

# Day--Day Chronological Bible

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with Daily Readings  
Guided by  
Dr. George H. Guthrie



CHRISTIAN  
STANDARD  
BIBLE®

HOLMAN®  
BIBLES

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# INTRODUCTION TO THE CHRISTIAN STANDARD BIBLE®

The Bible is God's revelation to humanity. It is our only source for completely reliable information about God, what happens when we die, and where history is headed. The Bible does these things because it is God's inspired Word, inerrant in the original manuscripts. Bible translation brings God's Word from the ancient languages (Hebrew, Greek, and Aramaic) into today's world. In dependence on God's Spirit to accomplish this sacred task, the CSB Translation Oversight Committee and Holman Bible Publishers present the Christian Standard Bible.

## TEXTUAL BASE OF THE CSB

The textual base for the New Testament (NT) is the Nestle-Aland *Novum Testamentum Graece*, 28th edition, and the United Bible Societies' *Greek New Testament*, 5th corrected edition. The text for the Old Testament (OT) is the *Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia*, 5th edition.

## GOALS OF THIS TRANSLATION

- Provide English-speaking people worldwide with an accurate translation in contemporary English.
- Provide an accurate translation for personal study, sermon preparation, private devotions, and memorization.
- Provide a text that is clear and understandable, suitable for public reading, and shareable so that all may access its life-giving message.
- Affirm the authority of Scripture and champion its absolute truth against skeptical viewpoints.

## TRANSLATION PHILOSOPHY OF THE CHRISTIAN STANDARD BIBLE

Most discussions of Bible translations speak of two opposite approaches: for-

mal equivalence and dynamic equivalence. However, Bible translations cannot be neatly sorted into these categories. Optimal equivalence capitalizes on the strengths of both approaches.

Optimal equivalence balances contemporary English readability with linguistic precision to the original languages. In the many places throughout the Bible where a word-for-word rendering is understandable, a literal translation is used. When a word-for-word rendering might obscure the meaning for a modern audience, a more dynamic translation is used. This process assures that both the words and the thoughts contained in the original text are conveyed accurately for today's readers. The Christian Standard Bible places equal value on fidelity to the original and readability for a modern audience, resulting in a translation that achieves both goals.

## HISTORY OF THE CSB

Holman Bible Publishers assembled an interdenominational team of 100 scholars, editors, stylists, and proofreaders, all of whom were committed to biblical inerrancy. Working from the original languages, the translation team edited and polished the manuscript, which was first published as the Holman Christian Standard Bible in 2004.

A standing committee maintained the translation, while also seeking ways to improve both readability and accuracy. As with the original translation, the committee that prepared this revision, renamed the Christian Standard Bible, is international and interdenominational, comprising evangelical scholars who honor the inspiration and authority of God's written Word.



# INTRODUCTION

**D**on't you love a good story? Whether in the form of a great book, a movie, or just a conversation with friends around a fire, powerful stories can pull us in, delight us, teach us, catch us off guard, scare us, frustrate us, or give us a great deal of satisfaction when the ending turns out "just right." What many people don't realize is that the Bible's sixty-six books weave together an amazing, cohesive story, a Grand Story that God has written on the world, and, believe it or not, you and I are a part of that story. Yet, you and I can't understand our place in the story until we understand how the Bible's Grand Story fits together, how it develops, where its climax comes, and how it invites us to join in a never-ending script that God continues to write in and through the lives of real people like you and me.

As you read the *CSB Day-by-Day Chronological Bible*, let me make a few suggestions for getting the most out of the experience.

*Read at a specific time and place each day, and do so until it becomes a habit.* Like other aspects of our lives, developing a rhythm really helps. It takes three or four weeks to develop a habit, but once that habit is established, you will look forward to the time set aside for reading God's Word. Also, we have given you six readings per week with Scripture, so if you miss a day, you can make it up. Just pick back up and keep going.

*Always keep the Big Story in view.* We have laid out this chronological Bible in three "Acts" and seventeen "scenes." At the beginning of each Act and scene you have an introduction that will help orient you to what is going on at that point in the story, and there are markers on each page to remind you which scene you are in. Let this framework for the Bible's Grand Story sink in and shape how you think about God's Word.

*Don't get bogged down in the passages you don't understand.* Focus on getting the big picture of how the Bible's story develops. There are parts of the Bible that are just plain difficult, that bring to mind more questions than answers. Just know that it is normal to struggle with understanding some parts, and some aspects of the story become much more clear as the story develops.

*Read in community with others.* The Bible talks a lot about community, and Bible reading is best experienced in community. It helps if you have family or friends who also are reading the Bible at the same pace, for they can encourage you, keep you on track, and discuss the Bible with you. If you do not attend a church, find one so you can have a place to celebrate what you are learning and to pose questions that come up in your study.

*Pick up tools to help you read the Bible better.* The *CSB Day-by-Day Chronological Bible* is part of a broader emphasis on biblical literacy called *Read the Bible for Life*. On the Read the Bible for Life website ([www.readthebibleforlife.com](http://www.readthebibleforlife.com)) you can find various tools, some of them free, to help you grow in the skill of Bible reading.

I love a good story, and one of my favorites is the *Lord of the Rings* trilogy. At one point in the story, the hobbits Sam and Frodo are in a difficult spot in a darkening world. As they travel towards Mount Doom to destroy the ring of power, Sam says to Frodo, "I wonder if we shall ever be put into songs or tales. We're in one, of course; but I mean: put into words you know, told by the fireside, or read out of a great big

book with red and black letters, years and years afterwards. And people will say, 'Let's hear about Frodo and the Ring!' And they'll say: 'Yes, that's one of my favorite stories. Frodo was really brave, wasn't he, dad?' 'Yes, my boy, the famousest of the hobbits. And that's saying a lot.' "

Laughing, Frodo picks up the conversation, "... you've left out one of the chief characters: Samwise the Stouthearted. 'I want to hear more about Sam, dad. . . . and Frodo wouldn't have got far without Sam, would he, dad?' "

The humble Sam is embarrassed. "Now Mr. Frodo, you shouldn't make fun; I was being serious."

And Frodo answers, "So was I."

Friend, my prayer is that, as you read the *CSB Day-by-Day Chronological Bible*, you will realize that *you* are a part of this wonderful story we find in the Bible. Once you get drawn in—your life will never be the same.

George Guthrie

# **GOD'S PLAN FOR ALL PEOPLE**

**ACT 1**

The Bible contains the best story ever told, providing true answers to important questions such as: Who is God? How does He relate to the world? How can humans know him? How did we get here and why? How will things end for us and our world?

Like every good story, the Bible has a memorable setting, interesting characters, and a grand plot that climaxes in a glorious conclusion. The plot plows ahead with conflicts described at many levels, but ultimately the conflicts are resolved as God moves history toward its appointed purpose. As you read the passages we have designated as Act 1, bear in mind that they are the foundation for Act 2 (God's Covenant People) and Act 3 (God's New Covenant People).

#### THE SETTINGS FOR ACT 1

The settings for Act 1 are broad, beginning with the entire universe and then narrowing down to specific locales on earth. Although places such as Eden, Ararat, and the Tower of Babylon are named, we don't know exactly where they were. This really doesn't matter, for the narrator describes seminal events and conditions that apply to all humans no matter where they live. Further, this part of the story is written in a way that makes the events hard to date. The account starts "in the beginning" and extends to the time of Abraham, which was the dawn of recorded history. Clearly it's more important for us to know *that* these things happened to our ancestors than to know when and where they occurred.

#### MAIN CHARACTERS FOR ACT 1

*God*—He is the Creator of the setting and of all the other characters involved in the plotline. He is known through his words and his works. He will remain the central character throughout the whole Bible; after all it is *his* story. His greatness and goodness are on display in creation and in the pages of Scripture. His justice and mercy are especially seen in the way he responds to human sin. Without

diminishing the gravity of sin, he provides a way for sin to be pardoned.

*The Serpent (Satan)*—Although the details of how and why he came to be in the garden are not explained, the Serpent alters history as the antagonist who acts in opposition to God. After his deception of Adam and Eve, his direct presence disappears for the rest of Act 1. As Satan, he will show up again sporadically in Acts 2 and 3. At the end of the Bible's storyline his final demise is foretold.

*Adam and Eve*—Our first parents are known for the impact of their words and deeds rather than by any description of their appearance. They are human beings made in the image of God, and yet they choose to disobey God. This sets in motion the central conflict of the Bible: rebellion (sin) against God. Since they are the parents of the entire human race, their sin shows that 100% of humanity became rebels against the Creator. It is impossible to understand the human condition today without making reference to Adam and Eve.

*Noah and his family*—These eight persons, imperfect but accounted righteous by God, are set in contrast to the rest of wicked humanity. Noah and his family are best known for building the ark and riding out the flood, but the theological importance of this should not be missed: they become the means by which God provides our ancestors with a fresh start. Even so, in the aftermath of the flood, awful behavior continues with Noah and his descendants. God has given humanity a fresh start, and yet it remains true that all humans are sinners in need of salvation.

*The people of Babylon*—The "whole earth" is again in conflict with the Creator. Individuals go unnamed, but they all receive God's judgment and are scattered. Sadly, in this last episode reported in Act 1, all humans are still rebels.

#### PLOT SUMMARY FOR ACT 1

The plot for Act 1 can be summarized in three phases:

- *God's good creation*
- *Humanity's fall into sin*
- *Humanity's ongoing rebellion*

The action begins with God's creation of the universe from nothing, focusing in on planet Earth and then mankind. The results are said to be "very good." But quickly the scene changes to the temptation and fall of humanity into sin. Sin leads to a death sentence for Adam and all his descendants, and the depressing refrain "then he died" resounds like an ominous drumbeat throughout the biblical genealogies and down to our own day. Later events demonstrate a pattern of broken relationships and rebellion against God: Cain murders Abel out of jealousy; the

human race is so sinful that God sends a worldwide flood; people settle in Babylon (and try to reach heaven on their own) rather than scatter over the earth as God intended.

Despite the ongoing rebellion, there are glimmers of hope. God's mercy breaks through undeserved: Adam and Eve live on to bear children rather than face immediate death for their sin; Noah finds favor with God in spite of his imperfections; after the flood God makes a covenant to preserve human life; God scatters (rather than destroys) the people despite their intention to disobey him.

As you read Act 1, use the lens of "God's plan for all people" to help interpret the story.

## WEEK 1

In our first week of readings, we will cover all of Act 1 in the story of the Bible. This act consists of three scenes:

1. The creation of the world, with human beings as the pinnacle of that creation
2. The fall into sin and its consequences
3. The flood, the first expression of God's judgment on the human race as a whole, as well as his desire to preserve the life he created

Act 1 is very brief in comparison to the other two Acts in the biblical story, but theologically, it is very important. In numerous ways Act 1 lays the foundation for the rest of the Bible. In addition to the main events, we will see many expressions of God's desire to have a relationship with people and his grace when people sin. As you read, slow down and notice the details, including moments of tension and crisis, and how these are resolved. This segment of Scripture is packed with important themes that will continue throughout all of Scripture, including the central theme of covenant. As you read Genesis 1 and Psalms, allow the music of these passages to touch you and teach you things about God.

# SCENE 1

## CREATION: THE GOD OF ALL OF LIFE

With this foundational scene, the plot is set in motion. We observe truths about God, our world, and humanity that are essential for understanding the overall story. First, God is the sovereign Creator of everything. There is no speculation on where God comes from or how he became powerful. He simply is. Second, our world is created good; moreover, the world is not God. The universe depends on him. Third, humans—male and female alike—are made in God’s image. We are not the random result of time and chance. Thus, God holds human beings in high regard and we are accountable to him.

### WEEK 1

## DAY

# 1

### GENESIS 1-2

### ACT 1 • SCENE 1 • READING 1

Notice ways the days of creation relate to each other: day 1 to day 4, day 2 to day 5, and day 3 to day 6. Days 1, 2, and 3 tell of God’s creation of settings to be inhabited, while days 4, 5, and 6 introduce the characters that inhabit those settings. God built both beauty and order into his creation. There was also a progression in creation, a process climaxing in the creation of human beings. According to Genesis 2:2-3, God rested on the seventh day, blessed that day, and declared it holy. In declaring one day of the week special, God built order and rhythm into the weekly human routine.

- ◆ *Identify the order and rhythm of rest in your weekly patterns.*

In Genesis 2 the author took one aspect of the creation account in Genesis 1—the creation of man and woman—and expanded on it. When you read narrative passages in Scripture, remember that God is the hero of the story.

- ◆ *How is God the hero in Genesis 2?*
- ◆ *What does the passage say about the nature and beauty of marriage as God designed it?*

## GENESIS 1-2

**1** In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.

<sup>2</sup> Now the earth was formless and empty, darkness covered the surface of the watery depths, and the Spirit of God was hovering over the surface of the waters. <sup>3</sup> Then God said, "Let there be light," and there was light. <sup>4</sup> God saw that the light was good, and God separated the light from the darkness. <sup>5</sup> God called the light "day," and the darkness he called "night." There was an evening, and there was a morning: one day.

<sup>6</sup> Then God said, "Let there be an expanse between the waters, separating water from water." <sup>7</sup> So God made the expanse and separated the water under the expanse from the water above the expanse. And it was so. <sup>8</sup> God called the expanse "sky." Evening came and then morning: the second day.

<sup>9</sup> Then God said, "Let the water under the sky be gathered into one place, and let the dry land appear." And it was so. <sup>10</sup> God called the dry land "earth," and the gathering of the water he called "seas." And God saw that it was good. <sup>11</sup> Then God said, "Let the earth produce vegetation: seed-bearing plants and fruit trees on the earth bearing fruit with seed in it according to their kinds." And it was so. <sup>12</sup> The earth produced vegetation: seed-bearing plants according to their kinds and trees bearing fruit with seed in it according to their kinds. And God saw that it was good. <sup>13</sup> Evening came and then morning: the third day.

<sup>14</sup> Then God said, "Let there be lights in the expanse of the sky to separate the day from the night. They will serve as signs for seasons and for days and years. <sup>15</sup> They will be lights in the expanse of the sky to provide light on the earth." And it was so. <sup>16</sup> God made the two great lights — the greater light to rule over the day and the lesser light to rule over the night — as well as the stars. <sup>17</sup> God placed them in the expanse of the sky to provide light on the earth, <sup>18</sup> to rule the day and the night, and to separate light from darkness. And God saw that it was good. <sup>19</sup> Evening came and then morning: the fourth day.

<sup>20</sup> Then God said, "Let the water swarm with living creatures, and let birds fly above the earth across the expanse of the sky." <sup>21</sup> So God created the large sea-creatures and every living creature that moves and swarms in the water, according to their kinds. He also created every winged creature according to its kind. And God saw that it was good. <sup>22</sup> God blessed them: "Be fruitful, multiply, and fill the waters of the seas, and let the birds multiply on the earth." <sup>23</sup> Evening came and then morning: the fifth day.

<sup>24</sup> Then God said, "Let the earth produce living creatures according to their kinds: livestock, creatures that crawl, and the wildlife of the earth according to their kinds." And it was so. <sup>25</sup> So God made the wildlife of the earth according to their kinds, the livestock according to their kinds, and all the creatures that crawl on the ground according to their kinds. And God saw that it was good.

<sup>26</sup> Then God said, "Let us make man in our image, according to our likeness. They will rule the fish of the sea, the birds of the sky, the livestock, the whole earth, and the creatures that crawl on the earth."

<sup>27</sup> So God created man in his own image;  
he created him in the image of God;  
he created them male and female.

<sup>28</sup> God blessed them, and God said to them, "Be fruitful, multiply, fill the earth, and subdue it. Rule the fish of the sea, the birds of the sky, and every creature that crawls on the earth." <sup>29</sup> God also said, "Look, I have given you every seed-bearing plant on the surface of the entire earth and every tree whose fruit contains seed. This will be food for you, <sup>30</sup> for all the wildlife of the earth, for every bird of the sky,

and for every creature that crawls on the earth — everything having the breath of life in it — I have given every green plant for food.” And it was so.<sup>31</sup> God saw all that he had made, and it was very good indeed. Evening came and then morning: the sixth day.

**2** So the heavens and the earth and everything in them were completed.<sup>2</sup> On the seventh day God had completed his work that he had done, and he rested on the seventh day from all his work that he had done.<sup>3</sup> God blessed the seventh day and declared it holy, for on it he rested from all his work of creation.

<sup>4</sup> These are the records of the heavens and the earth, concerning their creation. At the time that the LORD God made the earth and the heavens,<sup>5</sup> no shrub of the field had yet grown on the land, and no plant of the field had yet sprouted, for the LORD God had not made it rain on the land, and there was no man to work the ground.

<sup>6</sup> But mist would come up from the earth and water all the ground.<sup>7</sup> Then the LORD God formed the man out of the dust from the ground and breathed the breath of life into his nostrils, and the man became a living being.

<sup>8</sup> The LORD God planted a garden in Eden, in the east, and there he placed the man he had formed.<sup>9</sup> The LORD God caused to grow out of the ground every tree pleasing in appearance and good for food, including the tree of life in the middle of the garden, as well as the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.

<sup>10</sup> A river went out from Eden to water the garden. From there it divided and became the source of four rivers.<sup>11</sup> The name of the first is Pishon, which flows through the entire land of Havilah, where there is gold.<sup>12</sup> Gold from that land is pure; bdellium and onyx are also there.<sup>13</sup> The name of the second river is Gihon, which flows through the entire land of Cush.<sup>14</sup> The name of the third river is Tigris, which runs east of Assyria. And the fourth river is the Euphrates.

<sup>15</sup> The LORD God took the man and placed him in the garden of Eden to work it and watch over it.<sup>16</sup> And the LORD God commanded the man, “You are free to eat from any tree of the garden,<sup>17</sup> but you must not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, for on the day you eat from it, you will certainly die.”<sup>18</sup> Then the LORD God said, “It is not good for the man to be alone. I will make a helper corresponding to him.”<sup>19</sup> The LORD God formed out of the ground every wild animal and every bird of the sky, and brought each to the man to see what he would call it. And whatever the man called a living creature, that was its name.<sup>20</sup> The man gave names to all the livestock, to the birds of the sky, and to every wild animal; but for the man no helper was found corresponding to him.<sup>21</sup> So the LORD God caused a deep sleep to come over the man, and he slept. God took one of his ribs and closed the flesh at that place.<sup>22</sup> Then the LORD God made the rib he had taken from the man into a woman and brought her to the man.<sup>23</sup> And the man said:

This one, at last, is bone of my bone  
and flesh of my flesh;  
this one will be called “woman,”  
for she was taken from man.

<sup>24</sup> This is why a man leaves his father and mother and bonds with his wife, and they become one flesh.<sup>25</sup> Both the man and his wife were naked, yet felt no shame.

WEEK 1

DAY

2

PSALMS 8; 104; JOHN 1:1-3

ACT 1 • SCENE 1 • READING 2

Psalm 8, a reflection on Genesis 1–2, describes our worth and responsibility as human beings. Think about what this psalm means for us as modern believers. Notice the first and last verses of the psalm; God is the real focus here.

Meditate on the description of God in Psalm 104:1-9 and notice how the psalmist responds to God in verses 33-35. The psalms often use rich word pictures to communicate truth.

◆ *How did the author paint a picture using word pictures?*

Notice how the words of John 1:1-3, which speak of Jesus as the Word, echo Genesis 1:1.

◆ *Read Genesis 1:1 again in light of John 1:1-3 and take a moment to worship Jesus as the Creator of all that is.*

PSALM 8

*For the choir director: on the Gittith. A psalm of David.*

<sup>1</sup> LORD, our Lord,  
how magnificent is your name throughout the earth!

You have covered the heavens with your majesty.  
<sup>2</sup> From the mouths of infants and nursing babies,  
you have established a stronghold  
on account of your adversaries  
in order to silence the enemy and the avenger.

<sup>3</sup> When I observe your heavens,  
the work of your fingers,  
the moon and the stars,  
which you set in place,

<sup>4</sup> what is a human being that you remember him,  
a son of man that you look after him?

<sup>5</sup> You made him little less than God  
and crowned him with glory and honor.

<sup>6</sup> You made him ruler over the works of your hands;  
you put everything under his feet:

<sup>7</sup> all the sheep and oxen,  
as well as the animals in the wild,

<sup>8</sup> the birds of the sky,  
and the fish of the sea  
that pass through the currents of the seas.

ACT 1 • SCENE 1 • READING 2

- 9 LORD, our Lord,  
how magnificent is your name throughout the earth!

**PSALM 104**

- 1 My soul, bless the LORD!  
LORD my God, you are very great;  
you are clothed with majesty and splendor.
- 2 He wraps himself in light as if it were a robe,  
spreading out the sky like a canopy,
- 3 laying the beams of his palace  
on the waters above,  
making the clouds his chariot,  
walking on the wings of the wind,
- 4 and making the winds his messengers,  
flames of fire his servants.
- 5 He established the earth on its foundations;  
it will never be shaken.
- 6 You covered it with the deep  
as if it were a garment;  
the water stood above the mountains.
- 7 At your rebuke the water fled;  
at the sound of your thunder they hurried away —
- 8 mountains rose and valleys sank —  
to the place you established for them.
- 9 You set a boundary they cannot cross;  
they will never cover the earth again.
- 10 He causes the springs to gush into the valleys;  
they flow between the mountains.
- 11 They supply water for every wild beast;  
the wild donkeys quench their thirst.
- 12 The birds of the sky live beside the springs;  
they make their voices heard among the foliage.
- 13 He waters the mountains from his palace;  
the earth is satisfied by the fruit of your labor.
- 14 He causes grass to grow for the livestock  
and provides crops for man to cultivate,  
producing food from the earth,
- 15 wine that makes human hearts glad —  
making his face shine with oil —  
and bread that sustains human hearts.
- 16 The trees of the LORD flourish,  
the cedars of Lebanon that he planted.
- 17 There the birds make their nests;  
storks make their homes in the pine trees.
- 18 The high mountains are for the wild goats;  
the cliffs are a refuge for hyraxes.

- 19 He made the moon to mark the festivals;  
the sun knows when to set.
- 20 You bring darkness, and it becomes night,  
when all the forest animals stir.
- 21 The young lions roar for their prey  
and seek their food from God.
- 22 The sun rises; they go back  
and lie down in their dens.
- 23 Man goes out to his work  
and to his labor until evening.
- 24 How countless are your works, LORD!  
In wisdom you have made them all;  
the earth is full of your creatures.
- 25 Here is the sea, vast and wide,  
teeming with creatures beyond number —  
living things both large and small.
- 26 There the ships move about,  
and Leviathan, which you formed to play there.
- 27 All of them wait for you  
to give them their food at the right time.
- 28 When you give it to them,  
they gather it;  
when you open your hand,  
they are satisfied with good things.
- 29 When you hide your face,  
they are terrified;  
when you take away their breath,  
they die and return to the dust.
- 30 When you send your breath,  
they are created,  
and you renew the surface of the ground.
- 31 May the glory of the LORD endure forever;  
may the LORD rejoice in his works.
- 32 He looks at the earth, and it trembles;  
he touches the mountains,  
and they pour out smoke.
- 33 I will sing to the LORD all my life;  
I will sing praise to my God while I live.
- 34 May my meditation be pleasing to him;  
I will rejoice in the LORD.
- 35 May sinners vanish from the earth  
and wicked people be no more.  
My soul, bless the LORD!  
Hallelujah!

**JOHN 1:1-3**

**1** In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. <sup>2</sup>He was with God in the beginning. <sup>3</sup>All things were created through him, and apart from him not one thing was created that has been created.

< END OF SCENE 1 >

# SCENE 2

## THE FALL: REJECTING GOD'S VISION FOR LIFE

A lot of people talk about “worldview” these days. This refers to the framework someone has for understanding existence and the nature of reality. Scene 1 answered a key question that a worldview must answer: *Where did we come from?* Now scene 2 answers a second: *What's gone wrong with us?* Our first parents choose to rebel against their Creator, becoming sinners. They pass down this sinful nature to their children. The image of God is not destroyed by sin, but it is damaged. We humans are fallen creatures, and we have all followed our ancestors' path of rejecting God's vision for life.

### WEEK 1

## DAY 3

### GENESIS 3-5

### ACT 1 • SCENE 2 • READING 1

Watch for the patterns of human sin depicted in Genesis 3-4:

- Temptation to question God's Word: “Did God really say . . . ?” (3:1).
- The false promise of desire
- The experience of shame and consequences of sin

Also notice the attempt to blame others for sin, the refusal to take responsibility for sinful actions. Finally, notice that in chapter 4 the problem was not just with Cain's offering but with Cain himself; this is a key to understanding the story.

◆ *How do these stories reflect your own battle with temptation?*

### GENESIS 3-5

**3** Now the serpent was the most cunning of all the wild animals that the LORD God had made. He said to the woman, “Did God really say, ‘You can't eat from any tree in the garden?’”

<sup>2</sup>The woman said to the serpent, “We may eat the fruit from the trees in the garden. <sup>3</sup>But about the fruit of the tree in the middle of the garden, God said, ‘You must not eat it or touch it, or you will die.’”

<sup>4</sup>“No! You will not die,” the serpent said to the woman. <sup>5</sup>“In fact, God knows that when you eat it your eyes will be opened and you will be like God, knowing good and evil.” <sup>6</sup>The woman saw that the tree was good for food and delightful to look at, and that it was desirable for obtaining wisdom. So she took some of its fruit and ate it; she also gave some to her husband, who was with her, and he ate it. <sup>7</sup>Then the

eyes of both of them were opened, and they knew they were naked; so they sewed fig leaves together and made coverings for themselves.

<sup>8</sup>Then the man and his wife heard the sound of the LORD God walking in the garden at the time of the evening breeze, and they hid from the LORD God among the trees of the garden. <sup>9</sup>So the LORD God called out to the man and said to him, "Where are you?"

<sup>10</sup>And he said, "I heard you in the garden, and I was afraid because I was naked, so I hid."

<sup>11</sup>Then he asked, "Who told you that you were naked? Did you eat from the tree that I commanded you not to eat from?"

<sup>12</sup>The man replied, "The woman you gave to be with me — she gave me some fruit from the tree, and I ate."

<sup>13</sup>So the LORD God asked the woman, "What is this you have done?" And the woman said, "The serpent deceived me, and I ate."

<sup>14</sup>So the LORD God said to the serpent:

Because you have done this,  
you are cursed more than any livestock  
and more than any wild animal.  
You will move on your belly  
and eat dust all the days of your life.

<sup>15</sup> I will put hostility between you and the woman,  
and between your offspring and her offspring.  
He will strike your head,  
and you will strike his heel.

<sup>16</sup>He said to the woman:

I will intensify your labor pains;  
you will bear children with painful effort.  
Your desire will be for your husband,  
yet he will rule over you.

<sup>17</sup>And he said to the man, "Because you listened to your wife and ate from the tree about which I commanded you, 'Do not eat from it':

The ground is cursed because of you.  
You will eat from it by means of painful labor  
all the days of your life.

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

<sup>19</sup> You will eat bread by the sweat of your brow  
until you return to the ground,  
since you were taken from it.  
For you are dust,  
and you will return to dust."

<sup>20</sup>The man named his wife Eve because she was the mother of all the living. <sup>21</sup>The LORD God made clothing from skins for the man and his wife, and he clothed them.

<sup>22</sup>The LORD God said, "Since the man has become like one of us, knowing good and evil, he must not reach out, take from the tree of life, eat, and live forever." <sup>23</sup>So the LORD God sent him away from the garden of Eden to work the ground from which

he was taken.<sup>24</sup> He drove the man out and stationed the cherubim and the flaming, whirling sword east of the garden of Eden to guard the way to the tree of life.

**4** The man was intimate with his wife Eve, and she conceived and gave birth to Cain. She said, "I have had a male child with the LORD's help."<sup>2</sup> She also gave birth to his brother Abel. Now Abel became a shepherd of flocks, but Cain worked the ground.<sup>3</sup> In the course of time Cain presented some of the land's produce as an offering to the LORD.<sup>4</sup> And Abel also presented an offering — some of the first-born of his flock and their fat portions. The LORD had regard for Abel and his offering,<sup>5</sup> but he did not have regard for Cain and his offering. Cain was furious, and he looked despondent.

<sup>6</sup>Then the LORD said to Cain, "Why are you furious? And why do you look despondent?<sup>7</sup> If you do what is right, won't you be accepted? But if you do not do what is right, sin is crouching at the door. Its desire is for you, but you must rule over it."

<sup>8</sup>Cain said to his brother Abel, "Let's go out to the field." And while they were in the field, Cain attacked his brother Abel and killed him.

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

"I don't know," he replied. "Am I my brother's guardian?"

<sup>10</sup>Then he said, "What have you done? Your brother's blood cries out to me from the ground!<sup>11</sup> So now you are cursed, alienated from the ground that opened its mouth to receive your brother's blood you have shed.<sup>12</sup> If you work the ground, it will never again give you its yield. You will be a restless wanderer on the earth."

<sup>13</sup>But Cain answered the LORD, "My punishment is too great to bear!<sup>14</sup> Since you are banishing me today from the face of the earth, and I must hide from your presence and become a restless wanderer on the earth, whoever finds me will kill me."

<sup>15</sup>Then the LORD replied to him, "In that case, whoever kills Cain will suffer vengeance seven times over." And he placed a mark on Cain so that whoever found him would not kill him.<sup>16</sup> Then Cain went out from the LORD's presence and lived in the land of Nod, east of Eden.

<sup>17</sup>Cain was intimate with his wife, and she conceived and gave birth to Enoch. Then Cain became the builder of a city, and he named the city Enoch after his son.<sup>18</sup> Irad was born to Enoch, Irad fathered Mehujael, Mehujael fathered Methushael, and Methushael fathered Lamech.<sup>19</sup> Lamech took two wives for himself, one named Adah and the other named Zillah.<sup>20</sup> Adah bore Jabal; he was the father of the nomadic herdsmen.<sup>21</sup> His brother was named Jubal; he was the father of all who play the lyre and the flute.<sup>22</sup> Zillah bore Tubal-cain, who made all kinds of bronze and iron tools. Tubal-cain's sister was Naamah.

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

Adah and Zillah, hear my voice;  
wives of Lamech, pay attention to my words.  
For I killed a man for wounding me,  
a young man for striking me.

<sup>24</sup> If Cain is to be avenged seven times over,  
then for Lamech it will be seventy-seven times!

<sup>25</sup>Adam was intimate with his wife again, and she gave birth to a son and named him Seth, for she said, "God has given me another child in place of Abel, since Cain killed him."<sup>26</sup> A son was born to Seth also, and he named him Enosh. At that time people began to call on the name of the LORD.

**5** This is the document containing the family records of Adam. On the day that God created man, he made him in the likeness of God; <sup>2</sup> he created them male and female. When they were created, he blessed them and called them mankind.

<sup>3</sup> Adam was 130 years old when he fathered a son in his likeness, according to his image, and named him Seth. <sup>4</sup> Adam lived 800 years after he fathered Seth, and he fathered other sons and daughters. <sup>5</sup> So Adam's life lasted 930 years; then he died.

<sup>6</sup> Seth was 105 years old when he fathered Enosh. <sup>7</sup> Seth lived 807 years after he fathered Enosh, and he fathered other sons and daughters. <sup>8</sup> So Seth's life lasted 912 years; then he died.

<sup>9</sup> Enosh was 90 years old when he fathered Kenan. <sup>10</sup> Enosh lived 815 years after he fathered Kenan, and he fathered other sons and daughters. <sup>11</sup> So Enosh's life lasted 905 years; then he died.

<sup>12</sup> Kenan was 70 years old when he fathered Mahalalel. <sup>13</sup> Kenan lived 840 years after he fathered Mahalalel, and he fathered other sons and daughters. <sup>14</sup> So Kenan's life lasted 910 years; then he died.

<sup>15</sup> Mahalalel was 65 years old when he fathered Jared. <sup>16</sup> Mahalalel lived 830 years after he fathered Jared, and he fathered other sons and daughters. <sup>17</sup> So Mahalalel's life lasted 895 years; then he died.

<sup>18</sup> Jared was 162 years old when he fathered Enoch. <sup>19</sup> Jared lived 800 years after he fathered Enoch, and he fathered other sons and daughters. <sup>20</sup> So Jared's life lasted 962 years; then he died.

<sup>21</sup> Enoch was 65 years old when he fathered Methuselah. <sup>22</sup> And after he fathered Methuselah, Enoch walked with God 300 years and fathered other sons and daughters. <sup>23</sup> So Enoch's life lasted 365 years. <sup>24</sup> Enoch walked with God; then he was not there because God took him.

<sup>25</sup> Methuselah was 187 years old when he fathered Lamech. <sup>26</sup> Methuselah lived 782 years after he fathered Lamech, and he fathered other sons and daughters. <sup>27</sup> So Methuselah's life lasted 969 years; then he died.

<sup>28</sup> Lamech was 182 years old when he fathered a son. <sup>29</sup> And he named him Noah, saying, "This one will bring us relief from the agonizing labor of our hands, caused by the ground the LORD has cursed." <sup>30</sup> Lamech lived 595 years after he fathered Noah, and he fathered other sons and daughters. <sup>31</sup> So Lamech's life lasted 777 years; then he died.

<sup>32</sup> Noah was 500 years old, and he fathered Shem, Ham, and Japheth.



< END OF SCENE 2 >

# SCENE 3

## THE FLOOD: GOD JUDGES AND MAKES A COVENANT TO PRESERVE LIFE

We now fast-forward to the time of Noah. The conflict of righteousness versus sin is on display. God's actions demonstrate his character and power. As Sovereign, he exercises his right to condemn and punish evil. He intervenes in creation as it pleases him, sending a global disaster. Yet he is also merciful, sparing one family for a new beginning. Further, he loves humanity so much that he enters a covenant (binding agreement), promising to withhold another such flood. The episode about scattering the people of Babylon shows God's justice and mercy. It also shows that human sin is an ongoing problem.

### WEEK 1

## DAY 4

### GENESIS 6-7

### ACT 1 • SCENE 3 • READING 1

Watch for details as you read today. Also keep the big picture in mind: the pervasiveness of sin and its devastating consequences. Notice what we learn about God in the first eight verses of Genesis 6, keeping in mind that he is the main actor in the story. Watch for expressions of God's grace and his desire to preserve life in the midst of judgment. Also notice what we learn about Noah as the story continues: he was a righteous man and walked with God. Noah's responses called for a great deal of trust in God in the face of cataclysmic events, yet at times it is difficult for us to trust God in minor events of everyday life. Perhaps Noah's walk with God was the key.

◆ *How might you express your trust in God today and learn to walk with God every day?*

### GENESIS 6-7

**6** When mankind began to multiply on the earth and daughters were born to them, <sup>2</sup>the sons of God saw that the daughters of mankind were beautiful, and they took any they chose as wives for themselves. <sup>3</sup>And the LORD said, "My Spirit will not remain with mankind forever, because they are corrupt. Their days will be 120 years." <sup>4</sup>The Nephilim were on the earth both in those days and afterward, when the sons of God came to the daughters of mankind, who bore children to them. They were the powerful men of old, the famous men.

<sup>5</sup>When the LORD saw that human wickedness was widespread on the earth and that every inclination of the human mind was nothing but evil all the time, <sup>6</sup>the LORD regretted that he had made man on the earth, and he was deeply grieved. <sup>7</sup>Then the LORD said, "I will wipe mankind, whom I created, off the face of the earth,

### ACT 1 • SCENE 3 • READING 1

together with the animals, creatures that crawl, and birds of the sky — for I regret that I made them.”<sup>8</sup> Noah, however, found favor with the LORD.

<sup>9</sup>These are the family records of Noah. Noah was a righteous man, blameless among his contemporaries; Noah walked with God.<sup>10</sup> And Noah fathered three sons: Shem, Ham, and Japheth.

<sup>11</sup>Now the earth was corrupt in God’s sight, and the earth was filled with wickedness.<sup>12</sup> God saw how corrupt the earth was, for every creature had corrupted its way on the earth.<sup>13</sup> Then God said to Noah, “I have decided to put an end to every creature, for the earth is filled with wickedness because of them; therefore I am going to destroy them along with the earth.

<sup>14</sup>“Make yourself an ark of gopher wood. Make rooms in the ark, and cover it with pitch inside and outside.<sup>15</sup> This is how you are to make it: The ark will be 450 feet long, 75 feet wide, and 45 feet high.<sup>16</sup> You are to make a roof, finishing the sides of the ark to within eighteen inches of the roof. You are to put a door in the side of the ark. Make it with lower, middle, and upper decks.

<sup>17</sup>“Understand that I am bringing a flood — floodwaters on the earth to destroy every creature under heaven with the breath of life in it. Everything on earth will perish.<sup>18</sup> But I will establish my covenant with you, and you will enter the ark with your sons, your wife, and your sons’ wives.<sup>19</sup> You are also to bring into the ark two of all the living creatures, male and female, to keep them alive with you.<sup>20</sup> Two of everything — from the birds according to their kinds, from the livestock according to their kinds, and from the animals that crawl on the ground according to their kinds — will come to you so that you can keep them alive.<sup>21</sup> Take with you every kind of food that is eaten; gather it as food for you and for them.”<sup>22</sup> And Noah did this. He did everything that God had commanded him.

**7** Then the LORD said to Noah, “Enter the ark, you and all your household, for I have seen that you alone are righteous before me in this generation.<sup>2</sup> You are to take with you seven pairs, a male and its female, of all the clean animals, and two of the animals that are not clean, a male and its female,<sup>3</sup> and seven pairs, male and female, of the birds of the sky — in order to keep offspring alive throughout the earth.<sup>4</sup> Seven days from now I will make it rain on the earth forty days and forty nights, and every living thing I have made I will wipe off the face of the earth.”<sup>5</sup> And Noah did everything that the LORD commanded him.

<sup>6</sup>Noah was six hundred years old when the flood came and water covered the earth.<sup>7</sup> So Noah, his sons, his wife, and his sons’ wives entered the ark because of the floodwaters.<sup>8</sup> From the clean animals, unclean animals, birds, and every creature that crawls on the ground,<sup>9</sup> two of each, male and female, came to Noah and entered the ark, just as God had commanded him.<sup>10</sup> Seven days later the floodwaters came on the earth.

<sup>11</sup>In the six hundredth year of Noah’s life, in the second month, on the seventeenth day of the month, on that day all the sources of the vast watery depths burst open, the floodgates of the sky were opened,<sup>12</sup> and the rain fell on the earth forty days and forty nights.<sup>13</sup> On that same day Noah along with his sons Shem, Ham, and Japheth, Noah’s wife, and his three sons’ wives entered the ark with him.<sup>14</sup> They entered it with all the wildlife according to their kinds, all livestock according to their kinds, all the creatures that crawl on the earth according to their kinds, every flying creature — all the birds and every winged creature — according to their kinds.<sup>15</sup> Two of every creature that has the breath of life in it came to Noah and entered the ark.<sup>16</sup> Those that entered, male and female of every creature, entered just as God had commanded him. Then the LORD shut him in.

THE FLOOD: GOD JUDGES AND MAKES A COVENANT TO PRESERVE LIFE

<sup>17</sup>The flood continued for forty days on the earth; the water increased and lifted up the ark so that it rose above the earth. <sup>18</sup>The water surged and increased greatly on the earth, and the ark floated on the surface of the water. <sup>19</sup>Then the water surged even higher on the earth, and all the high mountains under the whole sky were covered. <sup>20</sup>The mountains were covered as the water surged above them more than twenty feet. <sup>21</sup>Every creature perished — those that crawl on the earth, birds, livestock, wildlife, and those that swarm on the earth, as well as all mankind. <sup>22</sup>Everything with the breath of the spirit of life in its nostrils — everything on dry land died. <sup>23</sup>He wiped out every living thing that was on the face of the earth, from mankind to livestock, to creatures that crawl, to the birds of the sky, and they were wiped off the earth. Only Noah was left, and those that were with him in the ark. <sup>24</sup>And the water surged on the earth 150 days.



Read Genesis 8:15–9:7, discerning how these verses echo the first three chapters of Genesis.

- ◆ *Why might the author have included these echoes?*

Now read chapter 9 and notice the differences from Genesis 1–3.

- ◆ *How do these differences develop the overall story of Genesis?*

A covenant with God is often at the heart of the story of the Old Testament. A covenant is basically an agreement between two parties. God established a covenant with the Jewish people, first through Abraham, and then renewed it with various leaders throughout the Old Testament. The covenant stated that if the people kept God's law, he would be their God, and they would be his people.

- ◆ *What role does the covenant play in Genesis 9?*

Reflect especially on verse 5 of Psalm 12. Worship God as One who rises up to help those burdened by evil people, providing a safe place for them. If you are being hurt by wickedness, cry out to God for help even as you worship.

### GENESIS 8–9

**8** God remembered Noah, as well as all the wildlife and all the livestock that were with him in the ark. God caused a wind to pass over the earth, and the water began to subside.<sup>2</sup> The sources of the watery depths and the floodgates of the sky were closed, and the rain from the sky stopped.<sup>3</sup> The water steadily receded from the earth, and by the end of 150 days the water had decreased significantly.<sup>4</sup> The ark came to rest in the seventh month, on the seventeenth day of the month, on the mountains of Ararat.

<sup>5</sup>The water continued to recede until the tenth month; in the tenth month, on the first day of the month, the tops of the mountains were visible.<sup>6</sup> After forty days Noah opened the window of the ark that he had made,<sup>7</sup> and he sent out a raven. It went back and forth until the water had dried up from the earth.<sup>8</sup> Then he sent out a dove to see whether the water on the earth's surface had gone down,<sup>9</sup> but the dove found no resting place for its foot. It returned to him in the ark because water covered the surface of the whole earth. He reached out and brought it into the ark to himself.<sup>10</sup> So Noah waited seven more days and sent out the dove from the ark again.<sup>11</sup> When the dove came to him at evening, there was a plucked olive leaf in its beak. So Noah knew that the water on the earth's surface had gone down.<sup>12</sup> After he had waited another seven days, he sent out the dove, but it did not return to him again.<sup>13</sup> In the six hundred and first year, in the first month, on the first day of the month, the water that had covered the earth was dried up. Then Noah removed the

ark's cover and saw that the surface of the ground was drying.<sup>14</sup> By the twenty-seventh day of the second month, the earth was dry.

<sup>15</sup> Then God spoke to Noah, <sup>16</sup> "Come out of the ark, you, your wife, your sons, and your sons' wives with you. <sup>17</sup> Bring out all the living creatures that are with you — birds, livestock, those that crawl on the earth — and they will spread over the earth and be fruitful and multiply on the earth." <sup>18</sup> So Noah, along with his sons, his wife, and his sons' wives, came out. <sup>19</sup> All the animals, all the creatures that crawl, and all the flying creatures — everything that moves on the earth — came out of the ark by their families.

<sup>20</sup> Then Noah built an altar to the LORD. He took some of every kind of clean animal and every kind of clean bird and offered burnt offerings on the altar. <sup>21</sup> When the LORD smelled the pleasing aroma, he said to himself, "I will never again curse the ground because of human beings, even though the inclination of the human heart is evil from youth onward. And I will never again strike down every living thing as I have done.

<sup>22</sup> As long as the earth endures,  
seedtime and harvest, cold and heat,  
summer and winter, and day and night  
will not cease."

**9** God blessed Noah and his sons and said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth. <sup>2</sup> The fear and terror of you will be in every living creature on the earth, every bird of the sky, every creature that crawls on the ground, and all the fish of the sea. They are placed under your authority. <sup>3</sup> Every creature that lives and moves will be food for you; as I gave the green plants, I have given you everything. <sup>4</sup> However, you must not eat meat with its lifeblood in it. <sup>5</sup> And I will require a penalty for your lifeblood; I will require it from any animal and from any human; if someone murders a fellow human, I will require that person's life.

<sup>6</sup> Whoever sheds human blood,  
by humans his blood will be shed,  
for God made humans in his image.

<sup>7</sup> But you, be fruitful and multiply; spread out over the earth and multiply on it."

<sup>8</sup> Then God said to Noah and his sons with him, <sup>9</sup> "Understand that I am establishing my covenant with you and your descendants after you, <sup>10</sup> and with every living creature that is with you — birds, livestock, and all wildlife of the earth that are with you — all the animals of the earth that came out of the ark. <sup>11</sup> I establish my covenant with you that never again will every creature be wiped out by floodwaters; there will never again be a flood to destroy the earth."

<sup>12</sup> And God said, "This is the sign of the covenant I am making between me and you and every living creature with you, a covenant for all future generations: <sup>13</sup> I have placed my bow in the clouds, and it will be a sign of the covenant between me and the earth. <sup>14</sup> Whenever I form clouds over the earth and the bow appears in the clouds, <sup>15</sup> I will remember my covenant between me and you and all the living creatures: water will never again become a flood to destroy every creature. <sup>16</sup> The bow will be in the clouds, and I will look at it and remember the permanent covenant between God and all the living creatures on earth." <sup>17</sup> God said to Noah, "This is the sign of the covenant that I have established between me and every creature on earth."

<sup>18</sup>Noah's sons who came out of the ark were Shem, Ham, and Japheth. Ham was the father of Canaan. <sup>19</sup>These three were Noah's sons, and from them the whole earth was populated.

<sup>20</sup>Noah, as a man of the soil, began by planting a vineyard. <sup>21</sup>He drank some of the wine, became drunk, and uncovered himself inside his tent. <sup>22</sup>Ham, the father of Canaan, saw his father naked and told his two brothers outside. <sup>23</sup>Then Shem and Japheth took a cloak and placed it over both their shoulders, and walking backward, they covered their father's nakedness. Their faces were turned away, and they did not see their father naked.

<sup>24</sup>When Noah awoke from his drinking and learned what his youngest son had done to him, <sup>25</sup>he said:

Canaan is cursed.

He will be the lowest of slaves to his brothers.

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

Blessed be the LORD, the God of Shem;

Let Canaan be Shem's slave.

<sup>27</sup> Let God extend Japheth;

let Japheth dwell in the tents of Shem;

let Canaan be Shem's slave.

<sup>28</sup>Now Noah lived 350 years after the flood. <sup>29</sup>So Noah's life lasted 950 years; then he died.

#### PSALM 12

*For the choir director: according to Sheminith. A psalm of David.*

- 1 Help, LORD, for no faithful one remains;  
the loyal have disappeared from the human race.
- 2 They lie to one another;  
they speak with flattering lips and deceptive hearts.
- 3 May the LORD cut off all flattering lips  
and the tongue that speaks boastfully.
- 4 They say, "Through our tongues we have power;  
our lips are our own — who can be our master?"
- 5 "Because of the devastation of the needy  
and the groaning of the poor,  
I will now rise up," says the LORD.  
"I will provide safety for the one who longs for it."
- 6 The words of the LORD are pure words,  
like silver refined in an earthen furnace,  
purified seven times.
- 7 You, LORD, will guard us;  
you will protect us from this generation forever.
- 8 The wicked prowl all around,  
and what is worthless is exalted by the human race.



Genealogies in the Bible strike some readers as uninteresting. However, these are part of God's Word, and we can learn from them. Among other things, the genealogies give us a sense of the passing of time, moving the story along. We also get a picture of the connectedness of people and events in the Bible's narrative. This is not a patchwork of loosely connected stories, but one story God is writing on the world. Meditate on the contrasts you find in Genesis 11:1-9. Now read the passage in light of Acts 2:1-21, noticing both the contrasts and the parallels with that passage. One problem reflected in Genesis 11 is that these people had an arrogant disregard for God's mandate to "fill the earth" (Gn 9:1). Think about how that mandate was ultimately fulfilled through the church in Acts as it advanced the kingdom of God in the world.

- ◆ *How are you called to participate in God's mandate to "fill the earth" by sharing the good news with others?*

## GENESIS 10–11

**10** These are the family records of Noah's sons, Shem, Ham, and Japheth. They also had sons after the flood.

<sup>2</sup>Japheth's sons: Gomer, Magog, Madai, Javan, Tubal, Meshech, and Tiras. <sup>3</sup>Gomer's sons: Ashkenaz, Riphath, and Togarmah. <sup>4</sup>And Javan's sons: Elishah, Tarshish, Kittim, and Dodanim. <sup>5</sup>From these descendants, the peoples of the coasts and islands spread out into their lands according to their clans in their nations, each with its own language.

<sup>6</sup>Ham's sons: Cush, Mizraim, Put, and Canaan. <sup>7</sup>Cush's sons: Seba, Havilah, Sabtah, Raamah, and Sabteca. And Raamah's sons: Sheba and Dedan.

<sup>8</sup>Cush fathered Nimrod, who began to be powerful in the land. <sup>9</sup>He was a powerful hunter in the sight of the LORD. That is why it is said, "Like Nimrod, a powerful hunter in the sight of the LORD." <sup>10</sup>His kingdom started with Babylon, Erech, Accad, and Calneh, in the land of Shinar. <sup>11</sup>From that land he went to Assyria and built Nineveh, Rehoboth-ir, Calah, <sup>12</sup>and Resen, between Nineveh and the great city Calah.

<sup>13</sup>Mizraim fathered the people of Lud, Anam, Lehab, Naphtuh, <sup>14</sup>Pathrus, Casluh (the Philistines came from them), and Caphtor.

<sup>15</sup>Canaan fathered Sidon his firstborn and Heth, <sup>16</sup>as well as the Jebusites, the Amorites, the Girgashites, <sup>17</sup>the Hivites, the Arkites, the Sinites, <sup>18</sup>the Arvadites, the Zemarites, and the Hamathites. Afterward the Canaanite clans scattered. <sup>19</sup>The Canaanite border went from Sidon going toward Gerar as far as Gaza, and going toward Sodom, Gomorrah, Admah, and Zeboiim as far as Lasha.

<sup>20</sup>These are Ham's sons by their clans, according to their languages, in their lands and their nations.

<sup>21</sup>And Shem, Japheth's older brother, also had sons. Shem was the father of all the sons of Eber. <sup>22</sup>Shem's sons were Elam, Asshur, Arpachshad, Lud, and Aram.

<sup>23</sup>Aram's sons: Uz, Hul, Gether, and Mash.

<sup>24</sup>Arpachshad fathered Shelah, and Shelah fathered Eber. <sup>25</sup>Eber had two sons. One was named Peleg, for during his days the earth was divided; his brother was

named Joktan.<sup>26</sup> And Joktan fathered Almodad, Sheleph, Hazarmaveth, Jerah,<sup>27</sup> Hadoram, Uzal, Diklah,<sup>28</sup> Obal, Abimael, Sheba,<sup>29</sup> Ophir, Havilah, and Jobab. All these were Joktan's sons.<sup>30</sup> Their settlements extended from Mesha to Sephar, the eastern hill country.

<sup>31</sup> These are Shem's sons by their clans, according to their languages, in their lands and their nations.

<sup>32</sup> These are the clans of Noah's sons, according to their family records, in their nations. The nations on earth spread out from these after the flood.

**11** The whole earth had the same language and vocabulary.<sup>2</sup> As people migrated from the east, they found a valley in the land of Shinar and settled there.<sup>3</sup> They said to each other, "Come, let us make oven-fired bricks." (They used brick for stone and asphalt for mortar.)<sup>4</sup> And they said, "Come, let us build ourselves a city and a tower with its top in the sky. Let us make a name for ourselves; otherwise, we will be scattered throughout the earth."

<sup>5</sup> Then the LORD came down to look over the city and the tower that the humans were building.<sup>6</sup> The LORD said, "If they have begun to do this as one people all having the same language, then nothing they plan to do will be impossible for them.<sup>7</sup> Come, let's go down there and confuse their language so that they will not understand one another's speech."<sup>8</sup> So from there the LORD scattered them throughout the earth, and they stopped building the city.<sup>9</sup> Therefore it is called Babylon, for there the LORD confused the language of the whole earth, and from there the LORD scattered them throughout the earth.

<sup>10</sup> These are the family records of Shem. Shem lived 100 years and fathered Arpachshad two years after the flood.<sup>11</sup> After he fathered Arpachshad, Shem lived 500 years and fathered other sons and daughters.<sup>12</sup> Arpachshad lived 35 years and fathered Shelah.<sup>13</sup> After he fathered Shelah, Arpachshad lived 403 years and fathered other sons and daughters.<sup>14</sup> Shelah lived 30 years and fathered Eber.<sup>15</sup> After he fathered Eber, Shelah lived 403 years and fathered other sons and daughters.<sup>16</sup> Eber lived 34 years and fathered Peleg.<sup>17</sup> After he fathered Peleg, Eber lived 430 years and fathered other sons and daughters.<sup>18</sup> Peleg lived 30 years and fathered Reu.<sup>19</sup> After he fathered Reu, Peleg lived 209 years and fathered other sons and daughters.<sup>20</sup> Reu lived 32 years and fathered Serug.<sup>21</sup> After he fathered Serug, Reu lived 207 years and fathered other sons and daughters.<sup>22</sup> Serug lived 30 years and fathered Nahor.<sup>23</sup> After he fathered Nahor, Serug lived 200 years and fathered other sons and daughters.<sup>24</sup> Nahor lived 29 years and fathered Terah.<sup>25</sup> After he fathered Terah, Nahor lived 119 years and fathered other sons and daughters.<sup>26</sup> Terah lived 70 years and fathered Abram, Nahor, and Haran.

<sup>27</sup> These are the family records of Terah. Terah fathered Abram, Nahor, and Haran, and Haran fathered Lot.<sup>28</sup> Haran died in his native land, in Ur of the Chaldeans, during his father Terah's lifetime.<sup>29</sup> Abram and Nahor took wives: Abram's wife was named Sarai, and Nahor's wife was named Milcah. She was the daughter of Haran, the father of both Milcah and Iscah.<sup>30</sup> Sarai was unable to conceive; she did not have a child.

<sup>31</sup> Terah took his son Abram, his grandson Lot (Haran's son), and his daughter-in-law Sarai, his son Abram's wife, and they set out together from Ur of the Chaldeans to go to the land of Canaan. But when they came to Haran, they settled there.<sup>32</sup> Terah lived 205 years and died in Haran.

WEEK 1

DAY **7**

READING SUMMARY FOR WEEK 1

What a week of readings! We have celebrated God's greatness in Psalms. We've moved from God's creating the universe and humanity, to the fall and then to the flood, and on through many generations. These accounts of our shared ancestors cheer us (because we too bear God's image) and shame us (because all our ancestors were rebels). God's saving plan, revealed in the rest of Scripture, is necessary because we cannot save ourselves.

PRAYER/MEDITATION

Thank you, God, for these accounts describing both the origin of my race and the awfulness of sin against you. O God of creation, I praise you for your greatness and your goodness. You wisely made all things and gave the earth to humanity to care for it. I submit myself to you again today as my loving Creator. Thanks for the privilege of bearing your image. Help me never forget the glory and the guilt of being Adam and Eve's descendant. Amen.

< END OF SCENE 3 >

ACT 1 · SCENE 3 · READING 4



# GOD'S COVENANT PEOPLE

ACT 2

Act 1 showed us that rebellion against God is the central conflict of the biblical narrative. In response to this rebellion, God enacted punishments at key junctures, such as the garden of Eden and Noah's flood. But punishment is not God's only response. He also begins to work his plan of salvation by developing a single channel of redemption. Act 2 is the story of God establishing a covenant people and being faithful in his relationship with them.

### THE SETTINGS FOR ACT 2

Unlike Act 1, where the settings were universal or vaguely defined locales on earth, the settings for Act 2 are places we can pinpoint. The main setting is the land of Israel, a land which God promises to give the descendants of Abraham. Within this land, Jerusalem looms large throughout the narrative. And in Jerusalem one building, the temple of Solomon, overshadows all others.

Other locations feature as secondary settings. Egypt at first is a welcoming nest for the fledging nation, but later becomes an enslaving monster. This land is the location for the events leading up to Moses's deliverance of the oppressed Hebrews. Babylon becomes the place of captivity after the Jerusalem temple's destruction. Eventually, however, Act 2 ends with the Israelites back in their God-promised land, where the chastened faithful wait hopefully for the coming Messiah.

### MAIN CHARACTERS FOR ACT 2

God remains the central character. He sets events in motion by making covenants and working through persons whom he has chosen to further his purposes. The central human characters are members of a single family down through the generations. Through this family God sends the Savior in Act 3. The following are examples of important characters in Act 2:

**Abraham and Sarah**—God chooses this couple to enter a covenant relationship with him. God promises that through their descendants, beginning with their

son Isaac, "all the peoples on earth will be blessed." Abraham and Sarah are noted in Scripture as premiere examples of faith (see Gn 15:6; Is 51:2; Rm 4:16; Gl 3:9; 1Pt 3:5-6).

**Moses**—God uses him to bring the Israelites out of Egyptian slavery. The first five Bible books are traditionally referred to as "the books of Moses" because he wrote most of this material (with the exception of the account of his death). God uses Moses as the agent for the covenant at Sinai. The central moment in his life is the encounter with God on Mount Sinai and his reception of the Ten Commandments.

**David**—Nobody expects God to choose a lowly shepherd to rule over Israel. David's adventures are told in loving (and sometimes lurid) detail. As a brilliant poet, he composes much of the Bible's hymnal, the book of Psalms. In the covenant God makes with David, David's descendants are promised an everlasting dynasty of kings. This dynasty culminates in Jesus Christ, as Act 3 will make clear.

**Elijah**—He stands first as a new breed of prophet, confronting Israel's political and religious establishment with pronouncements that begin with the jolting phrase, "this is what the LORD says." The Israelites perpetually struggle with worshiping false gods, and Elijah repeatedly makes it clear that only one God is true—the God who can speak and perform works of power. Elijah is so great that he (along with Moses) appears with Jesus on the mountain of the Transfiguration in Act 3.

**Isaiah**—As the supreme writing prophet, he foretells Jerusalem's fall and restoration. More importantly, Isaiah prophesies the coming messianic King, the Prince of Peace. This King is also the Suffering Servant who takes away "the iniquity of us all" (Is 53:6).

**Esther**—A Jewish beauty in a Persian king's harem seems an unlikely biblical heroine. The book about her is the last narrative in Act 2. Esther's courage is decisive in sparing the Jews from extermination by a cunning enemy. God is working, yet there

is no resolution to the overall conflict. Humanity's rebellion against God continues.

### PLOT SUMMARY FOR ACT 2

The plot for Act 2 can be summarized in three phases:

- *Rising action*
- *Falling action*
- *Sustaining action*

The rising action lasts for about a thousand years. It begins with Abraham and Sarah, whose descendants grow into a nation-sized multitude in Egypt. The action continues to rise as God redeems his people from slavery through Moses and gives them his laws. Then the people enter their promised land under Joshua's leadership. Despite the setbacks of the period recounted in the book of Judges, the action moves ahead decisively to the establishment of the kingdom of David. The climax of Act 2 is the reign of

Solomon, when David's wise and wealthy son rules a glorious Jerusalem, where the Lord's temple is at the center of Israel's worship.

Then there is falling action for some four hundred years. The kingdom of Israel splits. The northern kingdom (with its idolatrous kings) falls to the Assyrian Empire. The southern kingdom (with its Davidic dynasty of kings) falls to Babylon. In 586 BC the temple burns, Jerusalem falls, and captivity begins, just as the prophets had warned.

Finally there is sustaining action, lasting hundreds of years, rather than the denouement (wrapping up the story) that might have been expected. After the return from captivity, the people are seemingly stuck in a period of waiting. They are in Jerusalem with a rebuilt temple, but the story is not finished.

As you read, use the lens of "God's covenant people" to help interpret the story as it develops in Act 2.

## WEEK 2

It would be hard to overstate the importance of this moment in biblical history. This week's readings take us halfway through Act 2, scene 1 in the story of the Bible. This scene introduces Abraham as the father of the Jewish people and the patriarch with whom God made a foundational agreement (covenant). In the Old Testament stories, covenant is often at the heart of what is going on. Notice how God advanced and developed the covenant through Abraham's son, Isaac, and his grandson, Jacob, and how God challenged each man's faith through moments of crisis that defined who he would be as God's representative. As you read, also notice the prominent role God played in the developing story. He was the main actor, moving the story along according to his grand design.

# SCENE 1

## THE PEOPLE: GOD CALLS A COVENANT PEOPLE

In this scene, we follow two parallel accounts. First is the narrative of Abraham and his descendants until they all enter Egypt. We call these the patriarchs. The covenant God initiates sets in motion what will become the nation of Israel. More important, he begins building the channel for the Savior. The second account is the book of Job, which helps us reflect on “the problem of evil:” Some ask, If God is powerful enough to stop evil but doesn’t do so, he must not be good; or if God is truly good, he must be unable to stop evil since it exists. This wisdom poem profoundly grapples with the human struggle to understand evil, and proclaims God’s righteousness in the gripping conclusion.

WEEK 2

DAY

1

GENESIS 12-13

ACT 2 • SCENE 1 • READING 1

Genesis 12 tells the story of God’s calling Abram (whose name would eventually be changed to Abraham). Abram was born during a violent time in which nations constantly fought with their enemies. The aspects of God’s promise to Abram in Genesis 12:1-3 seem very counter-cultural for that time: God’s people would be a blessing to other people groups!

- ◆ *How might this promise lay a foundation for the biblical emphasis on the way God’s people should treat their enemies, a theme developed in both the Old and New Testaments?*
- ◆ *Whom might you bless today? How will you do so?*

Notice the movement from place to place and the importance of geography. Abram’s relocation lays a foundation for the importance of the land of Canaan in the Bible’s story. Look at a map in your Bible or in a Bible dictionary to trace Abram’s journey.

## GENESIS 12–13

- 12** The LORD said to Abram:  
 Go out from your land,  
 your relatives,  
 and your father's house  
 to the land that I will show you.
- <sup>2</sup> I will make you into a great nation,  
 I will bless you,  
 I will make your name great,  
 and you will be a blessing.
- <sup>3</sup> I will bless those who bless you,  
 I will curse anyone who treats you with contempt,  
 and all the peoples on earth  
 will be blessed through you.

<sup>4</sup> So Abram went, as the LORD had told him, and Lot went with him. Abram was seventy-five years old when he left Haran. <sup>5</sup> He took his wife Sarai, his nephew Lot, all the possessions they had accumulated, and the people they had acquired in Haran, and they set out for the land of Canaan. When they came to the land of Canaan, <sup>6</sup> Abram passed through the land to the site of Shechem, at the oak of Moreh. (At that time the Canaanites were in the land.) <sup>7</sup> The LORD appeared to Abram and said, "To your offspring I will give this land." So he built an altar there to the LORD who had appeared to him. <sup>8</sup> From there he moved on to the hill country east of Bethel and pitched his tent, with Bethel on the west and Ai on the east. He built an altar to the LORD there, and he called on the name of the LORD. <sup>9</sup> Then Abram journeyed by stages to the Negev.

<sup>10</sup> There was a famine in the land, so Abram went down to Egypt to stay there for a while because the famine in the land was severe. <sup>11</sup> When he was about to enter Egypt, he said to his wife Sarai, "Look, I know what a beautiful woman you are. <sup>12</sup> When the Egyptians see you, they will say, 'This is his wife.' They will kill me but let you live. <sup>13</sup> Please say you're my sister so it will go well for me because of you, and my life will be spared on your account." <sup>14</sup> When Abram entered Egypt, the Egyptians saw that the woman was very beautiful. <sup>15</sup> Pharaoh's officials saw her and praised her to Pharaoh, so the woman was taken to Pharaoh's household. <sup>16</sup> He treated Abram well because of her, and Abram acquired flocks and herds, male and female donkeys, male and female slaves, and camels.

<sup>17</sup> But the LORD struck Pharaoh and his household with severe plagues because of Abram's wife Sarai. <sup>18</sup> So Pharaoh sent for Abram and said, "What have you done to me? Why didn't you tell me she was your wife? <sup>19</sup> Why did you say, 'She's my sister,' so that I took her as my wife? Now, here is your wife. Take her and go!" <sup>20</sup> Then Pharaoh gave his men orders about him, and they sent him away with his wife and all he had.

**13** Abram went up from Egypt to the Negev — he, his wife, and all he had, and Lot with him. <sup>2</sup> Abram was very rich in livestock, silver, and gold. <sup>3</sup> He went by stages from the Negev to Bethel, to the place between Bethel and Ai where his tent had formerly been, <sup>4</sup> to the site where he had built the altar. And Abram called on the name of the LORD there.

<sup>5</sup> Now Lot, who was traveling with Abram, also had flocks, herds, and tents. <sup>6</sup> But the land was unable to support them as long as they stayed together, for they had so many possessions that they could not stay together, <sup>7</sup> and there was quarreling

between the herdsmen of Abram's livestock and the herdsmen of Lot's livestock. (At that time the Canaanites and the Perizzites were living in the land.)

<sup>8</sup> So Abram said to Lot, "Please, let's not have quarreling between you and me, or between your herdsmen and my herdsmen, since we are relatives. <sup>9</sup> Isn't the whole land before you? Separate from me: if you go to the left, I will go to the right; if you go to the right, I will go to the left."

<sup>10</sup> Lot looked out and saw that the entire plain of the Jordan as far as Zoar was well watered everywhere like the LORD's garden and the land of Egypt. (This was before the LORD destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah.) <sup>11</sup> So Lot chose the entire plain of the Jordan for himself. Then Lot journeyed eastward, and they separated from each other. <sup>12</sup> Abram lived in the land of Canaan, but Lot lived in the cities on the plain and set up his tent near Sodom. <sup>13</sup> (Now the men of Sodom were evil, sinning immensely against the LORD.)

<sup>14</sup> After Lot had separated from him, the LORD said to Abram, "Look from the place where you are. Look north and south, east and west, <sup>15</sup> for I will give you and your offspring forever all the land that you see. <sup>16</sup> I will make your offspring like the dust of the earth, so that if anyone could count the dust of the earth, then your offspring could be counted. <sup>17</sup> Get up and walk around the land, through its length and width, for I will give it to you."

<sup>18</sup> So Abram moved his tent and went to live near the oaks of Mamre at Hebron, where he built an altar to the LORD.



Genesis 14 recounts the rescue of Lot and the blessing given to Abram by Melchizedek. Notice that when the covenant with Abram was established in chapter 15, this encounter with God placed a greater emphasis on Abram's children and faith than we saw in chapter 12. Yet the story of the birth of Ishmael in chapter 16 showed the results of a lack of trust in God when Abram faced a delay in God's fulfillment of his promise. Rather than affirming polygamy and the sexual use of concubines, God subverted these institutions in the book of Genesis, showing that they are not the divine pattern. Nevertheless, God was gracious to Hagar and Ishmael, and he worked through the cultural patterns of the ancient Near East.

- ◆ *With what delay are you presently trusting God?*
- ◆ *Worship God for his grace as you struggle to trust him with your wait.*

## GENESIS 14–16

**14** In those days King Amraphel of Shinar, King Arioch of Ellasar, King Chedorlaomer of Elam, and King Tidal of Goiim <sup>2</sup> waged war against King Bera of Sodom, King Birsha of Gomorrah, King Shinab of Admah, and King Shemeber of Zeboiim, as well as the king of Bela (that is, Zoar). <sup>3</sup> All of these came as allies to the Siddim Valley (that is, the Dead Sea). <sup>4</sup> They were subject to Chedorlaomer for twelve years, but in the thirteenth year they rebelled. <sup>5</sup> In the fourteenth year Chedorlaomer and the kings who were with him came and defeated the Rephaim in Ashteroth-karnaim, the Zuzim in Ham, the Emim in Shaveh-kiriathaim, <sup>6</sup> and the Horites in the mountains of Seir, as far as El-paran by the wilderness. <sup>7</sup> Then they came back to invade En-mishpat (that is, Kadesh), and they defeated the whole territory of the Amalekites, as well as the Amorites who lived in Hazazon-tamar.

<sup>8</sup> Then the king of Sodom, the king of Gomorrah, the king of Admah, the king of Zeboiim, and the king of Bela (that is, Zoar) went out and lined up for battle in the Siddim Valley <sup>9</sup> against King Chedorlaomer of Elam, King Tidal of Goiim, King Amraphel of Shinar, and King Arioch of Ellasar — four kings against five. <sup>10</sup> Now the Siddim Valley contained many asphalt pits, and as the kings of Sodom and Gomorrah fled, some fell into them, but the rest fled to the mountains. <sup>11</sup> The four kings took all the goods of Sodom and Gomorrah and all their food and went on. <sup>12</sup> They also took Abram's nephew Lot and his possessions, for he was living in Sodom, and they went on.

<sup>13</sup> One of the survivors came and told Abram the Hebrew, who lived near the oaks belonging to Mamre the Amorite, the brother of Eshcol and the brother of Aner. They were bound by a treaty with Abram. <sup>14</sup> When Abram heard that his relative had been taken prisoner, he assembled his 318 trained men, born in his household, and they went in pursuit as far as Dan. <sup>15</sup> And he and his servants deployed against them by night, defeated them, and pursued them as far as Hobah to the north of Damascus. <sup>16</sup> He brought back all the goods and also his relative Lot and his goods, as well as the women and the other people.

<sup>17</sup> After Abram returned from defeating Chedorlaomer and the kings who were with him, the king of Sodom went out to meet him in the Shaveh Valley (that is, the King's Valley). <sup>18</sup> Melchizedek, king of Salem, brought out bread and wine; he was a priest to God Most High. <sup>19</sup> He blessed him and said:

Abram is blessed by God Most High,

Creator of heaven and earth,

<sup>20</sup> and blessed be God Most High

who has handed over your enemies to you.

And Abram gave him a tenth of everything.

<sup>21</sup> Then the king of Sodom said to Abram, "Give me the people, but take the possessions for yourself."

<sup>22</sup> But Abram said to the king of Sodom, "I have raised my hand in an oath to the LORD, God Most High, Creator of heaven and earth, <sup>23</sup> that I will not take a thread or sandal strap or anything that belongs to you, so you can never say, 'I made Abram rich.' <sup>24</sup> I will take nothing except what the servants have eaten. But as for the share of the men who came with me — Aner, Eshcol, and Mamre — they can take their share."

**15** After these events, the word of the LORD came to Abram in a vision:  
Do not be afraid, Abram.

I am your shield;

your reward will be very great.

<sup>2</sup> But Abram said, "Lord GOD, what can you give me, since I am childless and the heir of my house is Eliezer of Damascus?" <sup>3</sup> Abram continued, "Look, you have given me no offspring, so a slave born in my house will be my heir."

<sup>4</sup> Now the word of the LORD came to him: "This one will not be your heir; instead, one who comes from your own body will be your heir." <sup>5</sup> He took him outside and said, "Look at the sky and count the stars, if you are able to count them." Then he said to him, "Your offspring will be that numerous."

<sup>6</sup> Abram believed the LORD, and he credited it to him as righteousness.

<sup>7</sup> He also said to him, "I am the LORD who brought you from Ur of the Chaldeans to give you this land to possess."

<sup>8</sup> But he said, "Lord GOD, how can I know that I will possess it?"

<sup>9</sup> He said to him, "Bring me a three-year-old cow, a three-year-old female goat, a three-year-old ram, a turtledove, and a young pigeon."

<sup>10</sup> So he brought all these to him, cut them in half, and laid the pieces opposite each other, but he did not cut the birds in half. <sup>11</sup> Birds of prey came down on the carcasses, but Abram drove them away. <sup>12</sup> As the sun was setting, a deep sleep came over Abram, and suddenly great terror and darkness descended on him.

<sup>13</sup> Then the LORD said to Abram, "Know this for certain: Your offspring will be resident aliens for four hundred years in a land that does not belong to them and will be enslaved and oppressed. <sup>14</sup> However, I will judge the nation they serve, and afterward they will go out with many possessions. <sup>15</sup> But you will go to your fathers in peace and be buried at a good old age. <sup>16</sup> In the fourth generation they will return here, for the iniquity of the Amorites has not yet reached its full measure."

<sup>17</sup> When the sun had set and it was dark, a smoking fire pot and a flaming torch appeared and passed between the divided animals. <sup>18</sup> On that day the LORD made a covenant with Abram, saying, "I give this land to your offspring, from the Brook of Egypt to the great river, the Euphrates River: <sup>19</sup> the land of the Kenizzites,

Kadmonites,<sup>20</sup> Hethites, Perizzites, Rephaim,<sup>21</sup> Amorites, Canaanites, Gergashites, and Jebusites.”

**16** Abram’s wife Sarai had not borne any children for him, but she owned an Egyptian slave named Hagar.<sup>2</sup> Sarai said to Abram, “Since the LORD has prevented me from bearing children, go to my slave; perhaps through her I can build a family.” And Abram agreed to what Sarai said.<sup>3</sup> So Abram’s wife Sarai took Hagar, her Egyptian slave, and gave her to her husband Abram as a wife for him. This happened after Abram had lived in the land of Canaan ten years.<sup>4</sup> He slept with Hagar, and she became pregnant. When she saw that she was pregnant, her mistress became contemptible to her.<sup>5</sup> Then Sarai said to Abram, “You are responsible for my suffering! I put my slave in your arms, and when she saw that she was pregnant, I became contemptible to her. May the LORD judge between me and you.”

<sup>6</sup> Abram replied to Sarai, “Here, your slave is in your hands; do whatever you want with her.” Then Sarai mistreated her so much that she ran away from her.

<sup>7</sup> The angel of the LORD found her by a spring in the wilderness, the spring on the way to Shur.<sup>8</sup> He said, “Hagar, slave of Sarai, where have you come from and where are you going?”

She replied, “I’m running away from my mistress Sarai.”

<sup>9</sup> The angel of the LORD said to her, “Go back to your mistress and submit to her authority.”<sup>10</sup> The angel of the LORD said to her, “I will greatly multiply your offspring, and they will be too many to count.”

<sup>11</sup> The angel of the LORD said to her, “You have conceived and will have a son. You will name him Ishmael, for the LORD has heard your cry of affliction.<sup>12</sup> This man will be like a wild donkey. His hand will be against everyone, and everyone’s hand will be against him; he will settle near all his relatives.”

<sup>13</sup> So she named the LORD who spoke to her: “You are El-roi,” for she said, “In this place, have I actually seen the one who sees me?”<sup>14</sup> That is why the well is called Be-er-lahai-roi. It is between Kadesh and Bered.

<sup>15</sup> So Hagar gave birth to Abram’s son, and Abram named his son (whom Hagar bore) Ishmael.<sup>16</sup> Abram was eighty-six years old when Hagar bore Ishmael to him.



In Genesis 17 God reiterated the covenant, changing Abram’s name to Abraham, meaning father of a multitude, and giving him the sign of circumcision. Genesis 18:19 emphasizes that God would fulfill the promises he had made to Abraham as Abraham’s children lived out God’s commands (see Gn 12:1-3). Meditate on the fact that today God also uses circumcision as a sign of covenant (see Rm 2:28-29), and God uses our obedience to his commands to fulfill certain promises to us today. In other words, God blesses us as we live according to his ways.

- ◆ *Is there any situation in your life now for which you are requesting God’s blessings although you are not living according to his ways?*

The destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah in Genesis 19 presents a clear picture of God’s judgment on sin, while his rescue of Lot depicts God’s compassion and desire to rescue.

- ◆ *Do you grasp the seriousness of sin? What evidence supports your answer?*

#### GENESIS 17–19

**17** When Abram was ninety-nine years old, the LORD appeared to him, saying, “I am God Almighty. Live in my presence and be blameless. <sup>2</sup>I will set up my covenant between me and you, and I will multiply you greatly.”

<sup>3</sup>Then Abram fell facedown and God spoke with him: <sup>4</sup>“As for me, here is my covenant with you: You will become the father of many nations. <sup>5</sup>Your name will no longer be Abram; your name will be Abraham, for I will make you the father of many nations. <sup>6</sup>I will make you extremely fruitful and will make nations and kings come from you. <sup>7</sup>I will confirm my covenant that is between me and you and your future offspring throughout their generations. It is a permanent covenant to be your God and the God of your offspring after you. <sup>8</sup>And to you and your future offspring I will give the land where you are residing — all the land of Canaan — as a permanent possession, and I will be their God.”

<sup>9</sup>God also said to Abraham, “As for you, you and your offspring after you throughout their generations are to keep my covenant. <sup>10</sup>This is my covenant between me and you and your offspring after you, which you are to keep: Every one of your males must be circumcised. <sup>11</sup>You must circumcise the flesh of your foreskin to serve as a sign of the covenant between me and you. <sup>12</sup>Throughout your generations, every male among you is to be circumcised at eight days old — every male born in your household or purchased from any foreigner and not your offspring. <sup>13</sup>Whether born in your household or purchased, he must be circumcised. My covenant will be marked in your flesh as a permanent covenant. <sup>14</sup>If any male is not circumcised in the flesh of his foreskin, that man will be cut off from his people; he has broken my covenant.”

<sup>15</sup>God said to Abraham, “As for your wife Sarai, do not call her Sarai, for Sarah will be her name. <sup>16</sup>I will bless her; indeed, I will give you a son by her. I will bless her, and she will produce nations; kings of peoples will come from her.”

<sup>17</sup> Abraham fell facedown. Then he laughed and said to himself, “Can a child be born to a hundred-year-old man? Can Sarah, a ninety-year-old woman, give birth?”

<sup>18</sup> So Abraham said to God, “If only Ishmael were acceptable to you!”

<sup>19</sup> But God said, “No. Your wife Sarah will bear you a son, and you will name him Isaac. I will confirm my covenant with him as a permanent covenant for his future offspring.” <sup>20</sup> As for Ishmael, I have heard you. I will certainly bless him; I will make him fruitful and will multiply him greatly. He will father twelve tribal leaders, and I will make him into a great nation. <sup>21</sup> But I will confirm my covenant with Isaac, whom Sarah will bear to you at this time next year.” <sup>22</sup> When he finished talking with him, God withdrew from Abraham.

<sup>23</sup> So Abraham took his son Ishmael and those born in his household or purchased — every male among the members of Abraham’s household — and he circumcised the flesh of their foreskin on that very day, just as God had said to him.

<sup>24</sup> Abraham was ninety-nine years old when the flesh of his foreskin was circumcised, <sup>25</sup> and his son Ishmael was thirteen years old when the flesh of his foreskin was circumcised. <sup>26</sup> On that same day Abraham and his son Ishmael were circumcised. <sup>27</sup> And all the men of his household — whether born in his household or purchased from a foreigner — were circumcised with him.

**18** The LORD appeared to Abraham at the oaks of Mamre while he was sitting at the entrance of his tent during the heat of the day. <sup>2</sup> He looked up, and he saw three men standing near him. When he saw them, he ran from the entrance of the tent to meet them, bowed to the ground, <sup>3</sup> and said, “My lord, if I have found favor with you, please do not go on past your servant. <sup>4</sup> Let a little water be brought, that you may wash your feet and rest yourselves under the tree. <sup>5</sup> I will bring a bit of bread so that you may strengthen yourselves. This is why you have passed your servant’s way. Later, you can continue on.”

“Yes,” they replied, “do as you have said.”

<sup>6</sup> So Abraham hurried into the tent and said to Sarah, “Quick! Knead three measures of fine flour and make bread.” <sup>7</sup> Abraham ran to the herd and got a tender, choice calf. He gave it to a young man, who hurried to prepare it. <sup>8</sup> Then Abraham took curds and milk, as well as the calf that he had prepared, and set them before the men. He served them as they ate under the tree.

<sup>9</sup> “Where is your wife Sarah?” they asked him.

“There, in the tent,” he answered.

<sup>10</sup> The LORD said, “I will certainly come back to you in about a year’s time, and your wife Sarah will have a son!” Now Sarah was listening at the entrance of the tent behind him.

<sup>11</sup> Abraham and Sarah were old and getting on in years. Sarah had passed the age of childbearing. <sup>12</sup> So she laughed to herself: “After I am worn out and my lord is old, will I have delight?”

<sup>13</sup> But the LORD asked Abraham, “Why did Sarah laugh, saying, ‘Can I really have a baby when I’m old?’” <sup>14</sup> Is anything impossible for the LORD? At the appointed time I will come back to you, and in about a year she will have a son.”

<sup>15</sup> Sarah denied it. “I did not laugh,” she said, because she was afraid.

But he replied, “No, you did laugh.”

<sup>16</sup> The men got up from there and looked out over Sodom, and Abraham was walking with them to see them off. <sup>17</sup> Then the LORD said, “Should I hide what I am about to do from Abraham?” <sup>18</sup> Abraham is to become a great and powerful nation, and all the nations of the earth will be blessed through him. <sup>19</sup> For I have chosen him so that he will command his children and his house after him to keep the

way of the LORD by doing what is right and just. This is how the LORD will fulfill to Abraham what he promised him.”<sup>20</sup> Then the LORD said, “The outcry against Sodom and Gomorrah is immense, and their sin is extremely serious.<sup>21</sup> I will go down to see if what they have done justifies the cry that has come up to me. If not, I will find out.”

<sup>22</sup> The men turned from there and went toward Sodom while Abraham remained standing before the LORD.<sup>23</sup> Abraham stepped forward and said, “Will you really sweep away the righteous with the wicked?<sup>24</sup> What if there are fifty righteous people in the city? Will you really sweep it away instead of sparing the place for the sake of the fifty righteous people who are in it?<sup>25</sup> You could not possibly do such a thing: to kill the righteous with the wicked, treating the righteous and the wicked alike. You could not possibly do that! Won’t the Judge of the whole earth do what is just?”

<sup>26</sup> The LORD said, “If I find fifty righteous people in the city of Sodom, I will spare the whole place for their sake.”

<sup>27</sup> Then Abraham answered, “Since I have ventured to speak to my lord — even though I am dust and ashes —<sup>28</sup> suppose the fifty righteous lack five. Will you destroy the whole city for lack of five?”

He replied, “I will not destroy it if I find forty-five there.”

<sup>29</sup> Then he spoke to him again, “Suppose forty are found there?”

He answered, “I will not do it on account of forty.”

<sup>30</sup> Then he said, “Let my lord not be angry, and I will speak further. Suppose thirty are found there?”

He answered, “I will not do it if I find thirty there.”

<sup>31</sup> Then he said, “Since I have ventured to speak to my lord, suppose twenty are found there?”

He replied, “I will not destroy it on account of twenty.”

<sup>32</sup> Then he said, “Let my lord not be angry, and I will speak one more time. Suppose ten are found there?”

He answered, “I will not destroy it on account of ten.”<sup>33</sup> When the LORD had finished speaking with Abraham, he departed, and Abraham returned to his place.

**19** The two angels entered Sodom in the evening as Lot was sitting in Sodom’s gateway. When Lot saw them, he got up to meet them. He bowed with his face to the ground<sup>2</sup> and said, “My lords, turn aside to your servant’s house, wash your feet, and spend the night. Then you can get up early and go on your way.”

“No,” they said. “We would rather spend the night in the square.”<sup>3</sup> But he urged them so strongly that they followed him and went into his house. He prepared a feast and baked unleavened bread for them, and they ate.

<sup>4</sup> Before they went to bed, the men of the city of Sodom, both young and old, the whole population, surrounded the house.<sup>5</sup> They called out to Lot and said, “Where are the men who came to you tonight? Send them out to us so we can have sex with them!”

<sup>6</sup> Lot went out to them at the entrance and shut the door behind him.<sup>7</sup> He said, “Don’t do this evil, my brothers.<sup>8</sup> Look, I’ve got two daughters who haven’t been intimate with a man. I’ll bring them out to you, and you can do whatever you want to them. However, don’t do anything to these men, because they have come under the protection of my roof.”

<sup>9</sup> “Get out of the way!” they said, adding, “This one came here as an alien, but he’s acting like a judge! Now we’ll do more harm to you than to them.” They put pressure

on Lot and came up to break down the door. <sup>10</sup> But the angels reached out, brought Lot into the house with them, and shut the door. <sup>11</sup> They struck the men who were at the entrance of the house, both young and old, with blindness so that they were unable to find the entrance.

<sup>12</sup> Then the angels said to Lot, “Do you have anyone else here: a son-in-law, your sons and daughters, or anyone else in the city who belongs to you? Get them out of this place, <sup>13</sup> for we are about to destroy this place because the outcry against its people is so great before the LORD, that the LORD has sent us to destroy it.”

<sup>14</sup> So Lot went out and spoke to his sons-in-law, who were going to marry his daughters. “Get up,” he said. “Get out of this place, for the LORD is about to destroy the city!” But his sons-in-law thought he was joking.

<sup>15</sup> At daybreak the angels urged Lot on: “Get up! Take your wife and your two daughters who are here, or you will be swept away in the punishment of the city.”

<sup>16</sup> But he hesitated. Because of the LORD’s compassion for him, the men grabbed his hand, his wife’s hand, and the hands of his two daughters. They brought him out and left him outside the city.

<sup>17</sup> As soon as the angels got them outside, one of them said, “Run for your lives! Don’t look back and don’t stop anywhere on the plain! Run to the mountains, or you will be swept away!”

<sup>18</sup> But Lot said to them, “No, my lords — please. <sup>19</sup> Your servant has indeed found favor with you, and you have shown me great kindness by saving my life. But I can’t run to the mountains; the disaster will overtake me, and I will die. <sup>20</sup> Look, this town is close enough for me to flee to. It is a small place. Please let me run to it — it’s only a small place, isn’t it? — so that I can survive.”

<sup>21</sup> And he said to him, “All right, I’ll grant your request about this matter too and will not demolish the town you mentioned. <sup>22</sup> Hurry up! Run to it, for I cannot do anything until you get there.” Therefore the name of the city is Zoar.

<sup>23</sup> The sun had risen over the land when Lot reached Zoar. <sup>24</sup> Then out of the sky the LORD rained on Sodom and Gomorrah burning sulfur from the LORD.

<sup>25</sup> He demolished these cities, the entire plain, all the inhabitants of the cities, and whatever grew on the ground. <sup>26</sup> But Lot’s wife looked back and became a pillar of salt.

<sup>27</sup> Early in the morning Abraham went to the place where he had stood before the LORD. <sup>28</sup> He looked down toward Sodom and Gomorrah and all the land of the plain, and he saw that smoke was going up from the land like the smoke of a furnace. <sup>29</sup> So it was, when God destroyed the cities of the plain, he remembered Abraham and brought Lot out of the middle of the upheaval when he demolished the cities where Lot had lived.

<sup>30</sup> Lot departed from Zoar and lived in the mountains along with his two daughters, because he was afraid to live in Zoar. Instead, he and his two daughters lived in a cave. <sup>31</sup> Then the firstborn said to the younger, “Our father is old, and there is no man in the land to sleep with us as is the custom of all the land. <sup>32</sup> Come, let’s get our father to drink wine so that we can sleep with him and preserve our father’s line.” <sup>33</sup> So they got their father to drink wine that night, and the firstborn came and slept with her father; he did not know when she lay down or when she got up.

<sup>34</sup> The next day the firstborn said to the younger, “Look, I slept with my father last night. Let’s get him to drink wine again tonight so you can go sleep with him and we can preserve our father’s line.” <sup>35</sup> That night they again got their father to drink wine,

and the younger went and slept with him; he did not know when she lay down or when she got up.

<sup>36</sup> So both of Lot's daughters became pregnant by their father. <sup>37</sup> The firstborn gave birth to a son and named him Moab. He is the father of the Moabites of today. <sup>38</sup> The younger also gave birth to a son, and she named him Ben-ammi. He is the father of the Ammonites of today.



## WEEK 2

## DAY

## 4

## GENESIS 20–23

## ACT 2 · SCENE 1 · READING 4

One subplot in the book of Genesis is the choosing of the younger son instead of the older. In the ancient Near East honoring the rights of the firstborn son was a dominant cultural practice. In Genesis God subverted this aspect of the culture by consistently blessing the younger son. God traced his covenant promise through Isaac instead of Ishmael because Isaac was the son of God's promise; Ishmael, on the other hand, was the product of human ingenuity. Notice the expressions of faith in God that are found in Genesis 22:3-10.

- ◆ *With what sacrifice are you currently being asked to trust God?*
- ◆ *How does this part of the story of the Bible underscore God as the hero?*
- ◆ *What details of the story seem most significant to you?*

## GENESIS 20–23

**20** From there Abraham traveled to the region of the Negev and settled between Kadesh and Shur. While he was staying in Gerar, <sup>2</sup> Abraham said about his wife Sarah, "She is my sister." So King Abimelech of Gerar had Sarah brought to him.

<sup>3</sup> But God came to Abimelech in a dream by night and said to him, "You are about to die because of the woman you have taken, for she is a married woman."

<sup>4</sup> Now Abimelech had not approached her, so he said, "Lord, would you destroy a nation even though it is innocent? <sup>5</sup> Didn't he himself say to me, 'She is my sister'? And she herself said, 'He is my brother.' I did this with a clear conscience and clean hands."

<sup>6</sup> Then God said to him in the dream, "Yes, I know that you did this with a clear conscience. I have also kept you from sinning against me. Therefore I have not let you touch her. <sup>7</sup> Now return the man's wife, for he is a prophet, and he will pray for you and you will live. But if you do not return her, know that you will certainly die, you and all who are yours."

<sup>8</sup> Early in the morning Abimelech got up, called all his servants together, and personally told them all these things, and the men were terrified.

## ACT 2 · SCENE 1 · READING 3

<sup>9</sup>Then Abimelech called Abraham in and said to him, "What have you done to us? How did I sin against you that you have brought such enormous guilt on me and on my kingdom? You have done things to me that should never be done."<sup>10</sup> Abimelech also asked Abraham, "What made you do this?"

<sup>11</sup>Abraham replied, "I thought, 'There is absolutely no fear of God in this place. They will kill me because of my wife.'<sup>12</sup> Besides, she really is my sister, the daughter of my father though not the daughter of my mother, and she became my wife.<sup>13</sup> So when God had me wander from my father's house, I said to her: Show your loyalty to me wherever we go and say about me: 'He's my brother.'"

<sup>14</sup>Then Abimelech took flocks and herds and male and female slaves, gave them to Abraham, and returned his wife Sarah to him.<sup>15</sup> Abimelech said, "Look, my land is before you. Settle wherever you want."<sup>16</sup> And he said to Sarah, "Look, I am giving your brother one thousand pieces of silver. It is a verification of your honor to all who are with you. You are fully vindicated."

<sup>17</sup>Then Abraham prayed to God, and God healed Abimelech, his wife, and his female slaves so that they could bear children,<sup>18</sup> for the LORD had completely closed all the wombs in Abimelech's household on account of Sarah, Abraham's wife.

**21** The LORD came to Sarah as he had said, and the LORD did for Sarah what he had promised.<sup>2</sup> Sarah became pregnant and bore a son to Abraham in his old age, at the appointed time God had told him.<sup>3</sup> Abraham named his son who was born to him — the one Sarah bore to him — Isaac.<sup>4</sup> When his son Isaac was eight days old, Abraham circumcised him, as God had commanded him.<sup>5</sup> Abraham was a hundred years old when his son Isaac was born to him.

<sup>6</sup>Sarah said, "God has made me laugh, and everyone who hears will laugh with me."<sup>7</sup> She also said, "Who would have told Abraham that Sarah would nurse children? Yet I have borne a son for him in his old age."

<sup>8</sup>The child grew and was weaned, and Abraham held a great feast on the day Isaac was weaned.<sup>9</sup> But Sarah saw the son mocking — the one Hagar the Egyptian had borne to Abraham.<sup>10</sup> So she said to Abraham, "Drive out this slave with her son, for the son of this slave will not be a coheir with my son Isaac!"

<sup>11</sup>This was very distressing to Abraham because of his son.<sup>12</sup> But God said to Abraham, "Do not be distressed about the boy and about your slave. Whatever Sarah says to you, listen to her, because your offspring will be traced through Isaac,<sup>13</sup> and I will also make a nation of the slave's son because he is your offspring."

<sup>14</sup>Early in the morning Abraham got up, took bread and a waterskin, put them on Hagar's shoulders, and sent her and the boy away. She left and wandered in the Wilderness of Beer-sheba.<sup>15</sup> When the water in the skin was gone, she left the boy under one of the bushes<sup>16</sup> and went and sat at a distance, about a bowshot away, for she said, "I can't bear to watch the boy die!" While she sat at a distance, she wept loudly.

<sup>17</sup>God heard the boy crying, and the angel of God called to Hagar from heaven and said to her, "What's wrong, Hagar? Don't be afraid, for God has heard the boy crying from the place where he is.<sup>18</sup> Get up, help the boy up, and grasp his hand, for I will make him a great nation."<sup>19</sup> Then God opened her eyes, and she saw a well. So she went and filled the waterskin and gave the boy a drink.<sup>20</sup> God was with the boy, and he grew; he settled in the wilderness and became an archer.<sup>21</sup> He settled in the Wilderness of Paran, and his mother got a wife for him from the land of Egypt.

<sup>22</sup>At that time Abimelech, accompanied by Phicol the commander of his army, said to Abraham, "God is with you in everything you do.<sup>23</sup> Swear to me by God here and now, that you will not break an agreement with me or with my children and

descendants. As I have been loyal to you, so you will be loyal to me and to the country where you are a resident alien."

<sup>24</sup> And Abraham said, "I swear it." <sup>25</sup> But Abraham complained to Abimelech because of the well that Abimelech's servants had seized.

<sup>26</sup> Abimelech replied, "I don't know who did this thing. You didn't report anything to me, so I hadn't heard about it until today."

<sup>27</sup> Abraham took flocks and herds and gave them to Abimelech, and the two of them made a covenant. <sup>28</sup> Abraham separated seven ewe lambs from the flock.

<sup>29</sup> And Abimelech said to Abraham, "Why have you separated these seven ewe lambs?"

<sup>30</sup> He replied, "You are to accept the seven ewe lambs from me so that this act will serve as my witness that I dug this well." <sup>31</sup> Therefore that place was called Beer-sheba because it was there that the two of them swore an oath. <sup>32</sup> After they had made a covenant at Beer-sheba, Abimelech and Phicol, the commander of his army, left and returned to the land of the Philistines.

<sup>33</sup> Abraham planted a tamarisk tree in Beer-sheba, and there he called on the name of the LORD, the Everlasting God. <sup>34</sup> And Abraham lived as an alien in the land of the Philistines for many days.

**22** After these things God tested Abraham and said to him, "Abraham!"

"Here I am," he answered.

<sup>2</sup> "Take your son," he said, "your only son Isaac, whom you love, go to the land of Moriah, and offer him there as a burnt offering on one of the mountains I will tell you about."

<sup>3</sup> So Abraham got up early in the morning, saddled his donkey, and took with him two of his young men and his son Isaac. He split wood for a burnt offering and set out to go to the place God had told him about. <sup>4</sup> On the third day Abraham looked up and saw the place in the distance. <sup>5</sup> Then Abraham said to his young men, "Stay here with the donkey. The boy and I will go over there to worship; then we'll come back to you." <sup>6</sup> Abraham took the wood for the burnt offering and laid it on his son Isaac. In his hand he took the fire and the knife, and the two of them walked on together.

<sup>7</sup> Then Isaac spoke to his father Abraham and said, "My father."

And he replied, "Here I am, my son."

Isaac said, "The fire and the wood are here, but where is the lamb for the burnt offering?"

<sup>8</sup> Abraham answered, "God himself will provide the lamb for the burnt offering, my son." Then the two of them walked on together.

<sup>9</sup> When they arrived at the place that God had told him about, Abraham built the altar there and arranged the wood. He bound his son Isaac and placed him on the altar on top of the wood. <sup>10</sup> Then Abraham reached out and took the knife to slaughter his son.

<sup>11</sup> But the angel of the LORD called to him from heaven and said, "Abraham, Abraham!"

He replied, "Here I am."

<sup>12</sup> Then he said, "Do not lay a hand on the boy or do anything to him. For now I know that you fear God, since you have not withheld your only son from me."

<sup>13</sup> Abraham looked up and saw a ram caught in the thicket by its horns. So Abraham went and took the ram and offered it as a burnt offering in place of his son. <sup>14</sup> And Abraham named that place The LORD Will Provide, so today it is said: "It will be provided on the LORD's mountain."

<sup>15</sup>Then the angel of the LORD called to Abraham a second time from heaven <sup>16</sup>and said, “By myself I have sworn,” this is the LORD’s declaration: “Because you have done this thing and have not withheld your only son, <sup>17</sup>I will indeed bless you and make your offspring as numerous as the stars of the sky and the sand on the seashore. Your offspring will possess the city gates of their enemies. <sup>18</sup>And all the nations of the earth will be blessed by your offspring because you have obeyed my command.”

<sup>19</sup>Abraham went back to his young men, and they got up and went together to Beer-sheba. And Abraham settled in Beer-sheba.

<sup>20</sup>Now after these things Abraham was told, “Milcah also has borne sons to your brother Nahor: <sup>21</sup>Uz his firstborn, his brother Buz, Kemuel the father of Aram, <sup>22</sup>Chesed, Hazo, Pildash, Jidlap, and Bethuel.” <sup>23</sup>And Bethuel fathered Rebekah. Milcah bore these eight to Nahor, Abraham’s brother. <sup>24</sup>His concubine, whose name was Reumah, also bore Tebah, Gaham, Tahash, and Maacah.

**23** Now Sarah lived 127 years; these were all the years of her life. <sup>2</sup>Sarah died in Kiriath-arba (that is, Hebron) in the land of Canaan, and Abraham went to mourn for Sarah and to weep for her.

<sup>3</sup>Then Abraham got up from beside his dead wife and spoke to the Hethites: <sup>4</sup>“I am an alien residing among you. Give me burial property among you so that I can bury my dead.”

<sup>5</sup>The Hethites replied to Abraham, <sup>6</sup>“Listen to us, my lord. You are a prince of God among us. Bury your dead in our finest burial place. None of us will withhold from you his burial place for burying your dead.”

<sup>7</sup>Then Abraham rose and bowed down to the Hethites, the people of the land. <sup>8</sup>He said to them, “If you are willing for me to bury my dead, listen to me and ask Ephron son of Zohar on my behalf <sup>9</sup>to give me the cave of Machpelah that belongs to him; it is at the end of his field. Let him give it to me in your presence, for the full price, as burial property.”

<sup>10</sup>Ephron was sitting among the Hethites. So in the hearing of all the Hethites who came to the gate of his city, Ephron the Hethite answered Abraham: <sup>11</sup>“No, my lord. Listen to me. I give you the field, and I give you the cave that is in it. I give it to you in the sight of my people. Bury your dead.”

<sup>12</sup>Abraham bowed down to the people of the land <sup>13</sup>and said to Ephron in the hearing of the people of the land, “Listen to me, if you please. Let me pay the price of the field. Accept it from me, and let me bury my dead there.”

<sup>14</sup>Ephron answered Abraham and said to him, <sup>15</sup>“My lord, listen to me. Land worth four hundred shekels of silver — what is that between you and me? Bury your dead.” <sup>16</sup>Abraham agreed with Ephron, and Abraham weighed out to Ephron the silver that he had agreed to in the hearing of the Hethites: four hundred standard shekels of silver. <sup>17</sup>So Ephron’s field at Machpelah near Mamre — the field with its cave and all the trees anywhere within the boundaries of the field — became <sup>18</sup>Abraham’s possession in the sight of all the Hethites who came to the gate of his city. <sup>19</sup>After this, Abraham buried his wife Sarah in the cave of the field at Machpelah near Mamre (that is, Hebron) in the land of Canaan. <sup>20</sup>The field with its cave passed from the Hethites to Abraham as burial property.

