

# INTRODUCTION TO GENESIS



## AUTHOR, DATE, AND RECIPIENTS

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

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

## THEME

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

## KEY THEMES

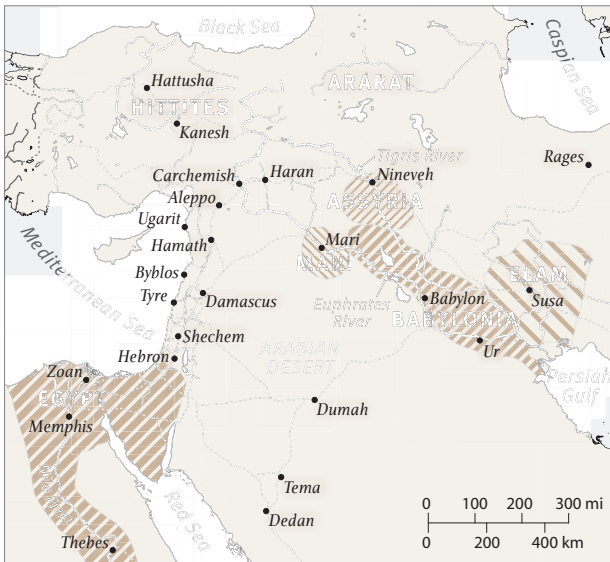
1. The Lord God commissions human beings to be his representatives on earth. They are to take care of the earth and govern the other creatures (1:1-2:25).
2. Instead of acting as God's representatives on earth, the first man and woman—Adam and Eve—listen to the serpent and follow his advice. Their disobedience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

# INTRODUCTION TO GENESIS

## OUTLINE

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

## THE NEAR EAST AT THE TIME OF GENESIS



c. 2000 B.C.

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

## The Creation of the World

**1** In the <sup>a</sup>beginning, God created the heavens and the earth. <sup>2</sup>The earth was <sup>b</sup>without form and void, and darkness was over the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters.

<sup>3</sup>And God said, <sup>c</sup>“Let there be light,” and there was light. <sup>4</sup>And 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. And there was evening and there was morning, the first day.

<sup>6</sup>And God said, <sup>d</sup>“Let there be an expanse<sup>7</sup> in the midst of the waters, and let it separate the waters from the waters.” <sup>7</sup>And God made<sup>2</sup> the expanse and <sup>e</sup>separated the waters that were under the expanse from the waters that were <sup>f</sup>above the expanse. And it was so. <sup>8</sup>And God called the expanse Heaven.<sup>3</sup> And there was evening and there was morning, the second day.

<sup>9</sup>And God said, <sup>g</sup>“Let the waters under the

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

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

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

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

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

## DID YOU KNOW?

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

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

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

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

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

## CROSS-REFERENCES:

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

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

<sup>11</sup> And God said, <sup>11a</sup> “Let the earth sprout vegetation, plants<sup>2</sup> yielding seed, and fruit trees bearing fruit in which is their seed, each according to its kind, on the earth.” And it was so. <sup>12</sup> The earth brought forth vegetation, plants yielding seed according to their own kinds, and trees bearing fruit in which is their seed, each according to its kind. And God saw that it was good. <sup>13</sup> And there was evening and there was morning, the third day.

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

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

## DID YOU KNOW?

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

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

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

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

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

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

<sup>20</sup> And God said, “Let the waters swarm with swarms of living creatures, and let birds<sup>4</sup> fly above the earth across the expanse of the heavens.” <sup>21</sup> So <sup>21a</sup> God created the great sea creatures and every living creature that moves, with which the waters swarm, according to their kinds, and every winged bird according to its kind. And God saw that it was good. <sup>22</sup> And God blessed them, saying, <sup>22a</sup> “Be fruitful and multiply and fill the waters in the seas, and let birds multiply on the earth.” <sup>23</sup> And there was evening and there was morning, the fifth day.

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

<sup>26</sup> Then God said, <sup>26a</sup> “Let us make man<sup>5</sup> in our image, <sup>26b</sup> after our likeness. And <sup>26c</sup> let them have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over the livestock and over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth.”

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

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

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

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

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

<sup>11</sup> Ps. 104:14 <sup>14</sup> Jer. 10:2; Ezek. 32:7; Joel 2:30, 31; 3:15; Matt. 24:29; Luke 21:25  
<sup>15</sup> Ps. 104:19 <sup>16</sup> Deut. 4:19; Ps. 136:7–9 <sup>18</sup> Jer. 31:35 <sup>21</sup> Ps. 104:25, 26 <sup>22</sup> ch. 8:17;  
 1:1 <sup>26</sup> ch. 3:22; 11:7; Isa. 68<sup>a</sup> ch. 5:1; 9:6; 1 Cor. 11:7; Eph. 4:24; Col. 3:10; James 3:9  
<sup>9</sup> ch. 9:2; Ps. 86:8; James 3:7 <sup>27</sup> ch. 2:18, 21–23; 5:2; Mal. 2:15; Matt. 19:4; Mark 10:6

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

### The Seventh Day, God Rests

**2** Thus the heavens and the earth were finished, and <sup>3</sup>all the host of them. <sup>2</sup>And <sup>3</sup>on the seventh day God finished his work that he had done,

<sup>1</sup>Or open country <sup>2</sup>Or earth; also verse 6 <sup>3</sup>Or spring

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

### The Creation of Man and Woman

<sup>4</sup> <sup>5</sup>These are the generations of the heavens and the earth when they were created, in the day that the LORD God made the earth and the heavens.

<sup>5</sup>When no <sup>6</sup>bush of the field <sup>7</sup>was yet in the land <sup>2</sup>and no small plant of the field had yet sprung up—for the LORD God had not caused it to rain on the land, and there was no man <sup>3</sup>to work the ground, <sup>6</sup>and a mist <sup>3</sup>was going up from the land and was watering the whole face of the ground— <sup>7</sup>then the LORD God formed the man of <sup>4</sup>dust from the ground and <sup>4</sup>breathed into his <sup>4</sup>nostrils the breath of life, and <sup>4</sup>the man became a living creature. <sup>8</sup>And the LORD God planted a

### PROFILE: ADAM

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

### KEY REFERENCE: GENESIS 2:7

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

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

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

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

<sup>7</sup>garden in Eden, in the east, and there he put the man whom he had formed. <sup>9</sup>And out of the ground the LORD God made to spring up every tree that is pleasant to the sight and good for food. <sup>9</sup>The tree of life was in the midst of the garden, <sup>10</sup>and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.

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

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

shall not eat, for in the day that you eat<sup>1</sup> of it you<sup>m</sup> shall surely die.”

<sup>18</sup>Then the LORD God said, “It is not good that the man should be alone; <sup>19</sup>I will make him a helper fit for<sup>2</sup> him.” <sup>19</sup>Now out of the ground the LORD God had formed<sup>3</sup> every beast of the field and every bird of the heavens and <sup>20</sup>brought them to the man to see what he would call them. And whatever the man called every living creature, that was its name. <sup>20</sup>The man gave names to all livestock and to the birds of the heavens and to every beast of the field. But for Adam<sup>4</sup> there was not found a helper fit for him. <sup>21</sup>So the LORD God caused a<sup>q</sup> deep sleep to fall upon the man, and while he slept took one of his ribs and closed up its place with flesh. <sup>22</sup>And the rib that the LORD God had taken from the man he made<sup>5</sup> into a woman and brought her to the man. <sup>23</sup>Then the man said,

“This at last is ‘bone of my bones  
and flesh of my flesh;  
she shall be called Woman,  
because she was<sup>2</sup> taken out of Man.”<sup>6</sup>

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

## DID YOU KNOW?

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

<sup>8</sup>ver. 15; ch. 13:10; Isa. 51:3; Ezek. 28:13; 31:8; Joel 2:3 <sup>9</sup>ch. 3:22; Rev. 27; 22:2, 14  
<sup>10</sup>ver. 17 <sup>11</sup>ch. 10:7; 29; 25:18; 1 Sam. 15:7 <sup>14</sup>Dan. 10:4 <sup>15</sup>ver. 8 <sup>17</sup>ch. 31:3; 11, 17  
<sup>18</sup>Rom. 6:23; James 1:15 <sup>19</sup>1 Cor. 11:9; 1 Tim. 2:13 <sup>19</sup>ch. 1:20, 24 <sup>20</sup>Ps. 8:6 <sup>21</sup>ch. 15:12; 1 Sam. 26:12 <sup>23</sup>ch. 29:14; Judg. 9:2; 2 Sam. 5:1; 19:13; [Eph. 5:28–30] <sup>1</sup>Cor. 11:8

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

### The Fall

**3** Now <sup>a</sup>the serpent was more crafty than any other beast of the field that the LORD God had made.

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

of its fruit <sup>7</sup>and ate, and she also gave some to her husband who was with her, <sup>7</sup>and he ate. <sup>7</sup>Then the eyes of both were opened, <sup>8</sup>and they knew that they were naked. And they sewed fig leaves together and made themselves loincloths.

<sup>8</sup>And they heard the sound of the LORD God walking in the garden in the cool <sup>3</sup>of the day, and the man and his wife <sup>b</sup>hid themselves from the presence of the LORD God among the trees of the garden. <sup>9</sup>But the LORD God called to the man and said to him, “Where are you?” <sup>10</sup>And he said, “I heard the sound of you in the garden, and I was afraid, <sup>c</sup>because I was naked, and I hid myself.” <sup>11</sup>He said, “Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten of the tree of which I commanded you not to eat?” <sup>12</sup>The man said, “The woman whom you gave to be with me, she gave me fruit of the tree, and I ate.” <sup>13</sup>Then the LORD God said to the woman, “What is this that you have done?” The woman said, <sup>e</sup>“The serpent deceived me, and I ate.”

<sup>14</sup>The LORD God said to the serpent,

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

### PROFILE: EVE

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

**KEY REFERENCE: GENESIS 2:23**

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

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

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

**24** Cited Matt. 19:5; Mark 10:7; 1 Cor. 6:16; Eph. 5:31; [Ps. 45:10; 1 Cor. 7:10, 11] **CHAPTER 3** <sup>1</sup>Matt. 10:16; 2 Cor. 11:3; Rev. 12:9; 20:2 <sup>3</sup>ch. 2:17 <sup>4</sup>ver. 13; John 8:44; [2 Cor. 11:3] <sup>6</sup>1 Tim. 2:14 <sup>7</sup>ver. 12, 17; Hos. 6:7 <sup>7</sup>ver. 5 <sup>8</sup>ch. 2:25 <sup>8</sup>1 [Ps. 139:1–12; Jer. 23:23, 24] <sup>10</sup>ver. 7; ch. 2:25 <sup>12</sup>ch. 2:18; Job 31:33 <sup>13</sup>ver. 4; 2 Cor. 11:3; 1 Tim. 2:14

“Because you have done this,  
 cursed are you above all livestock  
 and above all beasts of the field;  
 on your belly you shall go,  
 and <sup>l</sup>dust you shall eat  
 all the days of your life.  
<sup>15</sup> I will put enmity between you and the  
 woman,  
 and between your offspring<sup>j</sup> and <sup>o</sup>her  
 offspring;  
<sup>h</sup>he shall bruise your head,  
 and you shall bruise his heel.”  
<sup>16</sup>To the woman he said,  
 “I will surely multiply your pain in  
 childbearing;  
<sup>i</sup>in pain you shall bring forth children.  
<sup>j</sup>Your desire shall be for <sup>2</sup>your husband,  
 and he shall <sup>k</sup>rule over you.”

<sup>1</sup>Hebrew *seed*; so throughout Genesis <sup>2</sup>Or *against*

<sup>17</sup>And to Adam he said,  
 “Because you have listened to the voice of  
 your wife  
 and have eaten of the tree  
<sup>l</sup>of which I commanded you,  
 ‘You shall not eat of it,’  
<sup>m</sup>cursed is the ground because of you;  
<sup>n</sup>in pain you shall eat of it all the days of  
 your life;  
<sup>18</sup> thorns and thistles it shall bring forth for you;  
 and you shall eat the plants of the field.  
<sup>19</sup> By the sweat of your face  
 you shall eat bread,  
 till you return to the ground,  
 for out of it you were taken;  
<sup>o</sup>for you are dust,  
 and <sup>p</sup>to dust you shall return.”  
<sup>20</sup>The man called his wife’s name Eve, because

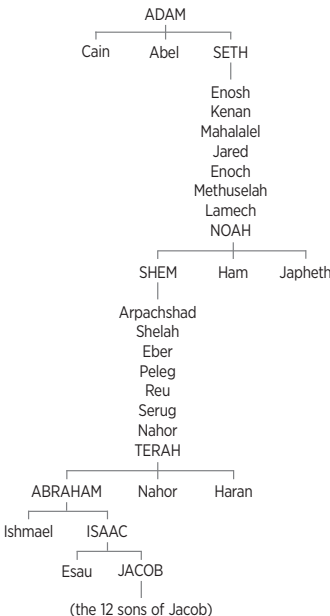
DID YOU KNOW?

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

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

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

The Genealogies of Genesis



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

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

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

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

<sup>14</sup>Isa. 65:25; Mic. 7:17 <sup>15</sup>Isa. 7:14; Mic. 5:3; Matt. 123, 25; Luke 1:34, 35; Gal. 4:4; 1 Tim. 2:15 <sup>16</sup>Rom. 16:20; Heb. 2:14; Rev. 20:1–3, 10 <sup>17</sup>[John 16:21] ch. 4:7; Song 7:10 <sup>18</sup>1 Cor. 11:3; 14:34; Eph. 5:22–24; Col. 3:18; 1 Tim. 2:11, 12; Titus 2:5; 1 Pet. 3:1, 5, 6 <sup>19</sup>ch. 2:17 <sup>20</sup>ch. 5:29; [Rom. 8:20–22] <sup>21</sup>Eccles. 2:22, 23 <sup>19</sup>ch. 2:7; Ps. 103:14 <sup>22</sup>Job 34:15; Ps. 104:29; Eccles. 3:20; 12:7; Rom. 5:12



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

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

### Cain and Abel

**4** Now Adam knew Eve his wife, and she conceived and bore Cain, saying, “I have gotten<sup>2</sup> a man with the help of the LORD.” <sup>2</sup>And again, she bore his brother Abel. Now Abel was a keeper of sheep, and Cain a worker of the ground. <sup>3</sup>In the course of time Cain brought to the LORD an offering of “the fruit of the ground,” and Abel also brought of “the firstborn of his flock and of their fat portions. And the LORD had regard for Abel and his offering, <sup>5</sup>but for Cain and his offering he had no regard. So Cain was very angry, and his face fell. <sup>6</sup>The LORD said to Cain, “Why are you angry, and why has your face fallen? <sup>7</sup>”If you do well, will you not be accepted? <sup>3</sup> And if you do not do well, sin is crouching at the door. <sup>4</sup>Its desire is for you, but you must rule over it.”

<sup>8</sup>Cain spoke to Abel his brother. <sup>5</sup> And when

they were in the field, Cain rose up against his brother Abel and killed him. <sup>9</sup>Then the LORD said to Cain, “Where is Abel your brother?” He said, <sup>6a</sup>“I do not know; am I my brother’s keeper?” <sup>10</sup>And the LORD said, “What have you done? The voice of your brother’s blood ‘is crying to me from the ground. <sup>11</sup>And now you are cursed from the ground, which has opened its mouth to receive your brother’s blood from your hand. <sup>12</sup>When you work the ground, it shall no longer yield to you its strength. You shall be a fugitive and a wanderer on the earth.” <sup>13</sup>Cain said to the LORD, “My punishment is greater than I can bear.” <sup>6</sup> <sup>14</sup>Behold, you have driven me today away from the ground, and from your face I shall be hidden. I shall be a fugitive and a wanderer on the earth, and whoever finds me will kill me.” <sup>15</sup>Then the LORD said to him, “Not so! If anyone kills Cain, vengeance shall be taken on him sevenfold.” And the LORD put a mark on Cain, lest any who found him should attack him. <sup>16</sup>Then Cain went away from the presence of the LORD and settled in the land of Nod, east of Eden.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

<sup>24</sup> <sup>k</sup>If Cain's revenge is sevenfold,  
then Lamech's is seventy-sevenfold.”

<sup>1</sup>Seth sounds like the Hebrew for *he appointed* <sup>2</sup>Hebrew *adam*

<sup>25</sup>And Adam knew his wife again, and she bore a son and called his name Seth, for she said, “God has appointed <sup>1</sup>for me another offspring instead of Abel, for Cain killed him.” <sup>26</sup>To <sup>3</sup>Seth also a son was born, and he called his name <sup>m</sup>Enosh. At that time people began <sup>n</sup>to call upon the name of the LORD.

**Adam's Descendants to Noah**

**5** This is the book of the generations of Adam. When God created man, <sup>o</sup>he made him in the likeness of God. <sup>2</sup>Male and female he created them, and he blessed them and named them Man <sup>2</sup>

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

<sup>24</sup><sup>k</sup>ver. 15. <sup>26</sup><sup>1</sup> Chr. 1:1; Luke 3:38 <sup>m</sup>ch. 5:6 <sup>n</sup>Ps. 116:17; Zeph. 3:9; Zech. 13:9 **CHAPTER 5** <sup>1</sup>See ch. 1:26, 27

**Genealogies: Showing Age at Fatherhood and Age at Death**

