



Women's
Study
Bible



Women's Study Bible

English Standard Version



CROSSWAY

WHEATON, ILLINOIS - ESV.ORG

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

General

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

Books of the Bible

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

Books of the Apocrypha

| | | | |
|------------------|---------|------------------|---------|
| 1 Maccabees..... | 1 Macc. | 2 Maccabees..... | 2 Macc. |
|------------------|---------|------------------|---------|

INTRODUCTION

TO THE ESV WOMEN'S STUDY BIBLE

The *ESV Women's Study Bible* is designed to help women pursue a deeper, transformational understanding of Scripture. Applicable for women in all stages of life, the *ESV Women's Study Bible* will help readers grow in their understanding of Scripture, love the Lord more deeply and fully, and apply the Word of God with confidence.

Adapted from the *ESV Study Bible* and the *ESV Women's Devotional Bible*, the *ESV Women's Study Bible* provides clear, theologically rich study notes, as well as over 350 reflections on key passages of Scripture. Both the notes and the reflections explain the text in a way that is heart-engaging and instructive. Beautiful illustrations by acclaimed artist Dana Tanamachi further illuminate the text and encourage women to meditate on and savor the very words of God.

Each book begins with an Introduction that provides the historical context and background for that book of the Bible and highlights the overall theme and key passages of the book. Character profiles are scattered throughout the text, highlighting men and women who have an important role in the storyline of Scripture. Maps, illustrations, cross-references, and a glossary of key terms help explain the text, providing clarity where it might be needed. The *ESV Women's Study Bible* also contains fifteen articles that cover topics related to major doctrines of the Bible as well as specific issues facing women.

Ideal for deep study and reflection on the Word of God, as well as for devotional purposes, our prayer is that the *ESV Women's Study Bible* will strengthen and nurture the faith of believers, equipping women to “grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ” (2 Peter 3:18).

Purpose

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

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

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

Divine Words and Merely Human Words

The *ESV Women's Study Bible* contains two kinds of words. First, there are the actual words of the Bible—the very words of God to us. These are printed in the larger font at the top of each page. Second, there are the study notes—merely human words. These are printed in the smaller font at the bottom of each page. The difference in font sizes serves to remind readers that the words of the Bible itself are infinitely more valuable than the words of the notes. The words of the Bible are the words of our Creator speaking to us. They are completely truthful (Ps. 119:160; Prov. 30:5; Titus 1:2; Heb. 6:18); they are pure (Ps. 12:6); they are powerful (Jer. 23:29; Heb. 4:12; 1 Pet. 1:23); and they are wise and righteous (Ps. 19:7–11). God's people should read these words with reverence and awe (Deut. 28:58; Ps. 119:74; Isa. 66:2), and with joy and delight (Ps. 19:7–11; 119:14, 97, 103; Jer. 15:16). Through these words God gives us eternal life (John 6:68; 1 Pet. 1:23) and daily nourishes our spiritual lives in this present world (Deut. 32:46; Matt. 4:4). The words of the

study notes are useful because they help to explain the words of the Bible, but they must never become a substitute for the Bible itself.

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

The Understanding and Teaching of God's Word

The *ESV Women's Study Bible* carries forward a centuries-old tradition of "explaining," "expounding," or "teaching" the Word of God. This process of teaching God's Word is found even within the Bible itself. For example, when Moses spoke the words of Deuteronomy to the people of Israel, he told them, "You shall *teach* them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, and when you walk by the way, and when you lie down, and when you rise" (Deut. 6:7). Similarly, when Ezra and the Levites read the Book of the Law to the exiles who had returned from Babylon, they "helped the people to understand . . . and they gave the sense, so that the people understood" (Neh. 8:7-8). In the early church, Philip was sent to the Ethiopian eunuch to help him understand what he was reading from Isaiah (Acts 8:26-40). And the apostle Paul, in city after city, spent his time "*teaching* the word of God" (Acts 18:11; compare 15:35; 20:20, 27). Likewise, throughout the history of the church, God has raised up people to teach the Word (see 1 Cor. 12:28; Eph. 4:11).

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

Doctrinal Perspective

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

Special Features of the ESV Women's Study Bible

As mentioned, the *ESV Women's Study Bible* is built upon study notes carefully condensed from the 2008 original *ESV Study Bible*. More specifically, the notes have been reduced to about half their original length to highlight the core insights in each text and to provide a concise survey of the Bible. Other features of this new *Women's Study Bible* include:

- An essential theological "Overview of the Bible," supplemented by more specific theological introductions to the Old and New Testaments.
- Timelines of the Old and New Testaments as well as "snapshot timelines" for each Bible book.
- Brief introductions and basic outlines for each Bible book, along with maps that help place each book in its geographical and historical setting.
- Reflections on key passages in every book of the Bible.
- Artistic illuminations that beautifully highlight specific verses.
- Interesting facts and observations about life in Bible times.
- Profiles of key people in the story of the Bible.

- Charts and diagrams giving visual summaries of important concepts.
- Carefully researched full-color illustrations, created specifically for the original *ESV Study Bible*, showing important biblical structures, cities, and objects in precise, accurate detail.
- Articles on topics such as the plan of salvation, Bible study, prayer, emotional health, and issues such as caring for children with disabilities.
- A glossary of more than 300 words and phrases.
- Finally, a special supplement of 15 full-color maps. All maps were created with the latest satellite imagery, digital technology, and cartographic techniques.

Cross-reference System and Concordance

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

The ESV Bible and the ESV Women's Study Bible

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

Goal and Vision

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

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

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

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PREFACE

TO THE ENGLISH STANDARD VERSION

The Bible

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

Translation Legacy

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

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

Translation Philosophy

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

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

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

As an essentially literal translation, taking into account grammar and syntax, the ESV thus seeks to carry over every possible nuance of meaning in the original words of Scripture into our own language. As such, the

ESV is ideally suited for in-depth study of the Bible. Indeed, with its commitment to literary excellence, the ESV is equally well suited for public reading and preaching, for private reading and reflection, for both academic and devotional study, and for Scripture memorization.

Translation Principles and Style

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

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

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

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

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

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

The Translation of Specialized Terms

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

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

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

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

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

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

Textual Basis and Resources

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

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

Textual Footnotes

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

Publishing Team

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

To God's Honor and Praise

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

Soli Deo Gloria!—To God alone be the glory!
The Translation Oversight Committee

AN OVERVIEW OF THE BIBLE

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

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

God's Plan for History

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

God's Promises and Predictions

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

God's Warnings and Curses

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

God's Covenant Commitment and Instruction

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

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

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

Christ Is the Offspring of Abraham and the Last Adam

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

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

Shadows, Prefigures, and "Types" of Christ

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

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

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

Christ Is the Mediator

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

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

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

The
OLD TESTAMENT

THE THEOLOGY AND DATES OF THE OLD TESTAMENT

The Essential Components of the Old Testament Story

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

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

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

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

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

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

The Parts of the Old Testament in Relation to the Story

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

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

Some would say that we should read the entire Old Testament as a story. This does not help the reader, for the very obvious reason that not everything in the Old Testament is narrative or "story." For example, there are laws (in the Pentateuch), whose purpose was to maintain order by guiding judges in what penalties to impose and by specifying the minimum standard of behavior necessary to preserve the theocracy; there is wisdom (in the books of Job, Proverbs, and Ecclesiastes, as well as in the Psalms), which helps God's people live well daily; there are songs (especially the Psalms) that the people of God should sing in corporate worship; there are poems (especially the Song of Solomon; compare Prov. 5:15–20) celebrating such wonders

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

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

The Old Testament as Christian Scripture

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

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

Old Testament Timeline: An Overview

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

Patriarchs to Judges (c. 2166-1030)

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

United Monarchy (c. 1050-931)

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

Divided Monarchy to Exile (931-586)

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

Return from Exile (539-445)

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

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

The Hebrew Calendar Compared to the Gregorian (Modern) Calendar

The Hebrew calendar was composed of 12 lunar months, each of which began when the thin crescent moon was first visible at sunset. They were composed of approximately 29/30 days and were built around the agricultural seasons. Apparently some of the names of the months were changed after the time of Israel's exile in Babylon (e.g., the first month of Abib changed to Nisan; for dates of the exile, see p. 3).

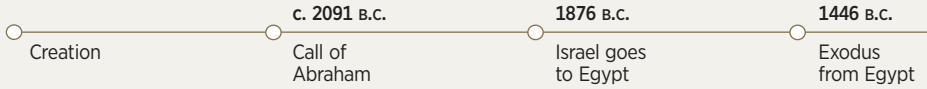
| Hebrew Month | Gregorian (Modern) Month | Biblical References |
|--|--------------------------|---|
| First Month: Abib (Preexile) Nisan (Postexile) | March–April | Ex. 13:4; 23:15; 34:18; Deut. 16:1; Neh. 2:1; Est. 3:7 (compare Gen. 8:13; Ex. 12:2, 18; 40:2, 17; Lev. 23:5; Num. 9:1; 20:1; 28:16; 33:3;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

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



GENESIS

INTRODUCTION



Author, Date, and Recipients

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

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

Theme

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

Key Themes

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

Outline

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

The Near East at the Time of Genesis



c. 2000 B.C.

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



GENESIS

The Creation of the World

In the ^abeginning, God created the heavens and the earth. ^bThe earth was 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.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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.”

of the deep points to the absence of light. **The Spirit of God was hovering** 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).

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

⁹ And God said, ⁹“Let the waters under the heavens be gathered together into one place, and let the dry land appear.” And it was so. ¹⁰God called the dry land Earth,¹ and the waters that were gathered together he called Seas. And God saw that it was good.

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

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

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

²⁰ And God said, “Let the waters swarm with swarms of living creatures, and let birds⁴ fly above the earth across the expanse of the heavens.” ²¹So ²¹God 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. ²²And God blessed them, saying, ²²“Be fruitful and multiply and fill the waters in the seas, and let birds multiply on the earth.” ²³And there was evening and there was morning, the fifth day.

²⁴And 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. ²⁵And 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.

²⁶Then God said, ²⁶“Let us make man⁵ in our image, ²⁶after our likeness. And ²⁶let them have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over the livestock and over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth.”

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

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.

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

⁹Job 38:8–11; Ps. 33:7; 136:6; Jer. 5:22; 2 Pet. 3:5 ¹¹Ps. 104:14 ¹⁴Jer. 10:2; Ezek. 32:7, 8; Joel 2:30, 31; 3:15; Matt. 24:29; Luke 21:25 ¹⁵Ps. 104:19 ¹⁶Deut. 4:19; Ps. 136:7–9 ¹⁸Jer. 31:35 ²¹Ps. 104:25, 26 ²²ch. 8:17; 9:1 ²⁶ch. 3:22; 11:7; Isa. 6:8 ⁹ch. 5:1; 9:6; 1 Cor. 11:7; Eph. 4:24; Col. 3:10; James 3:9 ¹⁹ch. 9:2; Ps. 8:6–8; James 3:7 ²⁷ch. 2:18, 21–23; 5:2; Mal. 2:15; Matt. 19:4; Mark 10:6

²⁸ And God blessed them. And God said to them, ⁵“Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and subdue it, and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over every living thing that moves on the earth.” ²⁹ And God said, “Behold, I have given you every plant yielding seed that is on the face of all the earth, and every tree with seed in its fruit. ⁴You shall have them for food. ³⁰ And ^uto every beast of the earth and to every bird of the heavens and to everything that creeps on the earth, everything that has the breath of life, I have given every green plant for food.” And it was so. ³¹ ^vAnd God saw everything that he had made, and behold, it was very good. And there was evening and there was morning, the sixth day.

The Seventh Day, God Rests

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

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

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

The Creation of Man and Woman

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

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

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

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

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

A HELPER FIT FOR HIM

GENESIS 2

I've had no greater joy in life than witnessing the wedding celebrations of my two daughters. One thing that contributed greatly to the happiness of that experience is that I, their father, performed the ceremonies. In doing so I reflected at length on Genesis 2, where we are given profound teaching on what it means to be a woman.

After God created Adam from the dust of the ground and breathed into him the breath of life, he placed him in the garden of Eden. There, in the splendor and beauty of that garden, as yet unstained by sin, one might think that Adam could ask for little more. With dominion over the creation and access to all the glory of God's handiwork, it seemed as if "paradise" was the only word fit to describe the life that was his.

But something wasn't quite right. There was something incomplete and unfinished about Adam's existence. For we read that the Lord God of heaven and earth looked down upon the pinnacle of his creative efforts and said, "It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him a helper fit for him" (Gen. 2:18). On the one hand, a woman is made in the image of God, whether married or not. At the same time, a husband and wife are made for one another. They are to be lifelong companions, best friends, united in covenant relationship.

But there is an even greater message in marriage. Scripture tells us that when God chose to create this universe and all that is in it, he had one ultimate and all-consuming purpose in his heart. Everything else was subordinate to this one goal. Whatever else God would do or say, it would all serve to achieve this single, consummate design—namely, to glorify himself by securing a bride for his Son, our Lord Jesus Christ. All of biblical history, from the creation of Adam and Eve in Genesis to the descent of the new heavens and new earth in Revelation, is the story of the Father's loving redemption and relentless pursuit of a bride, the church, for the bridegroom, Jesus Christ. Marriage is the glorious opportunity for a man and a woman to embody, express, and illustrate this love relationship between Jesus Christ and his bride, the church.

And yet this is not to say that marriage is required for a fulfilling life. Jesus himself, after all, was single his whole life. As meaningful as marriage is, what brings supreme fulfillment in life is not knowing and being loved by any other human being, but knowing and being loved by God. While it will be painful to lack the companionship of marriage, all God's people, married or single, are called to trust in him alone for their joy and comfort. He will never leave us or forsake us. He is a good Father.

SAM STORMS



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

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

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

shall not eat, for in the day that you eat ²of it you ^mshall surely die.”

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

“This at last is ^rbone of my bones
and flesh of my flesh;
she shall be called Woman,
because she was ^ttaken out of Man.”⁶

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

then **put** him in the garden (compare v. 15). The earliest translation 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.

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.

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

⁸ver. 15; ch. 13:10; Isa. 51:3; Ezek. 28:13; 31:8; Joel 2:3 ⁹ch. 3:22; Rev. 2:7; 22:2, 14 ¹⁰ver. 17 ¹¹ch. 10:7, 29; 25:18; 1 Sam. 15:7 ¹⁴Dan. 10:4 ¹⁵ver. 8 ¹⁷ch. 3:1–3, 11, 17 ¹⁸Rom. 6:23; James 1:15 ¹⁸1 Cor. 11:9; 1 Tim. 2:13 ¹⁹ch. 1:20, 24 ¹⁹Ps. 8:6 ²¹ch. 15:12; 1 Sam. 26:12 ²³ch. 29:14; Judg. 9:2; 2 Sam. 5:1; 19:13; [Eph. 5:28–30] ²¹1 Cor. 11:8

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

The Fall

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

He said to the woman, “Did God actually say, ‘You⁷ shall not eat of any tree in the garden?’” 2 And the woman said to the serpent, “We may eat of the fruit of the trees in the garden, 3 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.’” 4 ^wBut the serpent said to the woman, “You will not surely die. 5 For God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil.” 6 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,² she took of its fruit ^xand ate, and she

also gave some to her husband who was with her, ^yand he ate. 7^zThen the eyes of both were opened, ^aand they knew that they were naked. And they sewed fig leaves together and made themselves loincloths.

8 And they heard the sound of the LORD God walking in the garden in the cool³ of the day, and the man and his wife ^bhid themselves from the presence of the LORD God among the trees of the garden. 9 But the LORD God called to the man and said to him, “Where are you?”⁴ 10 And he said, “I heard the sound of you in the garden, and I was afraid, ^cbecause I was naked, and I hid myself.” 11 He said, “Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten of the tree of which I commanded you not to eat?” 12 The man said, ^d“The woman whom you gave to be with me, she gave me fruit of the tree, and I ate.” 13 Then the LORD God said to the woman, “What is this that you have done?” The woman said, ^e“The serpent deceived me, and I ate.”

14 The LORD God said to the serpent,

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

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

a wife, **they shall become one flesh.** That is, they become one 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 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^fCited Matt. 19:5; Mark 10:7; 1 Cor. 6:16; Eph. 5:31; [Ps. 45:10; 1 Cor. 7:10, 11] **CHAPTER 3** 1^fMatt. 10:16; 2 Cor. 11:3; Rev. 12:9; 20:2 3^{ch} ch. 2:17 4^{ver} ver. 13; John 8:44; [2 Cor. 11:3] 6¹ 1 Tim. 2:14 ^y ver. 12, 17; Hos. 6:7 7^{ver} ver. 5 ^{ch} ch. 2:25 8^f[Ps. 139:1-12; Jer. 23:23, 24] 10^{ch} ver. 7; ch. 2:25 12^{ch} ch. 2:18; Job 31:33 13^{ver} ver. 4; 2 Cor. 11:3; 1 Tim. 2:24

THE FALL OF MAN AND THE GRACE OF GOD

GENESIS 3

Created in the image of God and placed in a garden of serene beauty, Adam and Eve had nothing to fear or be anxious about. They enjoyed beauty and goodness and unhindered fellowship with one another and their Creator. But with one act of disobedience, everything changed. In a moment, death and evil were introduced into the world, devastating both creation (Rom. 8:20-22) and humankind (Rom. 5:12-15). It is appropriate for us to feel the gravity of what was lost in the fall when we read this passage.

At the same time, the evidences of God's grace in Genesis 3 are astounding. God would have been completely just had he immediately returned Adam to the dust from which he came and been done with humanity. Instead, he showed mercy and compassion. Reason for hope, in spite of sin, is evident in at least four ways in this passage.

The first is seen in God's curse upon the serpent: "I will put enmity between you and the woman. And between your offspring and her offspring; he shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise his heel" (Gen. 3:15). Theologians call this verse the *Protoevangelium*—the first announcement of the gospel. Immediately after sin enters the world, God initiates a plan to deal with it. This plan to reconcile people to himself becomes a unifying theme throughout the Bible, culminating in the person of Jesus Christ, the second Adam (Rom. 5:18-21), whose death and resurrection defeated sin, death, and the Devil (Heb. 2:14-15).

The second place we see God's grace is in Genesis 3:20, when Adam gives his wife a name. The verse almost seems out of place. Why mention this here? The name Eve means "life-giver." Although it will be in pain that she will bring forth children (v. 16), God is not done with humanity. Despite her sin, Eve will have the distinction of being "the mother of all living."

Third, verse 21 says, "the LORD God made for Adam and for his wife garments of skins and clothed them." That these garments were made of skins implies that an animal had to die to cover Adam and Eve's nakedness. This hints at the sacrificial system as well as the eventual work of Christ, through which we are clothed with his righteousness. It also shows the fatherly love of God toward his children. He did not leave us naked and ashamed.

Fourth, even God's driving Adam and Eve from Eden was an act of grace. The tree of life apparently served in some way to confirm a person in his or her moral condition (vv. 22-23). God refuses to allow Adam and Eve to eat from this tree of life and thus remain forever in their sinful state. He bars access to the tree until Jesus returns, at which time those of us who belong to him will once again be able to enjoy its fruit (Rev. 22:14).

ERIKA ALLEN



“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 ^ldust you shall eat
 all the days of your life.
¹⁵ I will put enmity between you and the
 woman,
 and between your offspring¹ and ⁹her
 offspring;
^hhe shall bruise your head,
 and you shall bruise his heel.”
¹⁶To the woman he said,
 “I will surely multiply your pain in
 childbearing;
ⁱin pain you shall bring forth children.
^jYour desire shall be contrary to² your
 husband,
 but he shall ^krule over you.”

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

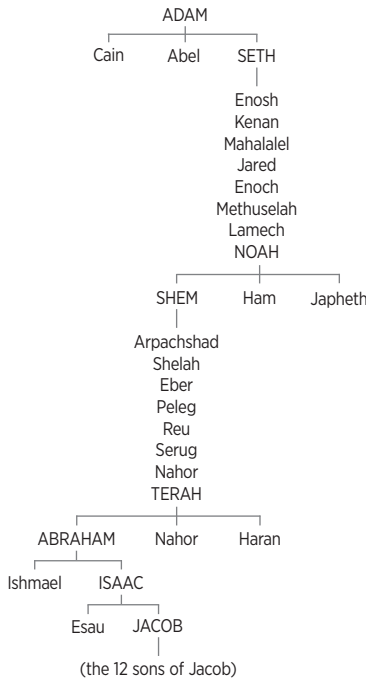
¹Hebrew *seed*; so throughout Genesis ²Or *shall be toward* (see 4:7)

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

3:15 This verse is usually understood as pointing forward to the defeat of the serpent by the **offspring** (that is, a descendant) of the woman. For this reason, it has been labeled the “Protoevangelium,” that is, the

first announcement of the gospel. While Genesis does not explicitly identify the serpent with Satan, that is clearly what the apostle John 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 contrary to your husband, but he shall rule over you.** God originally intended that there would be a complementary relationship between husband and wife, with the husband in a leadership role (see note on 2:15–16). But that plan has now been distorted and damaged by sin. This takes the form of “desire” on the part of the wife and heavy-handed “rule” on the part of the husband. The Hebrew term here for “desire” appears again in 4:7, where the Lord says to Cain that sin’s “desire is contrary to you.” Eve will have the sinful “desire” to oppose Adam and to assert leadership over him. But Adam will also abandon his God-given role of leading, guarding, and caring for Eve. Instead, he will have a sinful, distorted desire to “rule” over her. Thus one of the most tragic results of Adam and Eve’s rebellion against God is ongoing conflict between husbands and wives, as they both rebel against their God-given roles and responsibilities in marriage. (See notes on Eph. 5:21–32 for the NT ideal for marriage.)

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

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

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

²⁰The man called his wife's name Eve, because she was the mother of all living.¹ ²¹And the LORD God made for Adam and for his wife garments of skins and clothed them.

²²Then the LORD God said, ²³"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—" ²³therefore the LORD God sent him out from the garden of Eden ²⁴to work the ground from which he was taken. ²⁴He drove out the man, and at the east of the garden of Eden he placed the ²⁵cherubim and a flaming sword that turned every way to guard the way to the tree of life.

Cain and Abel

4 Now Adam knew Eve his wife, and she conceived and bore Cain, saying, "I have gotten² a man with the help of the LORD." ²And again, she bore his brother Abel. Now Abel was a keeper of sheep, and Cain a worker of the ground. ³In the course of time Cain brought to the LORD an offering of ⁴the fruit of the ground, ⁴and Abel also brought of ⁵the firstborn of his flock and of their fat portions. And the LORD ⁶had regard for Abel and his offering, ⁵but ⁷for Cain and his offering he had no regard. So Cain was very angry, and his face fell. ⁶The LORD said to Cain, "Why are you angry, and why has your face fallen? ⁷⁷If you do well, will you not be accepted? ⁸And if you do not do well, sin is crouching at the door. ⁹Its desire is contrary to ¹⁰you, but you must rule over it."

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

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 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

⁸Cain spoke to Abel his brother. ⁹And when they were in the field, Cain rose up against his brother Abel and ¹⁰killed him. ⁹Then the LORD said to Cain, "Where is Abel your brother?" He said, ¹⁰"I do not know; am I my brother's keeper?" ¹⁰And the LORD said, "What have you done? The voice of your brother's blood ¹¹is crying to me from the ground. ¹¹And now ¹²you are cursed from the ground, which has opened its mouth to receive your brother's blood from your hand. ¹²When you work the ground, it shall no longer yield to you its strength. You shall be a fugitive and a wanderer on the earth." ¹³Cain said to the LORD, "My ¹⁴punishment is greater than I can bear. ¹⁴Behold, ¹⁵you have driven me today away from the ground, and ¹⁶from your face I shall be hidden. I shall be a fugitive and a wanderer on the earth, ¹⁷and whoever finds me will kill me." ¹⁵Then the LORD said to him, "Not so! If anyone kills Cain, vengeance shall be taken on him ¹⁸sevenfold." And the LORD ¹⁹put a mark on Cain, lest any who found him should attack him. ¹⁶Then Cain went away from the presence of the LORD and settled in the land of Nod, ¹⁷east of Eden.

¹⁷Cain 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. ¹⁸To Enoch was born Irad, and Irad fathered Mehujael, and Mehujael fathered Methushael, and Methushael fathered Lamech. ¹⁹And Lamech took two wives. The name of the one was Adah, and the name of the other Zillah. ²⁰Adah bore Jabal; he was

possibility of pleasing God. To do so, however, he must overcome the power of **sin**, which is like a wild beast seeking to devour him.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

²³Lamech said to his wives:

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

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

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

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

Adam's Descendants to Noah

5 This is the book of the generations of Adam. When God created man, ^ohe made him in the likeness of God. ²Male and female he created them, and he blessed them and named them Man² when they were created. ³When Adam had lived

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

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.

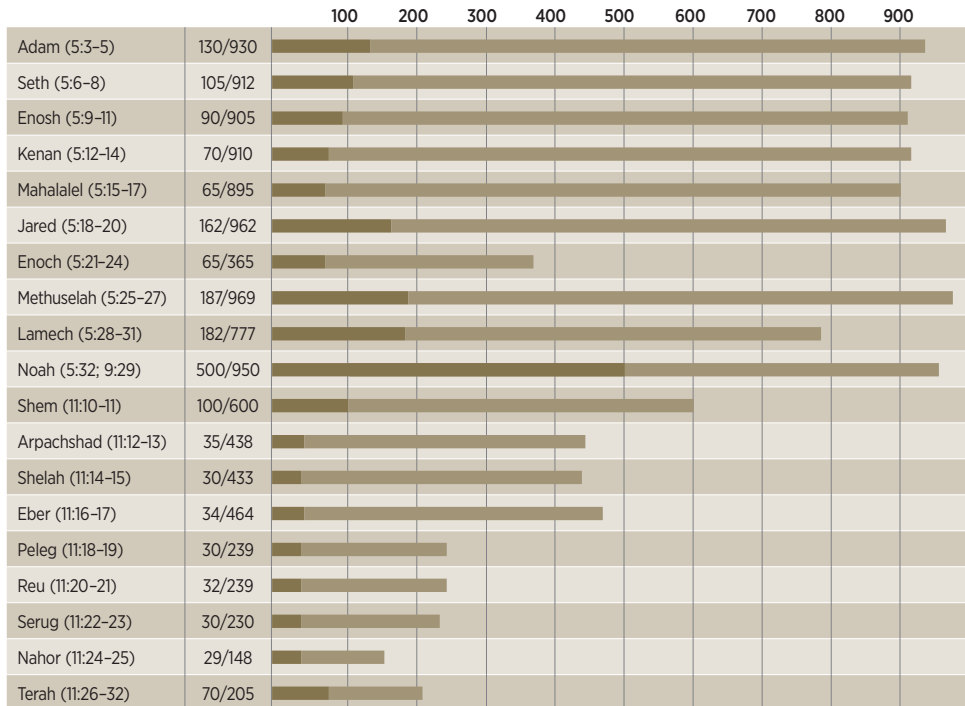
5:1-6:8 Adam's Descendants. This section of Genesis falls into two parts: 5:1-32 traces a single line of descendants from Adam to Noah, naming only one person in each generation (see diagram, p. 16); 6:1-8 provides a worldwide picture of increasing human wickedness.

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

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

Genealogies: Showing Age at Fatherhood and Age at Death



130 years, he fathered a son in his own likeness, after his image, and ^pnamed him Seth. ^{4q}The days of Adam after he fathered Seth were 800 years; and he had other sons and daughters. ⁵Thus all the days that Adam lived were 930 years, ^rand he died.

⁶When Seth had lived 105 years, ^she fathered Enosh. ⁷Seth lived after he fathered Enosh 807 years and had other sons and daughters. ⁸Thus all the days of Seth were 912 years, and he died.

⁹When Enosh had lived 90 years, he fathered Kenan. ¹⁰Enosh lived after he fathered Kenan 815 years and had other sons and daughters. ¹¹Thus all the days of Enosh were 905 years, and he died.

¹²When Kenan had lived 70 years, he fathered Mahalalel. ¹³Kenan lived after he fathered Mahalalel 840 years and had other sons and daughters. ¹⁴Thus all the days of Kenan were 910 years, and he died.

¹⁵When Mahalalel had lived 65 years, he fathered Jared. ¹⁶Mahalalel lived after he fathered Jared 830 years and had other sons and daughters. ¹⁷Thus all the days of Mahalalel were 895 years, and he died.

¹⁸When Jared had lived 162 years, he fathered ^tEnoch. ¹⁹Jared lived after he fathered Enoch 800 years and had other sons and daughters. ²⁰Thus all the days of Jared were 962 years, and he died.

²¹When Enoch had lived 65 years, he fathered Methuselah. ²²Enoch ^uwalked with God ¹after he

fathered Methuselah 300 years and had other sons and daughters. ²³Thus all the days of Enoch were 365 years. ²⁴Enoch ^vwalked with God, and he was not, ^{2v}for God took him.

²⁵When Methuselah had lived 187 years, he fathered Lamech. ²⁶Methuselah lived after he fathered Lamech 782 years and had other sons and daughters. ²⁷Thus all the days of Methuselah were 969 years, and he died.

²⁸When Lamech had lived 182 years, he fathered a son ²⁹and called his name Noah, saying, "Out of the ground ^wthat the LORD has cursed, this one shall bring us relief ³from our work and from the painful toil of our hands." ³⁰Lamech lived after he fathered Noah 595 years and had other sons and daughters. ³¹Thus all the days of Lamech were 777 years, and he died.

³²After Noah was 500 years old, Noah fathered ^xShem, Ham, and ^yJapheth.

Increasing Corruption on Earth

6 When man began to multiply on the face of the land and daughters were born to them, ²the sons of God saw that the daughters of man were attractive. And they took as their wives any they chose. ³Then the LORD said, ^z"My Spirit shall not abide in ⁴man forever, ^afor he is flesh: his days shall be 120 years." ⁴The Nephilim ⁵were on the earth in those days, and also afterward, when the sons of God came in to the daughters of man and

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

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

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

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

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

6:3 God announces that because of the immoral nature of people, their **days shall be 120 years**. This could mean either that the lives

PROFILE: NOAH

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

KEY REFERENCE: GENESIS 6:7-8

of human beings will no longer exceed 120 years, or that the flood will come in 120 years.

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

³ch. 4:25 ⁴For ver. 4-32, see 1 Chr. 11:4; Luke 3:36-38 ⁵ch. 3:19 ⁶ch. 4:26 ¹⁸Jude 14 ²²ver. 24; ch. 6:9; [Mic. 6:8; Mal. 2:6] ²⁴["See ver. 22 above"] ¹Heb. 11:5; [2 Kgs. 2:11] ²⁹ch. 3:17 ³²ch. 6:10 ^vch. 10:21 **CHAPTER 6** ³1 Pet. 3:19, 20; [Neh. 9:30; Gal. 5:16, 17] ⁴Ps. 78:39

they bore children to them. These were the mighty men who were of old, the men of renown.

^{5b}The LORD saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every ^cintention of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. ⁶And ^dthe LORD regretted that he had made man on the earth, and it ^egrieved him to his heart. ⁷So the LORD said, “I will blot out man whom I have created from the face of the land, man and animals and creeping things and birds of the heavens, for I am sorry that I have made them.” ⁸But Noah ^ffound favor in the eyes of the LORD.

Noah and the Flood

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

¹¹Now the earth was corrupt in God’s sight, and the earth was filled with violence. ¹²And God ^jsaw the earth, and behold, it was corrupt, ^kfor all flesh had corrupted their way on the earth. ¹³And God said to Noah, ^l“I have determined to make an end of all flesh, ^jfor the earth is filled with violence through them. Behold, I will destroy them with the earth. ¹⁴Make yourself an ark of gopher wood.²

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

Make rooms in the ark, and cover it inside and out with pitch. ¹⁵This is how you are to make it: the length of the ark 300 cubits, ³its breadth 50 cubits, and its height 30 cubits. ¹⁶Make a roof⁴ for the ark, and finish it to a cubit above, and set the door of the ark in its side. Make it with lower, second, and third decks. ^{17m}For behold, I will bring a flood of waters upon the earth to destroy all flesh in which is the breath of life under heaven. Everything that is on the earth shall die. ¹⁸But ⁿI will establish my covenant with you, and you shall come into the ark, you, your sons, your wife, and your sons’ wives with you. ¹⁹And of every living thing of all flesh, you shall bring two of every sort into the ark to keep them alive with you. They shall be male and female. ²⁰Of the birds according to their kinds, and of the animals according to their kinds, of every creeping thing of the ground, according to its kind, two of every sort shall come in to you to keep them alive. ²¹Also take with you every sort of food that is eaten, and store it up. It shall serve as food for you and for them.” ^{22o}Noah did this; he did all that God commanded him.

7 Then the LORD said to Noah, ^p“Go into the ark, you and all your household, for I have seen that ^qyou are righteous before me in this generation.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

6:15 In modern measurements, the ark would have been around 450 feet (140 m) long, 75 feet (23 m) wide, and 45 feet (14 m) high, displacing about 43,000 tons (about 39 million kg). The inside capacity would have been 1.4 million cubic feet (39,644 cubic m), with an approximate total deck area of 95,700 square feet (8,891 square m).

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

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

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

⁵Ps. 14:2, 3 ⁶ch. 8:21; Job 14:4; 15:14; Ps. 51:5; Jer. 17:9; Matt. 15:19; Rom. 3:23 ⁶1 Sam. 15:11; 2 Sam. 24:16; Joel 2:13; [Num. 23:19; 1 Sam. 15:29] ⁷Isa. 63:10; Eph. 4:30 ⁸ch. 19:19; Ex. 33:12, 13, 16, 17 ⁹ch. 7:1; Ezek. 14:14, 20; 2 Pet. 2:5 ¹⁰Job 11, 8; Luke 16 ch. 5:22, 24; [Heb. 11:7] ¹²Ps. 14:2, 3; 53:2, 3 ¹³Job 22:15–17 ¹⁴Ezek. 7:2, 3, 6 ¹⁷ch. 7:4; 2 Pet. 2:5 ¹⁸ch. 9:9, 11 ²²Heb. 11:7; [Ex. 40:16] **CHAPTER 7** ¹Matt. 24:38, 39; Luke 17:26, 27; Heb. 11:7; 1 Pet. 3:20; 2 Pet. 2:5 ²ch. 6:9

²Take with you seven pairs of all ^vclean animals, ¹the male and his mate, and a pair of the animals that are not clean, the male and his mate, ³and seven pairs² of the birds of the heavens also, male and female, to keep their offspring alive on the face of all the earth. ⁴For in seven days ⁵I will send rain on the earth forty days and forty nights, ⁴and every living thing³ that I have made I will blot out from the face of the ground.”⁵⁴And Noah did all that the LORD had commanded him.

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

¹¹In the six hundredth year of Noah's life, in the second month, on the seventeenth day of the month,

on that day all the ^vfountains of the great deep burst forth, and ^wthe windows of the heavens were opened. ¹²And rain fell upon the earth forty days and forty nights. ¹³On the very same day Noah and his sons, Shem and Ham and Japheth, and Noah's wife and the three wives of his sons with them entered the ark, ¹⁴they and every beast, according to its kind, and all the livestock according to their kinds, and every creeping thing that creeps on the earth, according to its kind, and every bird, according to its kind, every winged creature. ¹⁵They ^xwent into the ark with Noah, two and two of all flesh in which there was the breath of life. ¹⁶And those that entered, male and female of all flesh, went in ^yas God had commanded him. And the LORD shut him in.

¹⁷The flood ^zcontinued forty days on the earth. The waters increased and bore up the ark, and it rose high above the earth. ¹⁸The waters prevailed and increased greatly on the earth, and the ark floated on the face of the waters. ¹⁹And the waters prevailed so mightily on the earth that all the high mountains under the whole heaven were covered.

¹Or seven of each kind of clean animal ²Or seven of each kind ³Hebrew all existence; also verse 23

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

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

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

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

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

²ch. 8:20; [Lev. 11] ⁴ver. 12, 17; [Job 37:11-13] ¹ch. 6:17 ⁵ch. 6:22 ¹¹ch. 8:2; Prov. 8:28; [Amos 9:6] ¹⁰ch. 8:2; 2 Kgs. 7:19; Isa. 24:18; Mal. 3:10; [Ps. 78:23] ¹⁵ch. 6:20 ¹⁶ver. 2, 3 ¹⁷ver. 4, 12

Chronology of Noah's Time in the Ark

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

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

²⁰The waters prevailed above the mountains, covering them fifteen cubits¹ deep. ²¹And ^aall flesh died that moved on the earth, birds, livestock, beasts, all swarming creatures that swarm on the earth, and all mankind. ²²Everything on the dry land ^bin whose nostrils was the breath of life died. ²³He blotted out every living thing that was on the face of the ground, man and animals and creeping things and birds of the heavens. They were blotted out from the earth. Only ^cNoah was left, and those who were with him in the ark. ²⁴And the waters prevailed on the earth 150 days.

The Flood Subsides

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

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

to him in the evening, and behold, in her mouth was a freshly plucked olive leaf. So Noah knew that the waters had subsided from the earth. ¹²Then he waited another seven days and sent forth the dove, and she did not return to him anymore.

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

God’s Covenant with Noah

²⁰Then Noah built an altar to the LORD and took some of every clean animal and some of every clean bird and offered burnt offerings on the altar. ²¹And when the LORD smelled ^kthe pleasing aroma, the LORD said in his heart, “I will never again ^lcurse² the ground because of man, for ^mthe intention of man’s heart is evil from his youth. ⁿNeither will I ever again strike down every living creature as I have done. ²²^oWhile the earth remains, seedtime and harvest, cold and heat, summer and winter, ^pday and night, shall not cease.”

9 And God blessed Noah and his sons and said to them, ^q“Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth. ²^rThe fear of you and the dread of you shall be upon every beast of the earth and upon every bird of the heavens, upon everything that creeps

¹A cubit was about 18 inches or 45 centimeters ²Or dishonor

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

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

8:2–4 In v. 2 God reverses the process started in 7:11. The waters both rose and fell during the period of **150 days** (see note on 7:17–24). **Mountains of Ararat** indicates a range of mountains of which Mount Ararat (in modern Turkey) is the highest. The text does not name the specific mountain on which the ark came to rest.

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

9:1–4 The earlier positive instruction that humans should exercise authority over the other living creatures (1:28–30) is replaced by the negative comment that those creatures will **fear** and **dread** humans. God now permits the taking of animal life for food (in contrast to

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