

Genesis

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

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

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

WORTH MEMORIZING

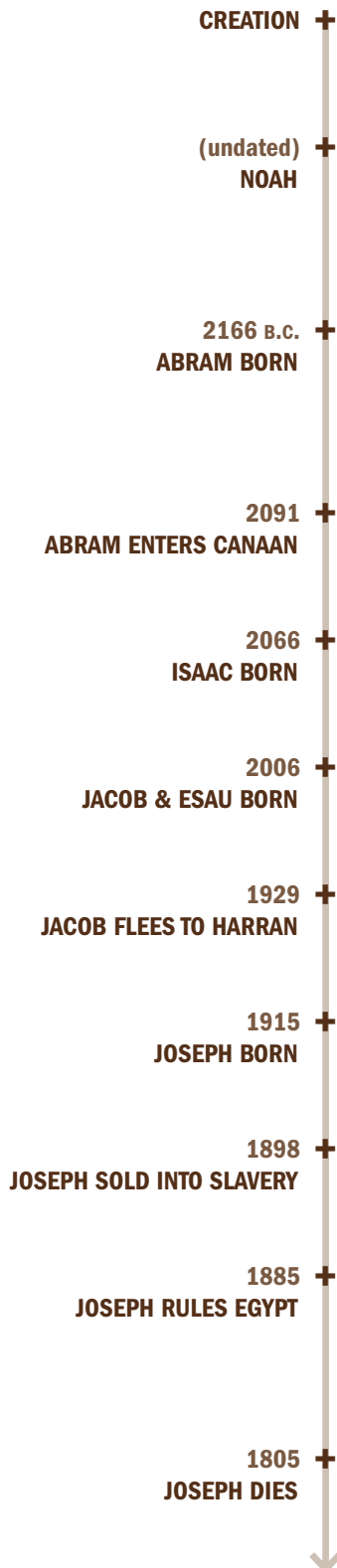
- **THE BIBLE'S OPENING WORDS IN 1:1.**
In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.
- **JOSEPH'S WORDS IN 50:20.** “You intended to harm me, but God intended it for good to accomplish what is now being done, the saving of many lives.”

THE MASCULINE PERSPECTIVE

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



Timeline



1 The Beginning

In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. ²Now the earth was formless and empty, darkness was over the surface of the deep, and the Spirit of God was hovering over the waters.

³And God said, "Let there be light," and there was light. ⁴God saw that the light was good, and he 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, "Let there be a vault between the waters to separate water from water." ⁷So God made the vault and separated the water under the vault from the water above it. And it was so. ⁸God called the vault "sky." And there was evening, and there was morning—the second day.

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

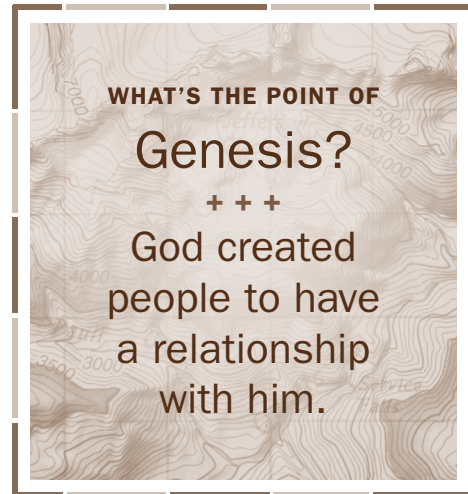
¹¹Then God said, "Let the land produce vegetation: seed-bearing plants and trees on the land that bear fruit with seed in it, according to their various kinds." And it was so. ¹²The land produced vegetation: plants bearing seed according to their kinds and trees bearing fruit with seed in

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

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

- it according to their kinds. And God saw that it was good. ¹³And there was evening, and there was morning—the third day.
- ¹⁴And God said, “Let there be lights in the vault of the sky to separate the day from the night, and let them serve as signs to mark sacred times, and days and years, ¹⁵and let them be lights in the vault of the sky to give light on the earth.” And it was so. ¹⁶God made two great lights—the greater light to govern the day and the lesser light to govern the night. He also made the stars. ¹⁷God set them in the vault of the sky to give light on the earth, ¹⁸to govern the day and the night, and to separate light from darkness. And God saw that it was good. ¹⁹And there was evening, and there was morning—the fourth day.
- ²⁰And God said, “Let the water teem with living creatures, and let birds fly above the earth across the vault of the sky.” ²¹So God created the great creatures of the sea and every living thing with which the water teems and that moves about in it, according to their kinds, and every winged bird according to its kind. And God saw that it was good. ²²God blessed them and said, “Be fruitful and increase in number and fill the water in the seas, and let the birds increase on the earth.” ²³And there was evening, and there was morning—the fifth day.
- ²⁴And God said, “Let the land produce living creatures according to their kinds: the livestock, the creatures that move along the ground, and the wild animals, each according to its kind.” And it was so. ²⁵God made the wild animals according to their kinds, the livestock according to their kinds, and all the creatures that move along the ground according to their kinds. And God saw that it was good.
- ²⁶Then God said, “Let us make mankind in our image, in our likeness, so that they

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



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

- ²⁷So God created mankind in his own image,
in the image of God he created them;
male and female he created them.

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

²⁹Then God said, “I give you every seed-bearing plant on the face of the whole earth and every tree that has fruit with seed in it. They will be yours for food.

³⁰And to all the beasts of the earth and all the birds in the sky and all the creatures that move along the ground—everything that has the breath of life in it—I give every green plant for food.” And it was so.

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

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

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

WHAT THE BIBLE SAYS ABOUT:

Time

+ GOD OUTLASTS TIME

Do not forget this one thing, dear friends: With the Lord a day is like a thousand years, and a thousand years are like a day. **2 PETER 3:8**

+ GOD CREATED TIME

God said, "Let there be lights in the vault of the sky to separate the day from the night, and let them serve as signs to mark sacred times, and days and years."

GENESIS 1:14

+ GOD IS WITH US THROUGHOUT TIME

Lord, you have been our dwelling place throughout all generations.

PSALM 90:1

+ + +

[Jesus:] "And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age."

MATTHEW 28:20

+ OUR TIME IS LIMITED

Our days may come to seventy years, or eighty, if our strength endures; yet the best of them are but trouble and sorrow, for they quickly pass, and we fly away.

PSALM 90:10

+ + +

Teach us to number our days, that we may gain a heart of wisdom.

PSALM 90:12

+ + +

The life of mortals is like grass, they flourish like a flower of the field; the wind blows over it and it is gone, and its place remembers it no more.

PSALM 103:15-16

+ TIME: USE IT WISELY

Be very careful, then, how you live—not as unwise but as wise, making the most of every opportunity, because the days are evil.

EPHESIANS 5:15-16

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

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

Adam and Eve

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

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

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

¹⁰A river watering the garden flowed from Eden; from there it was separated into four headwaters.
¹¹The name of the first is the Pishon; it winds through the entire land of

Havilah, where there is gold.¹² (The gold of that land is good; aromatic resin^d and onyx are also there.)
¹³The name of the second river is the Gihon; it winds through the entire land of Cush.^e
¹⁴The name of the third river is the Tigris; it runs along the east side of Ashur. And the fourth river is the Euphrates.

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

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

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

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

²³The man said,

“This is now bone of my bones
 and flesh of my flesh;
 she shall be called ‘woman,’
 for she was taken out of man.”

^a 5 Or land; also in verse 6 ^b 6 Or mist ^c 7 The Hebrew for *man* (*adam*) sounds like and may be related to the Hebrew for *ground* (*adamah*); it is also the name *Adam* (see verse 20). ^d 12 Or good; pearls ^e 13 Possibly southeast Mesopotamia ^f 20 Or the man ^g 21 Or took part of the man’s side ^h 22 Or part

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

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

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

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

Making a Man and a Woman

Genesis 1:27 and 2:15-25

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

3 The Fall

Now the serpent was more crafty than any of the wild animals the LORD God had made. He said to the woman, "Did God really say, 'You must not eat from any tree in the garden?'"

²The woman said to the serpent, "We may eat fruit from the trees in the garden, ³but God did say, 'You must not eat fruit from the tree that is in the middle of the garden, and you must not touch it, or you will die.'" ⁴"You will not certainly die," the serpent said to the woman. ⁵"For God knows that when you eat from it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil."

⁶When the woman saw that the fruit of the tree was good for food and pleasing to the eye, and also desirable for gaining wisdom, she took some and ate it. She also gave some to her husband, who was with her, and he ate it. ⁷Then the eyes of both of them were opened, and they realized they were naked; so they sewed fig leaves together and made coverings for themselves.

⁸Then the man and his wife heard the sound of the LORD God as he was walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and they hid from the LORD God among the trees of the garden. ⁹But the LORD God called to the man, "Where are you?" ¹⁰He answered, "I heard you in the garden, and I was afraid because I was naked; so I hid."

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

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

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

someone you
should know:

Adam

Coming in First

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

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

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

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

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

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

Most of us would like to forget the one first for which Adam is most remembered. But we can't, since the results of *that* first continue to harass us to this day. Adam

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

The Bible
fingers Adam
as the one
responsible
for bringing sin
and chaos into
the world.

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

says, "Sin entered the world through one man, and death through sin, and in this way death came to all people, because all sinned" (Romans 5:12).

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

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

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

+ + + Men, Women, & God

Naked and Unashamed

Genesis 2:25

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

"Cursed are you above all livestock
and all wild animals!
You will crawl on your belly
and you will eat dust
all the days of your life.

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

¹⁶To the woman he said,

"I will make your pains in childbearing
very severe;
with painful labor you will give birth
to children.
Your desire will be for your husband,
and he will rule over you."

¹⁷To Adam he said, "Because you listened to your wife and ate fruit from the tree about which I commanded you, 'You must not eat from it,'

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

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

¹⁹By the sweat of your brow
you will eat your food
until you return to the ground,
since from it you were taken;
for dust you are
and to dust you will return."

^a 15 Or *seed* ^b 15 Or *strike*

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

²⁰Adam^a named his wife Eve,^b because she would become the mother of all the living.

²¹The LORD God made garments of skin for Adam and his wife and clothed them. ²²And the LORD God said, “The man has now become like one of us, knowing good and evil. He must not be allowed to reach out his hand and take also from the tree of life and eat, and live forever.” ²³So the LORD God banished him from the Garden of Eden to work the ground from which he had been taken. ²⁴After he drove the man out, he placed on the east side^c of the Garden of Eden cherubim and a flaming sword flashing back and forth to guard the way to the tree of life.

4 Cain and Abel

Adam^a made love to his wife Eve, and she became pregnant and gave birth to Cain.^d She said, “With the help of the LORD I have brought forth^e a man.” ²Later she gave birth to his brother Abel.

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

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

⁸Now Cain said to his brother Abel, “Let’s go out to the field.”^f While they were in the field, Cain attacked his brother Abel and killed him.

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

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

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

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

¹⁵But the LORD said to him, “Not so^g; anyone who kills Cain will suffer vengeance seven times over.” Then the LORD put a mark on Cain so that no one who found him would kill him. ¹⁶So Cain went out from

^a 20,1 Or *The man* ^b 20 *Eve* probably means *living*. ^c 24 Or *placed in front* ^d 1 *Cain* sounds like the Hebrew for *brought forth* or *acquired*. ^e 1 Or *have acquired* ^f 8 Samaritan Pentateuch, Septuagint, Vulgate and Syriac; Masoretic Text does not have “*Let’s go out to the field.*” ^g 15 Septuagint, Vulgate and Syriac; Hebrew *Very well*

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

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

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

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

Passing the Buck

Genesis 3:8-13

THIRTY YEARS AGO, the conversation went like this:

“Tommy, where’s your math assignment?”

“Uh, I think my dog ate it.”

Today, it may be more like this:

“Honey, where are the car keys?”

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

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

After God created the earth, he told Adam and Eve not to eat the fruit from the tree in the middle of the garden. “When you eat from it you will certainly die,” said God (Genesis 2:17).

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

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

“Eve gave it to me,” said Adam.

“The serpent deceived me,” said Eve.

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

the LORD’s presence and lived in the land of Nod,^a east of Eden.

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

¹⁹Lamech married two women, one named Adah and the other Zillah. ²⁰Adah gave birth to Jabal; he was the father of those who live in tents and raise livestock. ²¹His brother’s name was Jubal; he was the father of all who play stringed instruments and pipes. ²²Zillah also had a son, Tubal-Cain, who forged

all kinds of tools out of^b bronze and iron. Tubal-Cain’s sister was Naamah.

²³Lamech said to his wives,

“Adah and Zillah, listen to me;
wives of Lamech, hear my words.

I have killed a man for wounding me,
a young man for injuring me.

²⁴If Cain is avenged seven times,
then Lamech seventy-seven times.”

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

At that time people began to call on^d the name of the LORD.

^a *16* Nod means *wandering* (see verses 12 and 14).

^b *22* Or *who instructed all who work in*

^c *25* Seth probably

means *granted*. ^d *26* Or *to proclaim*

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