian historical sources). Often dates can be further confirmed by ancient Assyrian and Babylonian documents which give narrative accounts of the same historical events, as recorded by those two countries. All of this adds great confidence and credibility to the truth and historicity of the Bible text itself.

OLD TESTAMENT DATES

Patriarchs to Judges (c. 2166–1030)

	1446 Date for Exodus	1260 Date for Exodus
Abraham	2166–1991	2000–1825
Isaac	2066–1886	1900–1720
Jacob	2006–1859	1840–1693
Joseph	1915–1805	1749–1639
Moses' birth	1526	1340
Exodus	1446	1260
Desert wanderings	1446–1406	1260–1220
Entrance into Canaan	1406	1220
Period of the judges	1375 to 1050–1030	1210 to 1050–1030

United Monarchy (c. 1050–931)

	Dates	Notes
Saul's reign	1050–1030 to 1010	For Saul's age and length of reign, see 1 Sam. 13:1 and its esv footnote*
David's reign	1010–971	
Solomon's reign	971–931	

Divided Monarchy to Exile (931–586)

Kingdom divided	931	See The Divided Kingdom, pp. 462–463
Syro-Ephraimite war	740–732	Pekah (Israel) and Rezin (Syria) pressure Jotham and Ahaz (Judah) to join their opposition to Tiglath-pileser III (Assyria)
Fall of Samaria (Israel)	722	Shalmaneser V (727–722) and Sargon II (722–705) of Assyria
Josiah's reforms	628	
Battle of Carchemish	605	Daniel and three friends exiled to Babylon
Jerusalem attacked	597	Nebuchadnezzar II takes exiles to Babylon including Jehoiachin and Ezekiel
Fall of Jerusalem (Judah)	586	Nebuchadnezzar II takes more exiles to Babylon

Return from Exile (539–445)

Fall of Babylon	539	Cyrus of Persia (539–530)
1st return of exiles to Jerusalem	538	
Temple building begins	536	
Temple completed	516	Darius I (522–486)
Esther in palace of Xerxes	478	Xerxes I/Ahasuerus (485–464)
2nd return of exiles to Jerusalem under Ezra	458	Artaxerxes I (464–423)
3rd return of exiles to Jerusalem under Nehemiah	445	

*Possible dates for the beginning of Saul's reign are calculated based on other data in the OT: e.g., David's age at accession and length of reign (2 Sam. 5:4–5); Ish-bosheth's age when he became king (2 Sam. 2:10); and Jonathan's probable age in relation to both Ish-bosheth and David, presuming that Jonathan was Saul's firstborn son (1 Sam. 14:49; 31:2) and was at least 20 when referred to as a commander of troops early in Saul's reign (1 Sam. 13:2).

THE HEBREW CALENDAR COMPARED TO THE GREGORIAN (MODERN) CALENDAR

The Hebrew calendar was composed of 12 lunar months, each of which began when the thin crescent moon was first visible at sunset. They were composed of approximately 29/30 days and were built around the agricultural seasons. Apparently some of the names of the months were changed after the time of Israel's exile in Babylon (e.g., the first month of Abib changed to Nisan; for dates of the exile, see p. 25).

Hebrew Month	Gregorian (Modern) Month	Biblical References
First Month: Abib (Preexile) Nisan (Postexile)	March–April	Ex. 13:4; 23:15; 34:18; Deut. 16:1; Neh. 2:1; Est. 3:7 (compare Gen. 8:13; Ex. 12:2, 18; 40:2, 17; Lev. 23:5; Num. 9:1; 20:1; 28:16; 33:3; Josh. 4:19; 1 Chron. 12:15; 27:2, 3; 2 Chron. 29:3, 17; 35:1; Ezra 6:19; 7:9; 8:31; 10:17; Est. 3:7, 12; Ezek. 29:17; 30:20; 45:18, 21; Dan. 10:4)
Festivals: 14th/15th: Passover (Ex. 12:18; Lev. 23:5) 15th–21st: Unleavened Bread (Ex. 12:14–20; Lev. 23:6) 16th: First Fruits (Lev. 23:9–11)		
Second Month: Ziv (Preexile) Iyyar (Postexile)	April–May	1 Kings 6:1, 37 (compare Gen. 7:11; 8:14; Ex. 16:1; Num. 1:1, 18; 9:11; 10:11; 1 Chron. 27:4; 2 Chron. 3:2; 30:2, 13, 15; Ezra 3:8)
Festival: 14th: Later Passover (Num. 9:10–11)		
Third Month: Sivan	May–June	Est. 8:9 (compare Ex. 19:1; 1 Chron. 27:5; 2 Chron. 15:10; 31:7; Ezek. 31:1)
Festivals: 4th: Pentecost [Feast of Weeks] (Lev. 23:15–16)		
Fourth Month: Tammuz	June–July	Ezek. 8:14 (compare 2 Kings 25:3; 1 Chron. 27:7; Jer. 39:2; 52:6; Ezek. 1:1; Zech. 8:19)
Fifth Month: Ab	July–August	Not mentioned by name in the Bible (compare Num. 33:38; 2 Kings 25:8; 1 Chron. 27:8; Ezra 7:8, 9; Jer. 1:3; 28:1; 52:12; Ezek. 20:1; Zech. 7:3, 5; 8:19)
Sixth Month: Elul	August–September	Neh. 6:15 (compare 1 Chron. 27:9; Ezek. 8:1; Hag. 1:1, 15)
Seventh Month: Ethanim (Preexile) Tishri (Postexile)	September–October	1 Kings 8:2 (compare Gen. 8:4; Lev. 16:29; 23:24, 27, 34, 39, 41; 25:9; Num. 29:1, 7, 12; 2 Kings 25:25; 1 Chron. 27:10; 2 Chron. 5:3; 7:10; 31:7; Ezra 3:1, 6; Neh. 7:73; 8:2, 14; Jer. 28:17; 41:1; Ezek. 45:25; Hag. 2:1; Zech. 7:5; 8:19)
Festivals: 1st: Trumpets (Lev. 23:24; Num. 29:1) 10th: Day of Atonement (Lev. 16:29–34; 23:27–32) 15th–21st: Booths (Lev. 23:34–40) 22nd: Solemn assembly (Lev. 23:36)		
Eighth Month: Bul (Preexile) Marchesvan (Postexile)	October–November	1 Kings 6:38 (compare 1 Kings 12:32, 33; 1 Chron. 27:11; Zech. 1:1)
Ninth Month: Chislew (Kislev)	November–December	Neh. 1:1; Zech. 7:1 (compare 1 Chron. 27:12; Ezra 10:9; Jer. 36:9, 22; Hag. 2:10, 18)
Festival: 25th: Dedication (John 10:22)		
Tenth Month: Tebeth	December–January	Est. 2:16 (compare Gen. 8:5; 2 Kings 25:1; 1 Chron. 27:13; Ezra 10:16; Jer. 39:1; 52:4; Ezek. 24:1; 29:1; 33:21; Zech. 8:19)
Eleventh Month: Shebat	January–February	Zech. 1:7 (compare Deut. 1:3; 1 Chron. 27:14)
Twelfth Month: Adar*	February–March	Ezra 6:15; Est. 3:7, 13; 8:12; 9:1, 15, 17, 19, 21 (compare 2 Kings 25:27; 1 Chron. 27:15; Jer. 52:31; Ezek. 32:1; 32:17)

*Periodically, a 13th month was added so that the lunar calendar would account for the entire solar year.

INTRODUCTION TO GENESIS



AUTHOR, DATE, AND RECIPIENTS

Traditionally, Moses is considered to have been the author of Genesis and the rest of the Pentateuch (see Num. 33:2; Deut. 31:24; John 5:46). Of course, Moses lived much later than the events of Genesis. Presumably, stories were passed down about those earlier events, and Moses brought them all together.

The first audience would have been the Israelites Moses led through the wilderness. For readers today, Genesis is an essential introduction to the rest of the Bible. It is rightly called the book of beginnings.

THEME

The theme of Genesis is creation, sin, and re-creation. God made the world very good, but first cursed it and then destroyed it in the flood because of man's disobedience. The new world after the flood was also spoiled by human sin (ch. 11). God chose Abraham for a special purpose. Through his family, all nations would be blessed (12:1-3). God's purpose will eventually be fulfilled through Abraham's descendants (ch. 49).

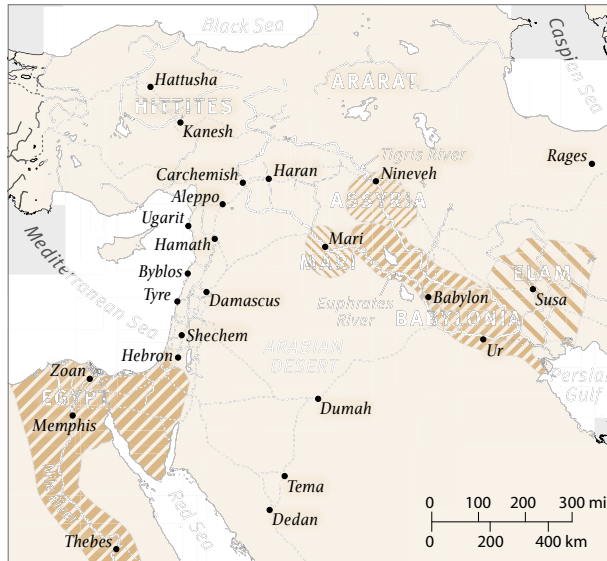
KEY THEMES

1. The Lord God commissions human beings to be his representatives on earth. They are to take care of the earth and govern the other creatures (1:1-2:25).
2. Instead of acting as God's representatives on earth, the first man and woman—Adam and Eve—listen to the serpent and follow his advice. Their disobedience has devastating results for all mankind and for the entire created world (3:1-24; 6:5-6).
3. God graciously announces that Eve's offspring will free humanity from the serpent's control (3:15). Genesis then begins tracing the history of one family that will become the people of Israel. This family has a special relationship with God and will become a source of blessing to fallen humanity (12:1-3).
4. As a result of Adam's disobedience, his unique relationship with the ground degenerates, resulting in hard work and later in flood and famine. But the special family descending from Adam also brings relief from the difficulties (3:17-19; 5:29; 50:19-21).
5. While Eve's punishment centers on pain in bearing children (3:16), women play an essential role in continuing the unique family line. With God's help, even barrenness is overcome (11:30; 21:1-7; 25:21; 38:1-30).
6. The corruption of human nature causes families to be torn apart (4:1-16; 13:5-8; 25:22-23; 27:41-45; 37:2-35). Although Genesis shows the reality of family conflicts, individual members of the chosen family can also help resolve those conflicts (13:8-11; 33:1-11; 45:1-28; 50:15-21).
7. The wicked are exiled from Eden and scattered throughout the earth (3:22-24; 4:12-16; 11:9), but God is kind to his chosen people and promises them a land of their own (12:1-2, 7; 15:7-21; 28:13-14; 50:24).
8. God is prepared to destroy almost the entire human race because of its corruption (6:7, 11-12; 18:17-33), but he still wants his world to be populated by righteous people (1:28; 9:1; 15:1-5; 35:11).

OUTLINE

- I. Primeval History (1:1-11:26)
 - A. God's creation and ordering of heaven and earth (1:1-2:3)
 - B. Earth's first people (2:4-4:26)
 - C. Adam's descendants (5:1-6:8)
 - D. Noah's descendants (6:9-9:29)
 - E. The descendants of Noah's sons (10:1-11:9)
 - F. Shem's descendants (11:10-26)
- II. Patriarchal History (11:27-50:26)
 - A. Terah's descendants (11:27-25:18)
 - B. Isaac's descendants (25:19-37:1)
 - C. Jacob's descendants (37:2-50:26)

THE NEAR EAST AT THE TIME OF GENESIS



c. 2000 B.C.

The book of Genesis describes events in the ancient Near East from the beginnings of civilization to the relocation of Jacob's (Israel's) family in Egypt. The stories of Genesis are set among some of the oldest nations in the world, including Egypt, Assyria, Babylonia, and Elam.

GENESIS

The Creation of the World

1 In the ^abeginning, God created the heavens and the earth. ²The earth was ^bwithout form and void, and darkness was over the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters.

³And God said, “Let there be light,” and there was light. ⁴And God saw that the light was good. And God separated the light from the darkness. ⁵God called the light Day, and the darkness he

called Night. And there was evening and there was morning, the first day.

⁶And God said, ^d“Let there be an expanse¹ in the midst of the waters, and let it separate the waters from the waters.” ⁷And God made² the expanse and ^eseparated the waters that were under the expanse from the waters that were ^fabove the expanse. And it was so. ⁸And God called the expanse Heaven.³ And there was evening and there was morning, the second day.

⁹And God said, ^g“Let the waters under the

¹Or a canopy; also verses 7, 8, 14, 15, 17, 20 ²Or fashioned; also verse 16 ³Or Sky; also verses 9, 14, 15, 17, 20, 26, 28, 30; 2:1

1:1-11:26 Primeval History. Genesis 1-11 surveys the history of the world before Abraham, while chs. 12-50 focus on one main family. There are no real parallels to chs. 12-50 in the literature of other ancient civilizations. However, other ancient stories do exist about both creation and the flood. These stories stand in sharp contrast to the biblical account. Generally they depict creation as a great struggle, often involving conflict between the gods. For example, they claim that the flood was sent because the gods could not stand the noise made by human beings but were unable to control it in any other way. Genesis disproves such stories by its teachings. There is only one God, whose word is almighty. He spoke the world into being. The sun and moon are not gods in their own right but are created by the one God. It is human sin that prompts the flood. These principles in Genesis 1-11 run through the rest of Scripture.

1:1-2:3 God's Creation and Ordering of Heaven and Earth. The book of Genesis opens with a majestic description of how God created the heavens and earth and then put everything in order so that it might become his dwelling place. God assigns humanity to govern the other creatures on his behalf, so that the whole earth should become the temple of God, the place of his presence, displaying his glory.

1:1 In the beginning. The opening verse of the Genesis creation account can be taken as either (1) a *summary* of the entire process of creation or (2) a description of the *first event* in creation. This event would have occurred sometime before the first day (vv. 3-5), and would have included the creation of matter, space, and time. This second view emphasizes the fact that God created the universe from nothing (compare Heb. 11:3). **God created.** The Hebrew word for God, *’Elohim*, is plural, possibly to express God's majesty, but the verb “created” is singular, indicating that God is one being. In contrast to other ancient Near Eastern accounts of creation, Genesis always emphasizes that there is only one God. Whenever the Hebrew verb for “create” occurs in the OT, God is the subject. **Heavens and the earth** here means “everything.” Thus, “in the beginning” refers to the beginning of everything. The text indicates that God created everything in the universe, which means that he created it out of nothing.

1:2 Before the first actual day of creation (vv. 3-5), the **earth** was **without form and void** (compare Jer. 4:23), implying that it lacked order and content. The reference to **darkness . . . over the face of the deep** points to the absence of light. **The Spirit of God** was hovering

In the Hebrew Bible, the title of Genesis is **In the Beginning**, the book's first words. The English title is related to the Greek word *genesis*, which means “beginning.”

suggests that something was about to happen. There is no reason to think that a long time elapsed between Gen. 1:1 and 1:2.

1:3-5 And God said. God's absolute power is seen in that he merely speaks and things are created. Each new section of ch. 1 is introduced by God's speaking. Everything that God speaks into being is **good** (vv. 10, 12, 18, 21, 25, 31). These verses show how God has arranged time in a weekly cycle (**Day . . . Night**). God is pictured as working for six days and resting on the seventh, which is a model for human activity. Day 4 will develop this idea further: the lights are placed in the heavens for signs and seasons, for marking days and years and the times of the festivals, such as Passover. This sense of time having a structure is further emphasized as each stage of God's creative work is separated into specific days. **there was evening and there was morning, the first day.** After each workday there is an evening and then a morning, implying that there is a nighttime (the worker's daily time of rest) in between. Similar phrases divide ch. 1 into six distinctive workdays, with 2:1-3 being a seventh day, God's Sabbath. On the first three days God creates the environment that the creatures of days 4-6 will inhabit. For example, the sea and sky (day 2) are occupied by the fish and birds (day 5). These days can be understood as days in the life of God, but how *his* days relate to human days is more difficult to determine (see 2 Pet. 3:8).

1:6-8 As light was separated from darkness, so the **waters** are separated to form an **expanse**, which God calls **Heaven**. It is difficult to find a single English word that accurately translates the precise meaning of this Hebrew term (see esv footnote). In this context, it refers to what humans see above them, that is, the region that contains both heavenly lights (vv. 14-17) and birds (v. 20).

1:9-13 God organizes two further regions: the **dry land**, forming **Earth**; and the **waters**, forming **Seas** (vv. 9-10). God then instructs the earth to

CROSS-REFERENCES:

CHAPTER 1 ¹Job 38:4-7; Ps. 33:6, 136:5; Isa. 42:5, 45:18; John 1:1-3; Acts 14:15; 17:24; Col. 1:16, 17; Heb. 1:10; 11:3; Rev. 4:11 ²Jer. 4:23 ³2 Cor. 4:6 ⁶Job 37:18; Ps. 136:5; Jer. 10:12; 51:15 ⁷Prov. 8:27-29 ⁹Ps. 148:4 ⁹Job 38:8-11; Ps. 33:7; 136:6; Jer. 5:22; 2 Pet. 3:5

heavens be gathered together into one place, and let the dry land appear.” And it was so. ¹⁰ God called the dry land Earth,¹ and the waters that were gathered together he called Seas. And God saw that it was good.

¹¹ And God said, ^h“Let the earth sprout vegetation, plants² yielding seed, and fruit trees bearing fruit in which is their seed, each according to its kind, on the earth.” And it was so. ¹² The earth brought forth vegetation, plants yielding seed according to their own kinds, and trees bearing fruit in which is their seed, each according to its kind. And God saw that it was good. ¹³ And there was evening and there was morning, the third day.

¹⁴ And God said, “Let there be lights in the expanse of the heavens to separate the day from the night. And let them be for ‘signs and for ‘seasons,³ and for days and years, ¹⁵ and let them be lights in the expanse of the heavens to give light upon the earth.” And it was so. ¹⁶ And God ^kmade the two great lights—the greater light to rule the day and the lesser light to rule the night—and the stars. ¹⁷ And God set them in the expanse of the heavens to give light on the earth, ¹⁸ to ‘rule over the day and over the night, and to separate the light from the darkness. And God saw that it was good. ¹⁹ And there was evening and there was morning, the fourth day.

¹ Or *Land*; also verses 11, 12, 22, 24, 25, 26, 28, 30; 2:1 ² Or *small plants*; also verses 12, 29 ³ Or *appointed times* ⁴ Or *flying things*; see Leviticus 11:19–20 ⁵ The Hebrew word for *man* (*adam*) is the generic term for mankind and becomes the proper name *Adam*

Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. God said, “Let us make man” (1:26). This phrase could be the Bible’s earliest indication that God exists as three persons in one: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Christians refer to this as the doctrine of the Trinity.

bring forth **vegetation** (vv. 11–12). The creation of distinctive locations in days 1–3, along with vegetation, prepares for the filling of these locations in days 4–6.

1:14–19 These verses, describing the fourth day, correspond with the separating of light and darkness on the first day (vv. 3–5). Here is the creation of **lights** that will govern time, as well as provide **light upon the earth** (v. 15). By referring to them as the **greater light** and **lesser light** (v. 16), the author of Genesis avoids using terms that were also proper names for pagan gods linked to the sun and the moon. The term **made** may simply mean that God “fashioned” or “worked on” these greater and lesser lights. It does not necessarily mean that they did not exist in any form before this. On this day God made it possible that the sun and moon would define the passing of time. The references to **seasons** (v. 14) or “appointed times” (esv footnote) and to **days and years** probably refer to appointed times for religious observances in the Hebrew calendar (see Ex. 13:10).

1:16 and the stars. The immense universe that God created (see note on Isa. 40:25–26) is mentioned here only briefly, almost as an afterthought. The focus of Genesis 1 is on the earth.

1:20–23 This section, on day 5, describes how the **waters** and the **expanse of the heavens** are filled with various kinds of creatures.

1:21 The Hebrew term for **great sea creatures** can mean large ser-

²⁰ And God said, “Let the waters swarm with swarms of living creatures, and let birds ^efly above the earth across the expanse of the heavens.” ²¹ So ^mGod created the great sea creatures and every living creature that moves, with which the waters swarm, according to their kinds, and every winged bird according to its kind. And God saw that it was good. ²² And God blessed them, saying, ⁿ“Be fruitful and multiply and fill the waters in the seas, and let birds multiply on the earth.” ²³ And there was evening and there was morning, the fifth day.

²⁴ And God said, “Let the earth bring forth living creatures according to their kinds—livestock and creeping things and beasts of the earth according to their kinds.” And it was so. ²⁵ And God made the beasts of the earth according to their kinds and the livestock according to their kinds, and everything that creeps on the ground according to its kind. And God saw that it was good.

²⁶ Then God said, ^o“Let us make man ⁵ in our image, ^pafter our likeness. And ^qlet them have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over the livestock and over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth.”

27 So God created man in his own image,
in the image of God he created him;
‘male and female he created them.

pents, dragons, or crocodiles, as well as whales or sharks. Some have suggested that this could also refer to extinct creatures such as dinosaurs.

1:24–25 livestock and creeping things and beasts of the earth. These terms group the land-dwelling animals into three broad categories, probably reflecting the way nomadic shepherds would experience them. This list is not intended to be exhaustive, and it is hard to know in which category to put some animals.

1:26 Let us make man in our image. Some have suggested that God may be addressing the members of his heavenly court, whom the OT elsewhere calls “sons of God” (e.g., Job 1:6) and the NT calls “angels.” But man is not made in the image of angels (see Gen. 1:27), and the Bible never teaches that angels participated in the creation of human beings. Since God alone creates man (v. 27), many Christians believe that “let us” means God is speaking to himself. If so, this would be the first biblical mention of the “Trinity” (see note on John 1:1).

1:27 The term image of God can be seen as describing the ways in which man is different from all other created beings. It describes how humans resemble God in their ability to think, to communicate, to understand right and wrong, to be creative, and to experience relationships with God and with one another. This allows men and women to represent God as they exercise authority over the rest of creation (see v. 26; and note on v. 28). The Hebrew word for **man** (*‘adam*), is often a generic term for both male and female, though sometimes it refers to man in distinction from woman (e.g., 2:22, 23; 3:8). It can also be the proper name “Adam” (2:20; 3:17; 4:1; 5:1).

¹¹Ps. 104:14 ¹⁴Jer. 10:2; Ezek. 32:7, 8; Joel 2:30, 31; 3:15; Matt. 24:29; Luke 21:25
¹⁵Ps. 104:19 ¹⁶Deut. 4:19; Ps. 136:7–9 ¹⁸Jer. 31:35 ²¹Ps. 104:25, 26 ²²ch. 8:17;
9:1 ²⁶ch. 3:22; 11:7; Isa. 6:8 ²ch. 5:1; 9:6; 1 Cor. 11:7; Eph. 4:24; Col. 3:10; James 3:9
³ch. 9:2; Ps. 8:6–8; James 3:7 ²⁷ch. 2:18, 21–23; 5:2; Mal. 2:15; Matt. 19:4; Mark 10:6

²⁸ And God blessed them. And God said to them, ⁵⁴“Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and subdue it, and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over every living thing that moves on the earth.” ²⁹ And God said, “Behold, I have given you every plant yielding seed that is on the face of all the earth, and every tree with seed in its fruit. ¹ You shall have them for food. ³⁰ And ^uto every beast of the earth and to every bird of the heavens and to everything that creeps on the earth, everything that has the breath of life, I have given every green plant for food.” And it was so. ³¹ ^vAnd God saw everything that he had made, and behold, it was very good. And there was evening and there was morning, the sixth day.

The Seventh Day, God Rests

2 Thus the heavens and the earth were finished, and ^wall the host of them. ² And ^xon the seventh day God finished his work that he had done,

¹ Or open country ² Or earth; also verse 6 ³ Or spring

1:28–30 Although the word “covenant” does not occur in the Bible until 6:18, many consider 1:28–30 along with 2:16–17 to be God’s covenant with Adam. See Hos. 6:7 and note. Adam receives this covenant on behalf of the rest of mankind. Thus, in the NT, Paul views Adam as a representative head of the human race (1 Cor. 15:22).

1:28 Be fruitful and multiply. From the time of creation, God’s plan has been that the whole earth should be populated by those who know him and who serve wisely as his representatives. To **subdue** the earth and to **have dominion** over it probably means that humans are permitted to make the earth beneficial for themselves. They are to investigate and develop its resources. This command provides a basis for wise scientific and technological development. It does not mean that humans may exploit the earth and its creatures simply to satisfy their own greed.

1:31 One final occurrence of **behold, it was very good** invites the reader to imagine seeing creation through God’s eyes. Despite the invasion of sin (ch. 3), the material creation retains its basic goodness (see 1 Tim. 4:4).

2:1–3 God has now completed the process of putting his creation in order (see note on 1:1–2:3). That God **rested** does not imply he was weary from labor. Rather, God’s resting hints at the purpose of creation. God’s purpose for the earth is that it should become his dwelling place, not simply a place for his creatures. **God blessed the seventh day and made it holy** (2:3). These words provide the basis for God’s instructing the Israelites to rest from their normal labor on the Sabbath day (see Ex. 20:8–11).

2:4–4:26 Earth’s First People. Centered initially on the garden of Eden, the episodes in this part of Genesis recount how God’s ordered creation is thrown into chaos by the human couple’s disobedience. The subsequent story of Cain and Abel and then Lamech (ch. 4) shows human society spiraling downward into violence. These events are essential for understanding not only the rest of Genesis but the rest of the Bible as well.

2:4 These are the generations of. This is the first of 11 such headings in Genesis (5:3; 6:9; 10:1; 11:10; 11:27; 25:12; 25:19; 36:1; 36:9; 37:2). **LORD God.** Throughout 1:1–2:3 the generic word “God” was used for the Creator. The reader is now introduced to God’s personal name, “Yahweh,” which is rendered in most English Bible translations as “LORD,” using small capital letters. This practice comes from the ancient Jewish tradition of substituting for “Yahweh” the Hebrew term for “LORD” when reading the biblical text. The Septuagint (an ancient

and he rested on the seventh day from all his work that he had done. ³ So God blessed the seventh day and made it holy, because on it God rested from all his work that he had done in creation.

The Creation of Man and Woman

⁴ ^yThese are the generations of the heavens and the earth when they were created, in the day that the LORD God made the earth and the heavens.

⁵ When no ² bush of the field ¹ was yet in the land ² and no small plant of the field had yet sprung up—for the LORD God had not caused it to rain on the land, and there was no man ^a to work the ground, ⁶ and a mist ³ was going up from the land and was watering the whole face of the ground— ⁷ then the LORD God formed the man of ^b dust from the ground and ^c breathed into his ^d nostrils the breath of life, and ^e the man became a living creature. ⁸ And the LORD God planted a

Adam, whose name means “man,” was the first human being. Created out of dust, he was made in the image of God. Adam was given dominion over the rest of creation and was placed in the garden of Eden to care for it. God created Eve as a helper for Adam, and together they enjoyed perfect fellowship with their Creator. But Adam and Eve chose to disobey God, which brought sin and death into the world. Because of their sin, all humans are now born sinners and will someday die. The Bible tells the story of how God redeems his creation from the curse of Adam’s sin. “For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ shall all be made alive” (1 Cor. 15:22).

KEY REFERENCE: GENESIS 2:7

Greek translation of the OT) used the Greek word for “LORD” (*Kyrios*) to refer to God. That translation was then quoted many times by the NT authors, who also used *Kyrios* rather than Yahweh for God’s name. See notes on Ex. 3:14; 3:15.

2:7 then the LORD God formed the man of dust from the ground. The verb “formed” describes a potter fashioning clay into a particular shape. The close relationship between the man and the ground is reflected in the Hebrew words *adam* for man and *adamah* for the ground. **living creature.** The same Hebrew term is used in 1:20, 24 for sea and land creatures. (See Paul’s quotation of this passage in 1 Cor. 15:45.)

2:8–9 God provides a suitable environment for the man by planting a **garden in Eden, in the east**. The name “Eden” suggests luxury and pleasure. It probably refers to a region much greater than the garden itself. God formed the man in the “land” (see vv. 5–7), and then **put** him in the garden (compare v. 15). The earliest translation

²⁸ ch. 9:1, 7 ²⁹ ch. 9:3; Ps. 104:14, 15; 145:15, 16 ³⁰ Ps. 147:9 ³¹ Eccles. 7:29; 1 Tim. 4:4 **CHAPTER 2 1** Deut. 4:19; Ps. 33:6 ² Ex. 20:8–11; 31:17; Deut. 5:12–14; Heb. 4:4 ⁴ ch. 1:1 ⁵ ch. 1:11, 12 ⁶ ch. 3:23 ⁷ ch. 3:19, 23; 18:27; Ps. 103:14; Eccles. 12:7; 1 Cor. 15:47 ⁸ ch. 7:22; Job 33:4; Isa. 2:22 ⁹ Job 27:3 ¹⁰ Cited 1 Cor. 15:45

¹garden in Eden, in the east, and there he put the man whom he had formed. ⁹And out of the ground the LORD God made to spring up every tree that is pleasant to the sight and good for food. ⁹The tree of life was in the midst of the garden, ¹⁰and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.

¹⁰A river flowed out of Eden to water the garden, and there it divided and became four rivers. ¹¹The name of the first is the Pishon. It is the one that flowed around the whole land of ¹¹Havilah, where there is gold. ¹²And the gold of that land is good; bdellium and onyx stone are there. ¹³The name of the second river is the Gihon. It is the one that flowed around the whole land of Cush. ¹⁴And the name of the third river is the ¹⁴Tigris, which flows east of Assyria. And the fourth river is the Euphrates.

¹⁵The LORD God took the man ¹⁵and put him in the garden of Eden to work it and keep it. ¹⁶And the LORD God commanded the man, saying, “You may surely eat of every tree of the garden, ¹⁷but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil ¹⁷you

shall not eat, for in the day that you eat ¹⁸of it you ¹⁸shall surely die.”

¹⁸Then the LORD God said, “It is not good that the man should be alone; ¹⁹I will make him a helper fit for ¹⁹him.” ¹⁹Now out of the ground the LORD God had formed ²⁰every beast of the field and every bird of the heavens and ²⁰brought them to the man to see what he would call them. And whatever the man called every living creature, that was its name. ²⁰The man gave names to all livestock and to the birds of the heavens and to every beast of the field. But for Adam ²¹there was not found a helper fit for him. ²¹So the LORD God caused a ²²deep sleep to fall upon the man, and while he slept took one of his ribs and closed up its place with flesh. ²²And the rib that the LORD God had taken from the man he made ²³into a woman and brought her to the man. ²³Then the man said,

“This at last is ²⁴bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called Woman, because she was ²⁵taken out of Man.”⁶

¹Or when you eat ²Or corresponding to; also verse 20 ³Or And out of the ground the LORD God formed ⁴Or the man ⁵Hebrew built ⁶The Hebrew words for woman (*ishshah*) and man (*ish*) sound alike

The Euphrates (2:14) is the longest and most important river in southwest Asia. Early settlers depended on the river for commerce and agriculture. The Euphrates and Tigris rivers form what is today the Shatt-al-Arab, a waterway that flows into the Persian Gulf.

into Greek (the Septuagint) used the word *paradeisos*, from which comes the English term “paradise” (compare Luke 23:43), to translate the Hebrew term for “garden.” The abundance of the garden is suggested by the fact that it contained **every tree that is pleasant to the sight and good for food** (Gen. 2:9). This very abundance will later become a source of temptation (3:6). On **the tree of life**, see note on 3:22–24. On **the tree of the knowledge of good and evil**, see note on 2:17.

2:10–14 The description of the **river that flowed out of Eden** dividing into **four rivers** implies that Eden occupied a central location in the ancient world. In spite of the very specific details provided, however, Eden’s location remains a mystery. While the names **Tigris** and **Euphrates** are associated with the two rivers that surround Mesopotamia, the rivers **Pishon** and **Gihon**, as well as the regions of **Havilah** and **Cush**, have not been satisfactorily identified. The reference to **gold** and **onyx** points to the land’s rich resources.

2:15–16 The overall picture of Eden suggests that the park-like garden is part of a divine sanctuary. **The man is put in the garden to work it and keep it**. Since God commanded Adam to work before Adam had committed any sin, work did not come as a result of sin. Productive work is part of God’s good purpose for humans. The fact that God **commanded the man** implies that God gave the man a leadership role, including the responsibility to guard and care for all of creation (v. 15). This leadership role is related to Adam’s relationship with Eve as his wife, who was given as “a helper fit for him” (v. 18). (On the NT understanding of the relationship between husband and wife, see Eph. 5:22–33.)

2:17 The fruit of the **tree of the knowledge of good and evil** has been variously understood as giving (1) sexual awareness, (2) moral discrimination, (3) moral responsibility, and (4) moral experience.

Of these possibilities, the last is the most likely. If Adam disobeys God and eats the fruit of this tree, he will come to know evil by experience. **you shall surely die**. What kind of death does this threaten: physical, spiritual, or some combination of the two? The Hebrew word can be used for any of these ideas, and the only way to discover what “surely die” means in this case is to see what happens as the story unfolds (see note on 3:4–5). **In the day that you eat of it** does not mean that death will come on that very day. It means that once the forbidden fruit is eaten, death will become a certainty.

2:18 **Not good** is a jarring contrast to 1:31. **Helper** is one who supplies strength in an area that is lacking in the one who is helped. **Fit for him** or “matching him” (see *esv* footnote) is not the same as “like him.” A wife is not to be just like her husband but is to complement him. **I will make him** can also be translated “I will make for him,” which explains Paul’s statement in 1 Cor. 11:9.

2:20 **The man gave names**. By naming the animals, the man demonstrates his authority over all the other creatures. **Adam**. See note on 5:1–2.

2:23–24 **This at last is bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh**. Compare 29:14. Marriage creates the closest of all human relationships. Heterosexual monogamy is the divine pattern for marriage that God established at creation. **Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife**. Marriage creates obligations that are more important than one’s duty to one’s parents. In ancient Israel, sons did not move away from home when they married. They lived near their parents and inherited their father’s land. But they “left” their parents in the sense of putting their wife’s welfare before that of their parents. The term “hold fast” is used elsewhere for practicing covenant faithfulness (e.g., Deut. 10:20). Thus, other Bible texts call marriage a “covenant” (e.g., Prov. 2:17; Mal. 2:14). Paul’s teaching on marriage in Eph. 5:25–32 is founded on this text. When a man leaves his parents and takes a wife, **they shall become one flesh**. That is, they become one

⁸ver. 15; ch. 13:10; Isa. 51:3; Ezek. 28:13; 31:8; Joel 2:3. ⁹ch. 3:22; Rev. 2:7; 22:2, 14 ¹⁰ver. 17. ¹¹ch. 10:7, 29; 25:18; 1 Sam. 15:7. ¹²Dan. 10:4. ¹³ver. 8. ¹⁴ch. 3:1–3, 11, 17 ¹⁵Rom. 6:23; James 1:5. ¹⁶1 Cor. 11:9; 1 Tim. 2:13. ¹⁷ch. 1:20, 24. ¹⁸Ps. 8:6. ¹⁹ch. 15:12; 1 Sam. 26:12. ²⁰ch. 29:14; Judg. 9:2; 2 Sam. 5:1; 19:13; [Eph. 5:28–30]. ²¹1 Cor. 11:8

²⁴Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife, and they shall become one flesh. ²⁵And the man and his wife were both naked and were not ashamed.

The Fall

3 Now ^uthe serpent was more crafty than any other beast of the field that the LORD God had made.

He said to the woman, “Did God actually say, ‘You ⁱshall not eat of any tree in the garden?’” ²And the woman said to the serpent, “We may eat of the fruit of the trees in the garden, ³but God said, ‘You shall not eat of the fruit of the tree that is in the midst of the garden, neither shall you touch it, lest you die.’” ⁴But the serpent said to the woman, “You will not surely die. ⁵For God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil.” ⁶So when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was to be desired to make one wise, ⁷she took of

its fruit ^vand ate, and she also gave some to her husband who was with her, ^vand he ate. ⁷²⁷Then the eyes of both were opened, ²and they knew that they were naked. And they sewed fig leaves together and made themselves loincloths.

⁸And they heard the sound of the LORD God walking in the garden in the cool³ of the day, and the man and his wife ^hhid themselves from the presence of the LORD God among the trees of the garden. ⁹But the LORD God called to the man and said to him, “Where are you?” ¹⁰And he said, “I heard the sound of you in the garden, and I was afraid, ^cbecause I was naked, and I hid myself.” ¹¹He said, “Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten of the tree of which I commanded you not to eat?” ¹²The man said, ^d“The woman whom you gave to be with me, she gave me fruit of the tree, and I ate.” ¹³Then the LORD God said to the woman, “What is this that you have done?” The woman said, ^e“The serpent deceived me, and I ate.”

¹⁴The LORD God said to the serpent,

¹In Hebrew *you* is plural in verses 1–5 ²*Or to give insight* ³Hebrew *wind* ⁴In Hebrew *you* is singular in verses 9 and 11

unit, a union of man and woman. This oneness is consummated in sexual intercourse. Jesus appeals to this verse and to Gen. 1:27 when teaching about marriage (Matt. 19:4–5).

2:25 naked and . . . not ashamed. The man and woman are living in a state of innocent delight.

3:1–24 The sudden arrival of a speaking **serpent** presents a challenge to the human couple. Their choice to disregard God’s instructions is an act of willful rebellion that has terrible consequences for all of creation. Nothing is said about where the serpent came from. The text does not indicate when or how the serpent became evil. It is clear, however, that evil entered the created world at some time after God’s “very good” work of creation was completed (1:31). Unlike the teachings of some other religions, the Bible never teaches that evil has always existed. See notes on Isa. 14:12–15; Ezek. 28:11–19.

3:2–3 The woman’s response echoes the divine instruction given in 2:16–17 (see note on 2:17), although she fails to identify the tree clearly, and she adds, “**neither shall you touch it**.”

3:4–5 The serpent directly contradicts what God has said. He presents the fruit of the tree as something worth having. By eating it, he says, Adam and Eve will be **like God, knowing good and evil**. The irony of the serpent’s remarks is that Adam and Eve, unlike the serpent, were already made in the image of God (1:26–27). They are already “like God.” This means they are expected to exercise authority over all the beasts of the field—including the serpent! By obeying the serpent, however, they betray the trust that God has placed in them. **You will not surely die**. It is sometimes claimed that the serpent is correct when he says this, for they do not immediately “die.” Further, their eyes are in fact opened (3:7), and God acknowledges that “the man has become like one of us in knowing good and evil” (v. 22). Yet the serpent speaks only half-truths. What Adam and Eve will experience outside of Eden is not life as God intended. It is spiritual death.

3:6 when the woman saw that the tree was good. Somehow the serpent has made the woman discontented with the permitted trees (2:16), and she desires instead the forbidden one. Apparently she is attracted to the tree’s ability to **make one wise** (see note on 2:17). **she also gave some to her husband who was with her, and he ate**. As Adam ate what God had forbidden, he was deliberately rebelling against God. The fact that he was “with” Eve at the time meant that

God created **Eve**, whose name means “life,” as a helper for Adam. Fashioned from one of Adam’s ribs, Eve became the mother (that is, the female ancestor) of all human beings. Though enjoying perfect fellowship with God, Eve was deceived by the serpent and disobeyed God by eating from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. Because of their sin, Adam and Eve were driven from the paradise of Eden and began to experience great hardship. For Eve, that included pain in childbearing. Yet, as promised in Genesis 3:15, one of her offspring would defeat the serpent and bring salvation and eternal life to all who put their trust in him.

KEY REFERENCE: GENESIS 2:23

he had failed to carry out his God-given responsibility to guard and “keep” both the garden and his wife (see 2:15). The disastrous consequences of Adam’s sin include the fall of mankind, the beginning of every kind of sin, suffering, and pain, along with spiritual and physical death for the entire human race.

3:9 the LORD God called to the man . . . , “Where are you?” Both “man” and “you” are singular in Hebrew. God thus confronts Adam first, holding him primarily responsible for the sin committed by both Adam and Eve. Adam is thus treated as the representative or “head” of the husband-and-wife relationship, established before the fall (see note on Eph. 5:23–24).

3:14–15 The serpent is punished for tempting the woman. It will live in ongoing hostility with the woman, which will be carried on by their respective offspring.

²⁴Cited Matt. 19:5; Mark 10:7; 1 Cor. 6:16; Eph. 5:31; [Ps. 45:10; 1 Cor. 7:10, 11]

CHAPTER 3 ¹Matt. 10:16; 2 Cor. 11:3; Rev. 12:9; 20:2 ³ch. 2:17 ⁴ver. 13; John 8:44; [2 Cor. 11:3] ⁶1 Tim. 2:14 ⁷ver. 12, 17; Hos. 6:7 ⁷ver. 5 ^cch. 2:25 ⁸[Ps. 139:1–12; Jer. 23:23, 24] ¹⁰ver. 7; ch. 2:25 ¹²ch. 2:18; Job 31:33 ¹³ver. 4; 2 Cor. 11:3; 1 Tim. 2:14

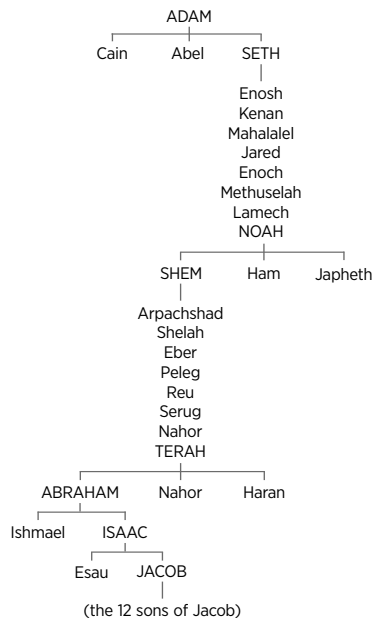
- “Because you have done this,
cursed are you above all livestock
and above all beasts of the field;
on your belly you shall go,
and ^hdust you shall eat
all the days of your life.
¹⁵ I will put enmity between you and the
woman,
and between your offspring¹ and ^gher
offspring;
^hhe shall bruise your head,
and you shall bruise his heel.”
¹⁶To the woman he said,
“I will surely multiply your pain in
childbearing;
ⁱin pain you shall bring forth children.
^jYour desire shall be contrary to² your husband,
but he shall ^krule over you.”

¹Hebrew *seed*; so throughout Genesis ²Or *shall be toward* (see 4:7)

Cherubim (3:24) are angels who guard holy places. They appear in various places in the Bible. “Cherubim” is the Hebrew plural form of “cherub.”

3:15 This verse is usually understood as pointing forward to the defeat of the serpent by the **offspring** (that is, a descendant) of the woman. For this reason, it has been labeled the “Protoevangelium,” that is, the first announcement of the gospel. While Genesis does not explicitly identify the serpent with Satan, that is clearly what the apostle John

The Genealogies of Genesis



- ¹⁷And to Adam he said,
“Because you have listened to the voice of
your wife
and have eaten of the tree
^lof which I commanded you,
‘You shall not eat of it,’
^mcursed is the ground because of you;
ⁿin pain you shall eat of it all the days of
your life;
¹⁸ thorns and thistles it shall bring forth for you;
and you shall eat the plants of the field.
¹⁹ By the sweat of your face
you shall eat bread,
till you return to the ground,
for out of it you were taken;
^ofor you are dust,
and ^pto dust you shall return.”
²⁰The man called his wife’s name Eve, because

understood (see Rev. 12:9; 20:2). The idea of the woman’s “offspring” is seen again in Gen. 4:25 in the birth of Seth. The rest of Genesis traces a single line of Seth’s descendants (see diagram, this page), which will eventually produce a king through whom all the nations of the earth will be blessed. **he shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise his heel.** The use of the singular “he” and “his” suggests that one particular person (“offspring”) is in view. The promise of this person comes to fulfillment in Jesus Christ, who is clearly presented in the NT as overcoming Satan (Heb. 2:14; 1 John 3:8; compare John 12:31). At the same time, he is “bruised” by Satan at the cross.

3:16 Your desire shall be contrary to your husband, but he shall rule over you. God originally intended that there would be a complementary relationship between husband and wife, with the husband in a leadership role (see note on 2:15–16). But that plan has now been distorted and damaged by sin. This takes the form of “desire” on the part of the wife and heavy-handed “rule” on the part of the husband. The Hebrew term here for “desire” appears again in 4:7, where the Lord says to Cain that sin’s “desire is contrary to you.” Eve will have the sinful “desire” to oppose Adam and to assert leadership over him. But Adam will also abandon his God-given role of leading, guarding, and caring for Eve. Instead, he will have a sinful, distorted desire to “rule” over her. Thus one of the most tragic results of Adam and Eve’s rebellion against God is ongoing conflict between husbands and wives, as they both rebel against their God-given roles and responsibilities in marriage. (See notes on Eph. 5:21–32 for the NT ideal for marriage.)

3:17–19 Because he has eaten what was prohibited (v. 6), Adam will have to struggle to eat in the future. He will no longer enjoy the garden’s abundance but will have to work the ground from which he was taken (v. 23; see note on 2:8–9). The punishment is not the work itself (see note on 2:15–16) but rather the hardship and frustration that it will involve. To say that the **ground is cursed** and will produce **thorns and thistles** means that it will no longer be as productive as it was in Eden.

3:19 Because of his sin, the man’s body will **return to the ground**, that is, he will die. Death was not a part of the original creation (see Rom. 5:12). The Bible looks forward to a time when nature will be set free from death and the other consequences of human sin (Rom. 8:19–22).

3:20–21 God’s words of judgment are immediately followed by two actions that offer hope. First, the man names his wife **Eve**, which

¹⁴Isa. 65:25; Mic. 7:17 ¹⁵Isa. 7:14; Mic. 5:3; Matt. 1:23, 25; Luke 1:34, 35; Gal. 4:4; 1 Tim. 2:15 ¹⁶Rom. 16:20; Heb. 2:14; Rev. 20:1–3, 10 ¹⁶[John 16:21] ^{ch} 4:7; Song 7:10 ¹⁷1 Cor. 11:3; 14:34; Eph. 5:22–24; Col. 3:18; 1 Tim. 2:11, 12; Titus 2:5; 1 Pet. 3:1, 5, 6 ¹⁷ch. 2:17 ^{ch} 5:29; [Rom. 8:20–22] ¹⁸Eccles. 2:22, 23 ¹⁹ch. 2:7; Ps. 103:14 ²⁰Job 34:15; Ps. 104:29; Eccles. 3:20; 12:7; Rom. 5:12

she was the mother of all living.¹ **21** And the LORD God made for Adam and for his wife garments of skins and clothed them.

22 Then the LORD God said, ^a“Behold, the man has become like one of us in knowing good and evil. Now, lest he reach out his hand and take also of the tree of life and eat, and live forever—” **23** therefore the LORD God sent him out from the garden of Eden to work the ground from which he was taken. **24** He drove out the man, and at the east of the garden of Eden he placed the cherubim and a flaming sword that turned every way to guard the way to the tree of life.

Cain and Abel

4 Now Adam knew Eve his wife, and she conceived and bore Cain, saying, “I have gotten² a man with the help of the LORD.” **2** And again, she bore his brother Abel. Now Abel was a keeper of sheep, and Cain a worker of the ground. **3** In the course of time Cain brought to the LORD an offering of ^b“the fruit of the ground,” and Abel also brought of ^c“the firstborn of his flock and of their fat portions. And the LORD ^d“had regard for Abel and his offering, ^ebut ^f“for Cain and his offering he had no regard. So Cain was very angry, and his face fell. **6** The LORD said to Cain, “Why are you angry, and why has your face fallen? ^g“If you do well, will you not be accepted? ^h“And if you do not do well, sin is crouching at the door. ⁱ“Its desire is contrary to ^j“you, but you must rule over it.”

^k Cain spoke to Abel his brother. ^l And when

they were in the field, Cain rose up against his brother Abel and ^m“killed him. **9** Then the LORD said to Cain, “Where is Abel your brother?” He said, ⁿ“I do not know; am I my brother’s keeper?” **10** And the LORD said, “What have you done? The voice of your brother’s blood ^o“is crying to me from the ground. **11** And now ^p“you are cursed from the ground, which has opened its mouth to receive your brother’s blood from your hand. **12** When you work the ground, it shall no longer yield to you its strength. You shall be a fugitive and a wanderer on the earth.” **13** Cain said to the LORD, “My ^q“punishment is greater than I can bear. **14** Behold, ^r“you have driven me today away from the ground, and ^s“from your face I shall be hidden. I shall be a fugitive and a wanderer on the earth, ^t“and whoever finds me will kill me.” **15** Then the LORD said to him, “Not so! If anyone kills Cain, vengeance shall be taken on him ^u“sevenfold.” And the LORD ^v“put a mark on Cain, lest any who found him should attack him. **16** Then Cain went away from the presence of the LORD and settled in the land of Nod, ^w east of Eden.

17 Cain knew his wife, and she conceived and bore Enoch. When he built a city, he called the name of the city after the name of his son, Enoch. **18** To Enoch was born Irad, and Irad fathered Methusael, and Methusael fathered Lamech. **19** And Lamech took two wives. The name of the one was Adah, and the name of the other Zillah. **20** Adah bore Jabal; he

¹ Eve sounds like the Hebrew for *life-giver* and resembles the word for *living*. ² Cain sounds like the Hebrew for *gotten*. ³ Hebrew *will there not be a lifting up [of your face]*? ⁴ Or *is toward*. ⁵ Hebrew; Samaritan, Septuagint, Syriac, Vulgate add *Let us go out to the field*. ⁶ Or *My guilt is too great to bear*. ⁷ Nod means *wandering*.

means “life-giver” (see ESV footnote). Second, God makes clothing for Adam and Eve, which suggests that he still cares for them. Because the clothing requires the death of an animal, this can be seen as an anticipation of (1) the system of animal sacrifices that God would later institute to atone for sin, and (2) the death of Christ as the final atonement for sin.

3:22–24 God begins a sentence in v. 22 and breaks off without finishing it. For the man to eat of the **tree of life** and thus **live forever** in his sinful condition is an unbearable thought, and God must waste no time in preventing it. **therefore the LORD God sent him out from the garden.** (On the “tree of life,” see Rev. 2:7; 22:2, 14, 19.) Outside the garden the man will have to work the ground, but the task of keeping or guarding the garden is now given to the **cherubim** (Gen. 3:24).

4:2–5 The fact that God **had regard for Abel and his offering**, but not for Cain, does not mean that shepherds are better than farmers or that animal offerings are better than plant offerings. Both kinds of offerings will be part of the later Levitical system (for offerings of the **fruit of the ground**, see Deut. 26:2). This passage and others suggest that God’s acceptance of Abel and rejection of Cain had to do with the attitudes of their hearts. Cain’s fundamentally bad heart can be seen in his resentment toward his brother and in his unloving attitude in the rest of the passage (see also 1 John 3:12). As compared to Cain’s offering, Abel’s offering (from the **firstborn of his flock**) is more costly, perhaps expressing greater devotion (see also Heb. 11:4).

4:6–7 The Lord’s words challenge Cain to do better. He still has the possibility of pleasing God. To do so, however, he must overcome the power of **sin**, which is like a wild beast seeking to devour him.

4:9 **am I my brother’s keeper?** Cain denies any knowledge about his brother and shows no sign of remorse.

4:10–12 Because his brother’s blood cries out to God **from the ground**, Cain will no longer be able to cultivate the soil. As seen throughout Scripture, human sin has an impact on the fertility of the earth (compare 3:17–18).

4:13–16 Cain will be alienated from both the ground and God. He will become a **fugitive and a wanderer on the earth**. He fears that others will have such a dread of him that anyone who sees him **will kill** him. The precise nature of the **mark on Cain** is not known, except that it must have been something visible.

4:17 **Cain knew his wife.** Presumably, Cain married his sister, since the whole human race descends from Adam and Eve (see 5:4). The later laws forbidding this practice, such as Lev. 18:9, would not have been relevant yet.

4:18–22 Lamech’s immediate descendants are associated with animal breeding, music, and metalwork. Whereas Abel is linked to sheep (v. 2), **Jabal raised livestock**, which probably included cattle and donkeys, and possibly camels.

22 ¹ver. 5 ²ch. 2:9 ³ch. 2:5 ⁴Ps. 18:10; 104:4; Heb. 1:7; [Ex. 25:18–22; Ezek. 28:11–16] **CHAPTER 4** ⁵Lev. 2:12; Num. 18:12 ⁶Ex. 13:12; Num. 18:17; Prov. 3:9 ⁷Heb. 11:4 ⁸[Prov. 21:27] ⁹Eccles. 8:12; 13; Isa. 3:10, 11; Rom. 2:6–11 ¹⁰ch. 3:16 ¹¹Matt. 23:35; Heb. 12:24; 1 John 3:12; Jude 11 ¹²John 8:44 ¹³Heb. 12:24; [Rev. 6:10] ¹⁴Deut. 27:24; [Num. 35:33] ¹⁵ch. 19:15 ¹⁶Job 15:20–24 ¹⁷2 Kgs. 24:20; Ps. 51:11; 143:7; Jer. 52:3 ¹⁸ch. 9:6; Num. 35:19 ¹⁹Ps. 79:12 [Ezek. 9:4, 6; Rev. 14:9, 11]

was the father of those who dwell in tents and have livestock. ²¹His brother's name was Jubal; he was the father of all those who play the lyre and pipe. ²²Zillah also bore Tubal-cain; he was the forger of all instruments of bronze and iron. The sister of Tubal-cain was Naamah.

²³Lamech said to his wives:

“Adah and Zillah, hear my voice;
you wives of Lamech, listen to what I say:
I have killed a man for wounding me,
a young man for striking me.

²⁴ ^kIf Cain's revenge is sevenfold,
then Lamech's is seventy-sevenfold.”

¹Seth sounds like the Hebrew for *he appointed* ²Hebrew *adam*

4:23–24 Lamech killed a man merely for wounding or striking him. His response is out of proportion to the injury. **sevenfold . . . seventy-sevenfold.** Lamech says that his vengeful response makes him safer than Cain, who had only God's protection (v. 15).

4:25–26 another offspring. Compare “her offspring” (3:15). **At that time people began to call upon the name of the LORD.** This suggests that the birth of Seth marks a new beginning for humanity. It probably refers to public worship, initially within Adam's own family circle.

5:1–6:8 Adam's Descendants. This section of Genesis falls into two parts: 5:1–32 traces a single line of descendants from Adam to Noah, naming only one person in each generation (see diagram, p. 34); 6:1–8 provides a worldwide picture of increasing human wickedness.

5:1–32 Most people living after the flood (that is, after chs. 6–9) did not live nearly as long as the people of chs. 1–5 (see chart, this page). This could have been due to some change in the structure of the earth

²⁵And Adam knew his wife again, and she bore a son and called his name Seth, for she said, “God has appointed¹ for me another offspring instead of Abel, for Cain killed him.” ²⁶To ^lSeth also a son was born, and he called his name ^mEnosh. At that time people began ⁿto call upon the name of the LORD.

Adam's Descendants to Noah

5 This is the book of the generations of Adam. When God created man, ^ohe made him in the likeness of God. ²Male and female he created them, and he blessed them and named them Man²

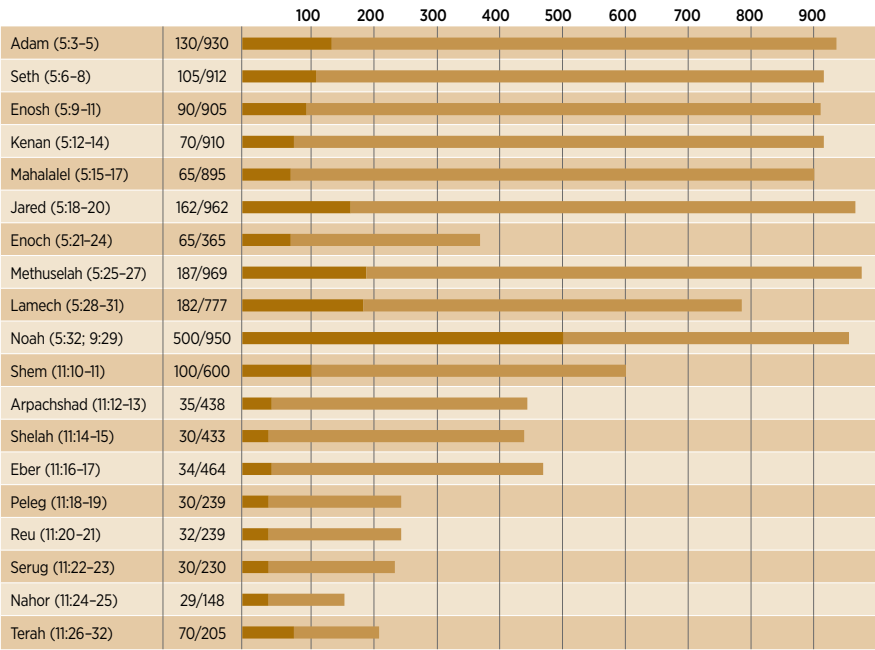
or in the bodies of humans (or both) following the flood. Psalm 90:10 describes a normal life span as 70 or 80 years, which has more or less been the case throughout subsequent history.

5:1–2 the book of the generations. This heading differs from the 10 others that provide the outline for Genesis (see note on 2:4) in that it refers to a “book.” This was probably something like a clay tablet. The book is named after Adam. The same Hebrew word is also translated in 5:1 by **man** and in 5:2 by **Man**. The word may function as a proper name, a common noun referring to a male individual, or a generic noun meaning both males and females. **the likeness of God.** See note on 1:27.

5:3–5 The genealogy of Adam's family through Seth contrasts with the seven generations linked to Cain (4:17–18). Instead of saying that

²⁴ver. 15 ²⁶^lChr. 13; Luke 3:38 ^mch. 5:6 ⁿPs. 116:17; Zeph. 3:9; Zech. 13:9
CHAPTER 5 ¹See ch. 1:26, 27

Genealogies: Showing Age at Fatherhood and Age at Death



when they were created. ³When Adam had lived 130 years, he fathered a son in his own likeness, after his image, and ⁴named him Seth. ⁵The days of Adam after he fathered Seth were 800 years; and he had other sons and daughters. ⁶Thus all the days that Adam lived were 930 years, ⁷and he died.

⁸When Seth had lived 105 years, ⁹he fathered Enosh. ¹⁰Seth lived after he fathered Enosh 807 years and had other sons and daughters. ¹¹Thus all the days of Seth were 912 years, and he died.

¹²When Enosh had lived 90 years, he fathered Kenan. ¹³Enosh lived after he fathered Kenan 815 years and had other sons and daughters. ¹⁴Thus all the days of Enosh were 905 years, and he died.

¹⁵When Kenan had lived 70 years, he fathered Mahalalel. ¹⁶Kenan lived after he fathered Mahalalel 840 years and had other sons and daughters. ¹⁷Thus all the days of Kenan were 910 years, and he died.

¹⁸When Mahalalel had lived 65 years, he fathered Jared. ¹⁹Mahalalel lived after he fathered Jared 830 years and had other sons and daughters. ²⁰Thus all the days of Mahalalel were 895 years, and he died.

²¹When Jared had lived 162 years, he fathered Enoch. ²²Jared lived after he fathered Enoch 800 years and had other sons and daughters. ²³Thus all the days of Jared were 962 years, and he died.

²⁴When Enoch had lived 65 years, he fathered Methuselah. ²⁵Enoch walked with God after he fathered Methuselah 300 years and had other sons

and daughters. ²⁶Thus all the days of Enoch were 365 years. ²⁷Enoch walked with God, and he was not, ²⁸for God took him.

²⁹When Methuselah had lived 187 years, he fathered Lamech. ³⁰Methuselah lived after he fathered Lamech 782 years and had other sons and daughters. ³¹Thus all the days of Methuselah were 969 years, and he died.

³²When Lamech had lived 182 years, he fathered a son ³³and called his name Noah, saying, "Out of the ground that the LORD has cursed, this one shall bring us relief from our work and from the painful toil of our hands." ³⁴Lamech lived after he fathered Noah 595 years and had other sons and daughters. ³⁵Thus all the days of Lamech were 777 years, and he died.

³⁶After Noah was 500 years old, Noah fathered Shem, Ham, and Japheth.

Increasing Corruption on Earth

6 When man began to multiply on the face of the land and daughters were born to them, the sons of God saw that the daughters of man were attractive. And they took as their wives any they chose. ³Then the LORD said, "My Spirit shall not abide in man forever, for he is flesh: his days shall be 120 years." ⁴The Nephilim were on the earth in those days, and also afterward, when the sons of God came in to the daughters of man and they bore children to them. These were the mighty men who were of old, the men of renown.

⁵The LORD saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every intention of the

¹Septuagint *pleased God*; also verse 24 ²Septuagint *was not found* ³Noah sounds like the Hebrew for *rest* ⁴Or *My Spirit shall not contend with* ⁵Or *giants*

Adam "fathered Seth," which would be the normal wording for such a genealogy, the text says that Adam **fathered a son in his own likeness, after his image**. This language echoes 1:26-27.

5:22-24 Enoch walked with God . . . and he was not, for God took him. The Hebrew verb for "walked" conveys a close relationship with God (compare 3:8; 6:9; 17:1; 24:40). Remarkably, because of this special relationship, Enoch does not die (compare 2 Kings 2:1-12).

5:28-31 Lamech expects that Noah, whose name means "rest," will bring both rest and comfort from the **painful toil** of working the soil (see 3:17-19).

6:1-2 Although God had commanded mankind to **multiply** (1:28), their increasing numbers led to increasing wickedness on the earth. The problem was worsened by the joining of the **sons of God** and the **daughters of man**. Scholars have proposed at least two interpretations of this passage: (1) fallen angels were marrying the daughters of man; (2) male descendants of Seth were marrying the ungodly female descendants of Cain. However one interprets the passage, it is clear that the relationships described here involved sexual sin, as men **saw** and **took** any women they wanted.

6:3 God announces that because of the immoral nature of people, their **days shall be 120 years**. This could mean either that the lives of human beings will no longer exceed 120 years, or that the flood will come in 120 years.

6:4 The meaning of **Nephilim** is not clear. The only other OT occurrence of the term is in Num. 13:33, where the Israelite spies use it to describe a group living in Canaan. The Nephilim were **mighty men**

Noah was a righteous man who faithfully walked with God despite the wickedness of his generation. When God chose to destroy the earth because of its hopeless corruption, Noah alone found favor in his eyes. God instructed Noah to build an ark that would keep him and his family safe during the coming flood. Noah also took representative pairs of each kind of animal with him into the ark, to replenish the earth after the flood. God made a covenant with Noah, promising that he would never again destroy the earth with a flood. The NT calls Noah a "herald of righteousness" (2 Pet. 2:5).

KEY REFERENCE: GENESIS 6:7-8

or warriors and, as such, may well have contributed to the violence that filled the earth (see Gen. 6:13).

³ch. 4:25 ⁴For ver. 4-32, see 1 Chr. 1:1-4; Luke 3:36-38 ⁵ch. 3:19 ⁶ch. 4:26 ⁷Jude 14 ⁸ver. 24; ch. 6:9; [Mic. 6:8; Mal. 2:6] ⁹24^a[See ver. 22 above] ¹⁰Heb. 11:5; [2 Kgs. 2:11] ¹¹ch. 3:17 ¹²ch. 6:10 ¹³ch. 10:21 **CHAPTER 6** ¹⁴1 Pet. 3:19, 20; [Neh. 9:30; Gal. 5:16, 17] ¹⁵Ps. 78:39 ¹⁶Ps. 14:2, 3 ¹⁷ch. 8:21; Job 14:4; 15:14; Ps. 51:5; Jer. 17:9; Matt. 15:19; Rom. 3:23

thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. ⁶And ^dthe LORD regretted that he had made man on the earth, and it ^egrieved him to his heart. ⁷So the LORD said, “I will blot out man whom I have created from the face of the land, man and animals and creeping things and birds of the heavens, for I am sorry that I have made them.” ⁸But Noah ^ffound favor in the eyes of the LORD.

Noah and the Flood

⁹These are the generations of Noah. ⁹Noah was a righteous man, ^hblameless in his generation. Noah ⁱwalked with God. ¹⁰And Noah had three sons, Shem, Ham, and Japheth.

¹¹Now the earth was corrupt in God’s sight, and the earth was filled with violence. ¹²And God ^jsaw the earth, and behold, it was corrupt, ^kfor all flesh had corrupted their way on the earth. ¹³And God said to Noah, ^l“I have determined to make an end of all flesh, ^mfor the earth is filled with violence through them. Behold, I will destroy them with the earth. ¹⁴Make yourself an ark of gopher wood. ²Make rooms in the ark, and cover it inside and out with pitch. ¹⁵This is how you are to make it: the length of the ark 300 cubits, ³its breadth 50 cubits, and its height 30 cubits. ¹⁶Make a roof ^dfor the ark, and finish it to a cubit above, and set the door of

the ark in its side. Make it with lower, second, and third decks. ¹⁷^mFor behold, I will bring a flood of waters upon the earth to destroy all flesh in which is the breath of life under heaven. Everything that is on the earth shall die. ¹⁸But ⁿI will establish my covenant with you, and you shall come into the ark, you, your sons, your wife, and your sons’ wives with you. ¹⁹And of every living thing of all flesh, you shall bring two of every sort into the ark to keep them alive with you. They shall be male and female. ²⁰Of the birds according to their kinds, and of the animals according to their kinds, of every creeping thing of the ground, according to its kind, two of every sort shall come in to you to keep them alive. ²¹Also take with you every sort of food that is eaten, and store it up. It shall serve as food for you and for them.” ²²^oNoah did this; he did all that God commanded him.

7 Then the LORD said to Noah, ^p“Go into the ark, you and all your household, for I have seen that ^qyou are righteous before me in this generation. ²Take with you seven pairs of all ^rclean animals, ⁵the male and his mate, and a pair of the animals that are not clean, the male and his mate, ³and seven pairs ⁶of the birds of the heavens also, male and female, to keep their offspring alive on the face of all the earth. ⁴For in seven days ¹I will send

¹Hebrew *The end of all flesh has come before me* ²An unknown kind of tree; transliterated from Hebrew ³A cubit was about 18 inches or 45 centimeters ⁴Or skylight ⁵Or seven of each kind of clean animal ⁶Or seven of each kind

Two men who never died. Enoch and Elijah are the only people in the Bible who did not die a natural death. Instead, they were “taken by God.”

Favor in the eyes of the Lord. “Favor” (6:8) is another word for God’s grace. Of all the people living at the time of the flood, only Noah and his family found favor in God’s sight.

6:6–7 The Hebrew word for **regretted** is sometimes translated “repent” and sometimes as “feel sorrow” or “be grieved.” God is **grieved** over his creation, which he at first saw as very good (1:31) but which is now filled with sin (see note on 1 Sam. 15:29).

6:9–9:29 Noah’s Descendants. Chapters 6–9 describe a flood that leads to a renewal of the earth—a reminder of the creation account of 1:1–2:3. But while the land is cleansed and God makes a new start possible, human nature has not changed. This is clearly seen in the final verses of these chapters (9:20–29).

6:9 Noah’s personal righteousness explains why he is warned about the forthcoming deluge. **Blameless** conveys the idea of being without evident fault, though not necessarily sinless. **walked with God.** See note on 5:22–24.

6:11–12 In contrast to Noah, **the earth was corrupt in God’s sight.** These verses confirm vv. 1–7. Here the emphasis is on the **violence** that fills the earth. Compare “bondage to corruption” (Rom. 8:21): the creation suffers because of mankind’s sin.

6:15 In modern measurements, the ark would have been around 450 feet (140 m) long, 75 feet (23 m) wide, and 45 feet (14 m) high, displacing about 43,000 tons (about 39 million kg). The inside capacity would have been 1.4 million cubic feet (39,644 cubic m),

with an approximate total deck area of 95,700 square feet (8,891 square m).

6:17 Everything that is on the earth shall die. This does not necessarily mean that the flood had to cover the whole earth. Since the geographical perspective of ancient people was more limited, it is possible that the flood, while universal from their viewpoint, did not cover the entire globe. Genesis implies that prior to the Tower of Babel incident (see 11:1–9), people had not yet spread throughout the earth. Many interpreters argue that a huge regional flood may have been all that was necessary for God to destroy all humans. The expression “all the earth” (7:3; compare 8:9, “the whole earth”) does not exclude such a possibility. Later, “all the earth” came to Joseph to buy grain (41:57); here, “all the earth” clearly refers to the eastern Mediterranean seaboard. To support the view that the flood did in fact cover the entire globe, other interpreters point out that the text says “all the high mountains under the whole heaven were covered” (7:19) and that the water was “fifteen cubits” above the tops of the mountains. If “the mountains of Ararat” (8:4) refers to the range that includes present-day Mount Ararat in Turkey (elevation 16,854 feet or 5,137 m), the amount of water necessary to cover it would be at least 16,854 feet above sea level.

6:18–22 God indicates that he will establish a **covenant** with Noah (see note on 9:9–11).

7:1–5 On the distinction between **clean** and **not clean** creatures, see Lev. 11:1–47 and Deut. 14:4–20. Since after the flood some clean animals will be offered as sacrifices (see Gen. 8:20) and some will be

⁶1 Sam. 15:11; 2 Sam. 24:16; Joel 2:13; [Num. 23:19; 1 Sam. 15:29] ⁹Isa. 63:10; Eph. 4:30 ⁸ch. 19:19; Ex. 33:12, 13, 16, 17 ⁹ch. 7; Ezek. 14:14, 20; 2 Pet. 2:5 ¹Job 11, 8; Luke 1:6 ch. 5:22, 24; [Heb. 11:7] ¹²Ps. 14:2, 3; 53:2, 3 ¹³Ezek. 7:2, 3, 6 ¹⁷ch. 7:4; 2 Pet. 2:5 ¹⁸ch. 9:9, 11 ²²Heb. 11:7; [Ex. 40:16] **CHAPTER 7** ¹Matt. 24:38, 39; Luke 17:26, 27; Heb. 11:7, 1 Pet. 3:20; 2 Pet. 2:5 ²ch. 6:9 ²ch. 8:20; [Lev. 11] ⁴Ver. 12, 17; [Job 37:11–13]

rain on the earth forty days and forty nights, ⁴and every living thing ¹that I have made I will blot out from the face of the ground.” ⁵“And Noah did all that the LORD had commanded him.

⁶Noah was six hundred years old when the flood of waters came upon the earth. ⁷And Noah and his sons and his wife and his sons’ wives with him went into the ark to escape the waters of the flood. ⁸Of clean animals, and of animals that are not clean, and of birds, and of everything that creeps on the ground, ⁹two and two, male and female, went into the ark with Noah, as God had commanded Noah. ¹⁰And after seven days the waters of the flood came upon the earth.

¹¹In the six hundredth year of Noah’s life, in the second month, on the seventeenth day of the month, on that day all the ^vfountains of the great deep burst forth, and ^wthe windows of the heavens were opened. ¹²And rain fell upon the earth forty days and forty nights. ¹³On the very same day Noah and his sons, Shem and Ham and Japheth, and Noah’s wife and the three wives of

his sons with them entered the ark, ¹⁴they and every beast, according to its kind, and all the livestock according to their kinds, and every creeping thing that creeps on the earth, according to its kind, and every bird, according to its kind, every winged creature. ¹⁵They ^xwent into the ark with Noah, two and two of all flesh in which there was the breath of life. ¹⁶And those that entered, male and female of all flesh, went in ^yas God had commanded him. And the LORD shut him in.

¹⁷The flood ^zcontinued forty days on the earth. The waters increased and bore up the ark, and it rose high above the earth. ¹⁸The waters prevailed and increased greatly on the earth, and the ark floated on the face of the waters. ¹⁹And the waters prevailed so mightily on the earth that all the high mountains under the whole heaven were covered. ²⁰The waters prevailed above the mountains, covering them fifteen cubits ²deep. ²¹And ^aall flesh died that moved on the earth, birds, livestock, beasts, all swarming creatures that swarm on the earth, and all mankind. ²²Everything on the dry

¹Hebrew *all existence*; also verse 23 ²A cubit was about 18 inches or 45 centimeters

eaten as food (see 9:3), it was necessary to have more than one pair of each kind in the ark.

7:11-12 The exact dates given for the flood (see 8:4-5, 13-14) show that it was a real event. **all the fountains of the great deep burst forth, and the windows of the heavens were opened.** From below and above, water poured out to cover the land.

7:16 The safety of those in the ark depended on both human and divine action. **the LORD shut him in.** The use of the personal name “Yahweh” (“LORD”; see note on 2:4) emphasizes God’s special relationship with Noah.

7:17-24 the waters prevailed on the earth 150 days (v. 24). The

figure of 150 days, which includes the 40 days of rain mentioned in v. 12, is repeated in 8:3 (see chart, this page). In both places it refers to the five-month period between the detailed chronology in 7:11 (at the very start of the flood, on the 17th day of the second month) and 8:4 (when the ark comes to rest on the 17th day of the seventh month). It will be an additional seven months before the land is sufficiently dry for those in the ark to leave it safely (see 8:13-14). On the depth of the flood (**above the mountains**), see note on 6:17.

⁴ch. 6:17 ⁵ch. 6:22 ¹¹ch. 8:2; Prov. 8:28; [Amos 9:6] ¹⁴ch. 8:2; 2 Kgs. 7:19; Isa. 24:18; Mal. 3:10; [Ps. 78:23] ¹⁵ch. 6:20 ¹⁶ver. 2, 3 ¹⁷ver. 4, 12 ²¹ver. 4; ch. 6:13, 17; 2 Pet. 3:6

Chronology of Noah’s Time in the Ark

Dates are in the form of month, day, and Noah’s year, as given in the text. Hence, 2/10/600 means the tenth day of the second month in Noah’s 600th year. Months are calculated at 30 days each. Dates in parentheses are guesses based on dates given in the text.

	Reference	Event	Date	Day
	7:4,10	Announcement of the flood 7 days in advance	(2/10/600)	Sunday
Waters prevail: 150-day period	7:11,13	Flood begins; Noah and family enter the ark	2/17/600	Sunday
	7:12	Flood lasts 40 days and ends	(3/27/600)	Friday
	8:4	Ark rests on mountains of Ararat after waters prevail and abate for 150 days total	7/17/600	Friday
Waters abate: 150-day period	8:5	Mountaintops eventually become visible	10/1/600	Wednesday
	8:7	Raven sent out (after 40 days of mountaintop visibility)	(11/10/600)	Sunday
	8:8	Dove sent out	(11/17/600)	Sunday
	8:10	Dove’s second flight (7 days later); returns with olive leaf	(11/24/600)	Sunday
	8:12	Dove’s third flight (7 days later); does not return	(12/1/600)	Sunday
	8:3	Waters fully abated; end of second 150-day period	(12/17/600)	Wednesday
	8:13	Noah eventually removes the covering of the ark	1/1/601	Wednesday
Earth dries: 70-day period	8:14-19	Earth dried out; Noah leaves ark	2/27/601	Wednesday
	Total time in ark:	370 days		

land ^bin whose nostrils was the breath of life died. ²³He blotted out every living thing that was on the face of the ground, man and animals and creeping things and birds of the heavens. They were blotted out from the earth. Only 'Noah was left, and those who were with him in the ark. ²⁴And the waters prevailed on the earth 150 days.

The Flood Subsides

8 But God ^aremembered Noah and all the beasts and all the livestock that were with him in the ark. And ^eGod made a wind blow over the earth, and the waters subsided. ²The fountains of the deep and ^fthe windows of the heavens were closed, the rain from the heavens was restrained, ³and the waters receded from the earth continually. At the end ^gof 150 days the waters had abated, ⁴and in the seventh month, on the seventeenth day of the month, the ark came to rest on the mountains of ^hArarat. ⁵And the waters continued to abate until the tenth month; in the tenth month, on the first day of the month, the tops of the mountains were seen.

⁶At the end of forty days Noah opened the window of the ark that he had made ⁷and sent forth a raven. It went to and fro until the waters were dried up from the earth. ⁸Then he sent forth a dove from him, to see if the waters had subsided from the face of the ground. ⁹But the dove found no place to set her foot, and she returned to him to the ark, for the waters were still on the face of the whole earth. So he put out his hand and took her and brought her into the ark with him. ¹⁰He waited another seven days, and again he sent forth the dove out of the ark. ¹¹And the dove came back to him in the evening, and behold, in her mouth was a freshly plucked olive leaf. So Noah knew that

the waters had subsided from the earth. ¹²Then he waited another seven days and sent forth the dove, and she did not return to him anymore.

¹³In the six hundred and first year, in the first month, the first day of the month, the waters were dried from off the earth. And Noah removed the covering of the ark and looked, and behold, the face of the ground was dry. ¹⁴In the second month, on the twenty-seventh day of the month, the earth had dried out. ¹⁵Then God said to Noah, ¹⁶"Go out from the ark, ⁱyou and your wife, and your sons and your sons' wives with you. ¹⁷Bring out with you every living thing that is with you of all flesh—birds and animals and every creeping thing that creeps on the earth—that they may swarm on the earth, and ^jbe fruitful and multiply on the earth." ¹⁸So Noah went out, and his sons and his wife and his sons' wives with him. ¹⁹Every beast, every creeping thing, and every bird, everything that moves on the earth, went out by families from the ark.

God's Covenant with Noah

²⁰Then Noah built an altar to the LORD and took some of every clean animal and some of every clean bird and offered burnt offerings on the altar. ²¹And when the LORD smelled ^kthe pleasing aroma, the LORD said in his heart, "I will never again ^lcurse¹ the ground because of man, for ^mthe intention of man's heart is evil from his youth. ⁿNeither will I ever again strike down every living creature as I have done. ²²While the earth remains, seedtime and harvest, cold and heat, summer and winter, ^oday and night, shall not cease."

9 And God blessed Noah and his sons and said to them, ^q"Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth. ²The fear of you and the dread of you shall

¹Or *dishonor*

Why did Noah take seven pairs of each clean animal but only one pair of each unclean animal? After the flood, some clean animals were needed for making sacrifices and for food. To ensure their survival, it was necessary to have more than one pair of each kind in the ark.

Extending an olive branch. The universal symbol for peace—a dove with an olive branch—is based on the Bible story of the flood (8:11).

8:1 God remembered Noah. When the Bible says that God "remembers" someone or that he remembers his covenant with someone, it means he is about to act for that person's welfare (see 9:15; 19:29; 30:22; Ex. 2:24; 32:13). God proceeds to renew everything, echoing what he did in Genesis 1. **God made a wind blow over the earth.** The Hebrew word for "wind" is also sometimes translated "Spirit" (e.g., 1:2; 6:3).

8:2-4 In v. 2 God reverses the process started in 7:11. The waters both rose and fell during the period of 150 days (see note on 7:17-24).

Mountains of Ararat indicates a range of mountains of which Mount Ararat (in modern Turkey) is the highest. The text does not name the specific mountain on which the ark came to rest.

8:20-22 Noah's burnt offering is intended to express gratitude for divine deliverance. It is also an act of atonement. Despite the human tendency to sin, atonement through sacrifice is possible, resulting in a peaceful relationship between the Lord and humanity. **I will never again curse the ground** means that God will not send another flood. He is not revoking the curse pronounced in 3:17, which continues (the words for "curse" in these two verses are different; see *esv* footnote). These verses show the importance of sacrifice in the Bible's plan of salvation.

9:1-4 The earlier positive instruction that humans should exercise authority over the other living creatures (1:28-30) is replaced by the negative comment that those creatures will **fear** and **dread** humans.

²²ch. 27 ²³2 Pet. 2:5 **CHAPTER 8** 1st ch. 19:29; 30:22; Ex. 2:24; 1 Sam. 1:19 ²Ex. 14:21 ³ch. 7:11 ⁴2 Kgs. 19:37; Isa. 37:38; Jer. 51:27 ⁵ch. 7:13 ⁶ch. 1:22, 28; 9:1 ⁷Ex. 29:18, 25, 41; Lev. 1:9, 13, 17; See Ezek. 16:19; 20:41; 2 Cor. 2:15; Eph. 5:2; Phil. 4:18 ⁸ch. 3:17; 6:17 ⁹ch. 6:5; Ps. 58:3; Rom. 1:21; [Matt. 15:19] ¹⁰ch. 9:11, 15; Isa. 54:9 ¹¹Jer. 5:24 ¹²Jer. 33:20, 25 **CHAPTER 9** 1st ch. 1:22, 28; 8:17 ²[Ps. 8:6-8; James 3:7]

be upon every beast of the earth and upon every bird of the heavens, upon everything that creeps on the ground and all the fish of the sea. Into your hand they are delivered. ³Every moving thing that lives shall be food for you. And ⁴as I gave you the green plants, I give you everything. ⁵But you shall not eat flesh with its ⁶life, that is, its blood. ⁷And for your lifeblood I will require a reckoning: ⁸from every beast I will require it and ⁹from man. From his fellow man I will require a reckoning for the life of man.

⁶“Whoever sheds the blood of man,
by man shall his blood be shed,
⁷for God made man in his own image.

⁷And you, ⁸be fruitful and multiply, increase greatly on the earth and multiply in it.”

⁸Then God said to Noah and to his sons with him, ⁹“Behold, ¹⁰I establish my covenant with you and your offspring after you, ¹¹and with every living creature that is with you, the birds, the livestock, and every beast of the earth with you, as many as came out of the ark; it is for every beast of the earth. ¹²I establish my covenant with you, that never again shall all flesh be cut off by the waters of the flood, and never again shall there be a flood to destroy the earth.” ¹³And God said, ¹⁴“This is the sign of the covenant that I make between me and you and every living creature that is with you,

for all future generations: ¹⁵I have set ¹⁶my bow in the cloud, and it shall be a sign of the covenant between me and the earth. ¹⁷When I bring clouds over the earth and the bow is seen in the clouds, ¹⁸I will remember my covenant that is between me and you and every living creature of all flesh. And the waters shall never again become a flood to destroy all flesh. ¹⁹When the bow is in the clouds, I will see it and remember ²⁰the everlasting covenant between God and every living creature of all flesh that is on the earth.” ²¹God said to Noah, “This is the sign of the covenant that I have established between me and all flesh that is on the earth.”

Noah's Descendants

¹⁸The sons of Noah who went forth from the ark were ¹⁹Shem, Ham, and Japheth. (Ham was the father of Canaan.) ²⁰These three were the sons of Noah, and ²¹from these the people of the whole earth were dispersed. ²

²⁰Noah began to be a man of the soil, and he planted a vineyard. ²¹He drank of the wine and became drunk and lay uncovered in his tent. ²²And Ham, the father of Canaan, saw the nakedness of his father and told his two brothers outside. ²³Then Shem and Japheth took a garment, laid it on both their shoulders, and walked backward and covered the nakedness of their father. Their faces were turned backward, and they did not see their father's nakedness. ²⁴When Noah awoke from his

¹In Hebrew you is plural ²Or from these the whole earth was populated ³Or Noah, a man of the soil, was the first to plant a vineyard

God now permits the taking of animal life for food (in contrast to 1:30, where man and animals are given “every green plant” for food). However, the animal's blood remains sacred and is not to be consumed; this is because the blood is the source of life, and all life is from God (see Lev. 17:12-14).

9:5-6 From his fellow man I will require a reckoning for the life of man. Any animal or person that takes a human life will be held accountable by God (see Ex. 20:13; 21:28). **Whoever sheds the blood of man, by man shall his blood be shed.** Human life is to be valued so highly because **God made man in his own image.** To murder another human being is to murder what is most like God, and is thus like an attack on God himself. Many see this as permitting the death penalty for murder—with the understanding that the person's guilt has been established beyond any reasonable doubt (thus the requirement of two or three witnesses, Deut. 19:15). A further requirement is that such a death sentence must always be carried out by the established authorities (see Deut. 19:15-21; Rom. 13:1-5).

9:9-11 This is the first **covenant** explicitly named in Genesis. A covenant formally binds two parties together in a relationship, with consequences for keeping or breaking the covenant. God makes this kind of covenant with a group of people through one person who represents the entire group. Everyone else then experiences the covenant by being included “in” the representative (see note on 12:3). Emphasizing that this particular covenant is for all living creatures, God states that there will never again be a **flood to destroy the earth**.

9:12-17 The rainbow will be a reminder of God's **everlasting covenant**. This does not mean that rainbows did not exist till this time.

9:20 The reference to Noah as a **man of the soil** and his suc-

cess in growing vines points to a fresh start after the flood (see note on 5:28-31).

9:21-23 became drunk. The brevity of the description of Noah's drunkenness indicates God's disapproval. Ham's actions of looking on the **nakedness of his father** in the tent and then reporting this to his brothers bring serious criticism. There is no indication that perverse sexual behavior was involved. Though the text does not explicitly state what happened, it is clear that Ham humiliated and dishonored his father, and apparently he involved his brothers in that humiliation.

9:24-27 The designation of Ham as the **youngest son** is peculiar, since he is always listed after Shem and before Japheth. Possibly the traditional order of names does not reflect the birth sequence of the boys. **Cursed be Canaan.** Noah's reaction to Ham's action is to curse Canaan, Ham's son. **a servant of servants shall he be.** This passage was wrongly used in past centuries to justify the enslavement of African people, resulting in grievous abuse, injustice, and inhumanity to people created in the image of God. Noah's curse of Canaan, which focuses on his being a servant, anticipates the judgment that will later befall the Canaanites (compare Deut. 7:1-3 with Gen. 10:15-19). This, coupled with the fact that the curse falls on Canaan alone and not on Ham's other children (who settled in northern Africa), shows how illegitimate it was to use this text to justify enslaving African people. (For more about biblical teaching on slavery, see notes on 1 Cor. 7:21; Eph. 6:5; Col. 3:22-25; 1 Tim. 1:10.) Shem is highlighted in Noah's remark that Japheth will **dwelling in the tents of Shem** (Gen. 9:27).

³Deut. 12:15; 1 Tim. 4:3, 4 ⁴ch. 1:29 ⁵Lev. 17:10, 11, 14; Deut. 12:16, 23; 1 Sam. 14:33; Acts 15:20, 29 ⁶Ex. 21:28 ⁷ch. 4:10, 11 ⁸Ex. 21:12, 14; Lev. 24:17; Num. 35:31, 33; [Matt. 26:52; Rev. 13:10] ⁹ch. 1:27; 5:1; James 3:9 ¹⁰ch. 6:18; 8:20-22 ¹¹Ilsa. 54:9, 10 ¹²ch. 17:11 ¹³Ezek. 1:28; [Rev. 4:3; 10:1] ¹⁴[Lev. 26:42, 45; 1 Kgs. 8:23; Ezek. 16:60] ¹⁵ch. 17:7, 13, 19 ¹⁶ch. 5:32; 10:1 ¹⁷ch. 10:32

wine ^hand knew what his youngest son had done to him, ²⁵he said,

¹⁴“Cursed be Canaan;

¹⁵a servant of servants shall he be to his brothers.”

²⁶He also said,

“Blessed be the LORD, the God of Shem; and let Canaan be his servant.

²⁷ May God enlarge Japheth, ¹and let him dwell in the tents of Shem, and let Canaan be his servant.”

²⁸After the flood Noah lived 350 years. ²⁹All the days of Noah were 950 years, and he died.

Nations Descended from Noah

10 These are the generations of the sons of Noah, Shem, Ham, and Japheth. Sons were born to them after the flood.

²^kThe sons of Japheth: Gomer, Magog, Madai, Javan, Tubal, Meshech, and Tiras. ³The sons of Gomer: Ashkenaz, Riphath, and Togarmah. ⁴The sons of Javan: Elishah, ^lTarshish, ^mKittim, and Dodanim. ⁵From these ⁿthe coastland peoples spread in their lands, each with his own language, by their clans, in their nations.

⁶^oThe sons of Ham: Cush, Egypt, Put, and Canaan. ⁷The sons of Cush: Seba, Havilah, Sabtah, Raamah, and Sabteca. The sons of Raamah: Sheba and Dedan. ⁸Cush fathered Nimrod; he was the first on earth to be a mighty man. ²⁹He was a mighty hunter before the LORD. Therefore it is said, “Like Nimrod a mighty hunter before the LORD.” ¹⁰The beginning of his kingdom was ^pBabel, Erech, Accad, and Calneh, in ^qthe land of Shinar. ¹¹From that land he went

into Assyria and built Nineveh, Rehoboth-Ir, Calah, and ¹²Resen between Nineveh and Calah; that is the great city. ¹³^rEgypt fathered Ludim, Anamim, Lehabim, Naphtuhim, ¹⁴Pathrusim, Casluhim (from whom ^sthe Philistines came), and ^tCaphtorim.

¹⁵^uCanaan fathered Sidon his firstborn and Heth, ¹⁶and the Jebusites, the Amorites, the Girgashites, ¹⁷the Hivites, the Arkites, the Sinites, ¹⁸the Arvadites, the Zemarites, and the Hamathites. Afterward the clans of the Canaanites dispersed. ¹⁹And the territory of the Canaanites extended from Sidon in the direction of Gerar as far as Gaza, and in the direction of Sodom, Gomorrah, Admah, and Zeboiim, as far as Lasha. ²⁰These are the sons of Ham, by their clans, their languages, their lands, and their nations.

²¹To Shem also, the father of all the children of Eber, the elder brother of Japheth, children were born. ²²The ^vsons of Shem: Elam, Asshur, Arpachshad, Lud, and Aram. ²³The sons of Aram: Uz, Hul, Gether, and Mash. ²⁴Arpachshad fathered ^wShelah; and Shelah fathered Eber. ²⁵^wTo Eber were born two sons: the name of the one was Peleg, ⁴for in his days the earth was divided, and his brother’s name was Joktan. ²⁶Joktan fathered Almodad, Sheleph, Hazarmaveth, Jerah, ²⁷Hadoram, Uzal, Diklah, ²⁸Obal, Abimael, Sheba, ²⁹^xOphir, Havilah, and Jobab; all these were the sons of Joktan. ³⁰The territory in which they lived extended from Mesha in the direction of Sephar to the hill country of the east. ³¹These are the sons of Shem, by their clans, their languages, their lands, and their nations.

³²These are the clans of the sons of Noah, according to their genealogies, in their nations,

¹Japheth sounds like the Hebrew for enlarge ²Or he began to be a mighty man on the earth ³Or from where ⁴Peleg means division

Sinful pride and rebellion against God brought negative consequences to the Tower of Babel builders—a warning to us today (11:7–9).

10:1–11:9 The Descendants of Noah’s Sons. The next main section of Genesis shows how humanity becomes divided into different nations.

10:1–32 This passage shows how the descendants of Noah’s three sons populated different regions of the earth, forming nations. This process covered a long time, as families migrated to particular regions.

10:2–5 From these the coastland peoples spread. This places Japheth’s descendants in the coastal regions and islands of the Mediterranean Sea.

10:6–20 Many of Israel’s enemies, such as the Egyptians, Babylonians, Philistines, and various Canaanite groups, descended from **Ham**. **Cush** and **Put** are regions south and west of Egypt, respectively. **Cush** fathered **Nimrod** (v. 8). This may seem unusual since Cush is linked geographically with Africa, and Nimrod with the great cities of Babel and Nineveh in Assyria. The military might of the Assyrians and Babylonians may account for the observations

that Nimrod was a **mighty man** and a **mighty hunter** (vv. 8, 9). These descriptions are probably to be viewed negatively. Nimrod’s aggression runs totally counter to God’s intentions. **Babel . . . in the land of Shinar** (v. 10). These details link Nimrod with the Tower of Babel episode (11:2, 9). Nimrod’s kingdom is the opposite of what God desired. **The great city** (10:12) probably refers to a region that included both Nineveh and Calah (see Jonah 3:3). “Canaanite” is sometimes used to cover all the different groups mentioned in Gen. 10:15–19 (e.g., 28:1).

10:21–32 Abraham was descended from **Shem**. Many of Shem’s descendants are Arabian tribes or kingdoms. Shem’s great-grandson **Eber** receives special attention (v. 21), being mentioned even before Shem’s own sons are named (v. 22). The designation “Hebrew” (see 14:13) is derived from “Eber.” He called one of his sons **Peleg** (which could mean “division”), **for in his days the earth was divided** (10:25). This is probably a reference to the Tower of Babel (11:1–9).

²⁴[Heb. 2:15] ²⁵Deut. 27:16 / Josh. 9:23; Judg. 1:28; 1 Kgs. 9:20, 21 **CHAPTER 10** ²For ver. 1–5, see 1 Chr. 1:5–7; Ezek. 38:1–6 ⁴Ps. 72:10; Ezek. 38:13 “Num. 24:24; Isa. 23:1, 12; Dan. 11:30 ⁵Isa. 11:11; Jer. 2:10, 25:22; Ezek. 27:6; Zeph. 2:11 ⁶For ver. 6–8, see 1 Chr. 1:8–10 ¹⁰ch. 11:9 ¹¹ch. 11:2 ¹³For ver. 13–18, see 1 Chr. 1:11–16 ¹⁴Deut. 2:23; Jer. 47:4; Amos 9:7 ¹⁵[ch. 15:18–21] ²²For ver. 22–29, see 1 Chr. 1:17–25 ²⁴ch. 11:2; Luke 3:35, 36 ²⁵1 Chr. 19 ²⁹1 Kgs. 9:28; 10:11

^yand from these the nations spread abroad on the earth after the flood.

The Tower of Babel

11 Now the whole earth had one language and the same words. ²And as people migrated from the east, they found a plain in ^zthe land of Shinar and settled there. ³And they said to one another, “Come, let us make bricks, and burn them thoroughly.” And they had brick for stone, ^aand bitumen for mortar. ⁴Then they said, “Come, let us build ourselves a city and a tower ^bwith its top in the heavens, and let us make a name for ourselves, lest we be dispersed over the face of the whole earth.” ⁵And ^cthe LORD came down to see the city and the tower, which the children of man had built. ⁶And the LORD said, “Behold, they are one people, and they have all one language, and this is only the beginning of what they will do. And nothing that they propose to do will now be impossible for them. ⁷Come, ^dlet us go down and there confuse their language, so that they may not understand one another’s speech.” ⁸So ^ethe LORD dispersed them from there over the face of all the earth, and they left off building the city. ⁹Therefore its name was called ^fBabel, because there the LORD confused ^gthe language of all the earth. And from there the LORD dispersed them over the face of all the earth.

Shem’s Descendants

¹⁰⁻⁹These are the generations of Shem. When Shem was 100 years old, he fathered Arpachshad two years after the flood. ¹¹And Shem lived after he fathered Arpachshad 500 years and had other sons and daughters.

¹ Babel sounds like the Hebrew for confused

¹²When Arpachshad had lived 35 years, he fathered Shelah. ¹³And Arpachshad lived after he fathered Shelah 403 years and had other sons and daughters.

¹⁴When Shelah had lived 30 years, he fathered Eber. ¹⁵And Shelah lived after he fathered Eber 403 years and had other sons and daughters.

¹⁶When Eber had lived 34 years, he fathered Peleg. ¹⁷And Eber lived after he fathered Peleg 430 years and had other sons and daughters.

¹⁸When Peleg had lived 30 years, he fathered Reu. ¹⁹And Peleg lived after he fathered Reu 209 years and had other sons and daughters.

²⁰When Reu had lived 32 years, he fathered Serug. ²¹And Reu lived after he fathered Serug 207 years and had other sons and daughters.

²²When Serug had lived 30 years, he fathered Nahor. ²³And Serug lived after he fathered Nahor 200 years and had other sons and daughters.

²⁴When ^hNahor had lived 29 years, he fathered Terah. ²⁵And Nahor lived after he fathered Terah 119 years and had other sons and daughters.

²⁶When ⁱTerah had lived 70 years, he fathered Abram, Nahor, and Haran.

Terah’s Descendants

²⁷Now these are the generations of Terah. Terah fathered Abram, Nahor, and Haran; and Haran fathered Lot. ²⁸Haran died in the presence of his father Terah in the land of his kindred, in Ur of the Chaldeans. ²⁹And Abram and Nahor took wives. The name of Abram’s wife was ^jSarai, and the name of Nahor’s wife, ^kMilcah, the daughter of Haran the father of Milcah and Iscah. ³⁰Now Sarai was barren; she had no child.

³¹Terah ^ltook Abram his son and Lot the son

11:1-9 The story of the Tower of Babel is more important than its length suggests. It tells of a unified humanity using all its resources to establish a city that is the antithesis of what God intended when he created the world. The city builders see themselves as establishing their own destiny without any reference to the Lord.

11:1 The description of the **whole earth** having **one language** indicates that the present episode happens before the events in ch. 10, which specifically mentions nations and languages. It may have occurred during the period covered in ch. 10, especially if it is linked to the naming of Peleg in 10:25 (see note on 10:21-32).

11:2-4 **Come, . . . let us make a name for ourselves.** Contrary to God’s plan that humanity should fill the earth (e.g., 1:22, 28; 9:1, 7), the builders of Babel want to prevent the population from being **dispersed over . . . the whole earth** (11:4).

11:9 This verse links the name of the city, **Babel**, with the verb that means “to confuse, to mix, to mingle.” This is also the name used in the OT for the city of Babylon. Babylon symbolizes humanity’s ambition to dethrone God and make the earth its own (see Revelation 17-18).

11:10-26 **Shem’s Descendants.** Resembling the list of Adam’s descendants in 5:3-31, this genealogy traces Noah’s line through Shem down to Terah, the father of Abram, Nahor, and Haran (see diagram, p. 34). The length of time these men live is much shorter than for men living before the flood (see 5:1-32; see chart, p. 36).

11:27-50:26 Patriarchal History. The story now moves from the general survey of humanity to the specific family from which Israel comes.

11:27-25:18 Terah’s Descendants. These chapters focus on the immediate family of Terah, paying special attention to Abram. Abram will later have his name changed to “Abraham” (see 17:5).

11:28 Ur of the Chaldeans was a city in southern Babylonia, the remains of which are located in modern Iraq.

11:29 The name **Sarai** is later changed to “Sarah” (see 17:15). The initial inability of the patriarchs’ wives to have children is a recurring theme in Genesis (see 25:21; 29:31).

11:31-32 **Haran** was an important crossroads and commercial center in the ancient Near East.

11:31 Although Terah’s ambition is to move his family **from Ur to Canaan**, they settle instead in northern Mesopotamia at **Haran** (in modern-day Turkey). The spelling of the town name “Haran” in

³²ver. 1; ch. 9:19 **CHAPTER 11** ²ch. 10:10; 14:1, 9; Isa. 11:1; Dan. 1:2; Zech. 5:11 ³ch. 14:10; Ex. 2:3 ⁴Deut. 1:28 ⁵ch. 18:21 ⁷ch. 1:26; [Ps. 2:4] ⁸ch. 10:25, 32; Luke 1:51 ⁹ch. 10:10 ¹⁰[ch. 10:22]; For ver. 10-26, see 1 Chr. 1:17-27 ²⁴Josh. 24:2 ²⁶[See ver. 24 above] ²⁹ch. 17:15; ch. 22:20 ³¹ch. 12:1