



“Then he said to me,  
‘These words are **faithful and true.**’”

Revelation 22:6a  
Christian Standard Bible

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**CHRISTIAN  
STANDARD  
BIBLE®**

## **FAITHFUL and TRUE**

These words describe God's Word (Revelation 22:6). They also describe the heartbeat of pastoral ministry. As a pastor, you want to be "faithful" and "true" to the Word that reveals God's character and transforms lives.

At LifeWay, we share your commitment to God's Word, and that is why we are delighted to present you with the CSB Study Bible, which includes thousands of notes, articles, and features to help Bible readers understand and share the Word of God.

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## **TREVIN WAX, PH.D.**

Bible and Reference Publisher  
LifeWay Christian Resources, Nashville, TN

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# Introducing the **CHRISTIAN STANDARD BIBLE**

**Faithful and True:** These words remind us that God's Word reveals His character and will to us, transforms our lives, and leaves us in awe of His glory. At LifeWay, we strive to be faithful and true to the Word of God in all that we do, and we know that God is faithful and true to guide us as we publish biblical resources for life.

We are excited to introduce you to the Christian Standard Bible (CSB). Throughout its history, the Holman Christian Standard Bible (HCSB) has held firm in its commitment to combine strong biblical scholarship with a translation fit for modern readers. Continuing this commitment to scholarship and readability, the Christian Standard Bible is now positioned to serve more people and churches than ever before.

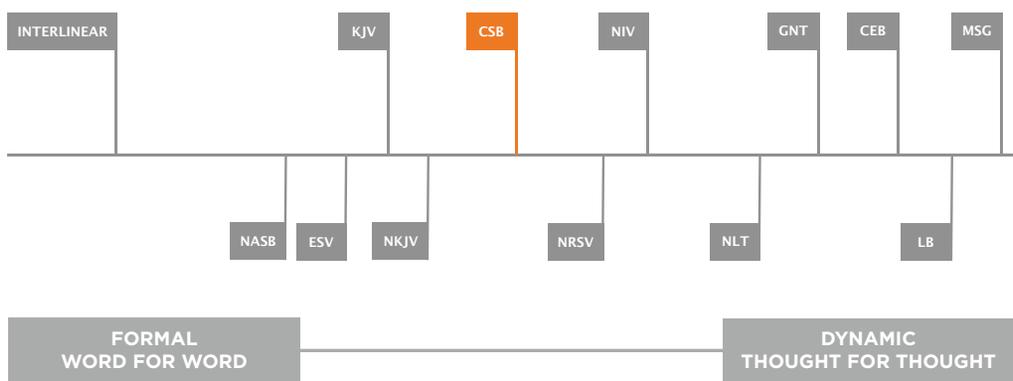
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The CSB was created using Optimal Equivalence, a translation philosophy that balances contemporary English readability with linguistic precision of the original languages. In the many places throughout Scripture where a word-for-word rendering is clearly understandable, a literal translation is used. When a word-for-word rendering might obscure the meaning for a modern audience, a more dynamic translation is used. This process assures that both the words and thoughts contained in the original text are conveyed as accurately as possible for today’s readers.

### BIBLE TRANSLATION CONTINUUM



*Bible translations shown in the top half of the chart are original translations directly from ancient languages to English. Versions shown below the line began with the English text of another Bible translation.*

On one hand, the CSB provides a highly accurate text for faithful sermon preparation and serious study, translated straight from the biblical languages by scholars who love God’s Word. It is highly faithful to the original text. On the other hand, it does not compromise readability and clarity for those who may be less familiar with the traditional (and sometimes difficult) vocabulary retained in some translations of the Bible.

Beyond that, we know that the good news of the Bible is meant to be shared. A translation that hits the sweet spot between fidelity and readability opens the door for every believer to share the Bible with someone who has read it for a lifetime, or with someone who has never before read its life-changing message.

# AWARD WINNING STUDY TOOLS

Expanded and improved  
featuring additional  
word studies, feature articles,  
and more!

The *CSB Study Bible* offers an updated edition of the award-winning Holman study system, which includes exclusive features including over 16,000 study notes, tools, word studies, and articles from respected Bible scholars. The result is a study Bible that helps the reader better understand and apply the life-transforming message of God's written Word.

Exclusive features include: Detailed book introductions and outlines, concordance, center-column cross-references, Smyth-sewn binding, presentation section, two-column text and topical subheadings, as well as:

16,124 Study Notes

368 Word Studies

55 Maps

21 Illustrations/Reconstructions

44 Paintings

94 Photographs

19 Charts

61 Timelines

34 Articles

The *CSB Study Bible* features the highly reliable, highly readable text of the Christian Standard Bible (CSB), which stays as literal as possible to the Bible's original meaning without sacrificing clarity. The CSB's optimal blend of accuracy and readability makes Scripture more moving, more memorable, and more motivating to read and share with others.

## INTRODUCTION TO GENESIS

66 INTRODUCTIONS

beginnings in the Bible. its Hebrew and Greek name "Beginning" [based on 1:1 [based on 2:4]], Genesis beginning of a multitude

### INTRODUCTION TO GENESIS

2

#### CIRCUMSTANCES OF WRITING

**AUTHOR:** Since pre-Christian times authorship of the Torah, the five books that include the book of Genesis, has been attributed to Moses, an enormously influential Israelite leader from the second millennium BC with an aristocratic Egyptian background. Even though Genesis is technically anonymous, both the Old and New Testaments unanimously recognize Moses as the Torah's author (Jos 8:35; 23:6; 1Kg 2:3; 8:9; 2Kg 14:6; 23:25; 2Ch 23:18; 25:4; 30:16; 34:14; 35:12; Ezr 3:2; 6:18; Neh 8:1; 9:14; Dn 9:11,13; Mal 4:4; Mk 12:19,26; Lk 2:22; 20:28; 24:44; Jn 1:17,45; 7:19; Ac 13:39; 15:21; 28:23; Rm 10:5; 1Co 9:9; Heb 10:28). At the same time, evidence in Gen-

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God is Spirit (Jn 4:24), many commentators believe it refers to the non-material aspects of a person—our moral sensibilities, intellectual

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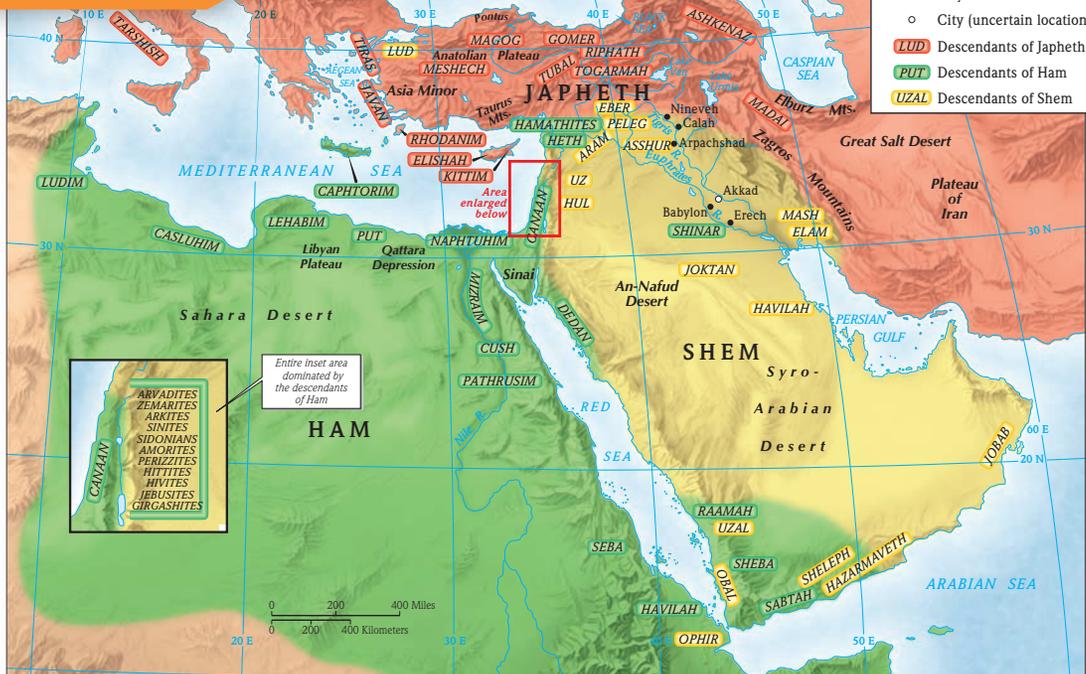
## yom

Hebrew pronunciation	[YOHM]
CSB translation	day, time
Uses in Genesis	152
Uses in the OT	2,301
Focus passage	Genesis 1:5,8,13-14,16,18-19,23,31

**Yom** means *day*, the Hebrew *day* lasting from one evening to the next (Gn 1:5). *Yom* describes a working *day* (Ex 20:9) or *day* of the *month* (Zch 1:7). It indicates a *time* (Pr 24:10) or *occasion* (Nm 10:10). *In the day* often appears as *when* (Zch 8:9). The plural can represent *age* (Jb 32:7), *lifetime* (Jos 24:31), or *reign* (Is 1:1). The plural denotes a *number of days* (Neh 1:4), a *time period* (Lv 25:8), *some time* (Gn 40:4), a *year* (Lv 25:29), or *years* (Ex 2:11). With the definite article *yom* suggests *today* (Dt 4:39), *now* (Neh 1:6), *whenever* (1Sm 1:4), *one day* (Jb 1:6), or *by day* (Jb 1:2).

## 365 WORD STUDIES

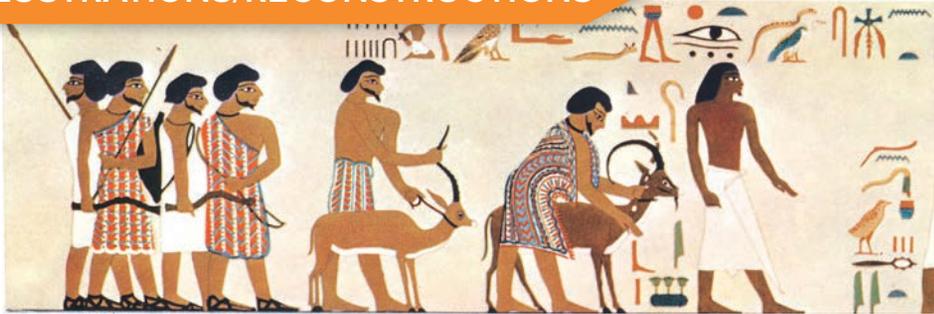
## 55 MAPS



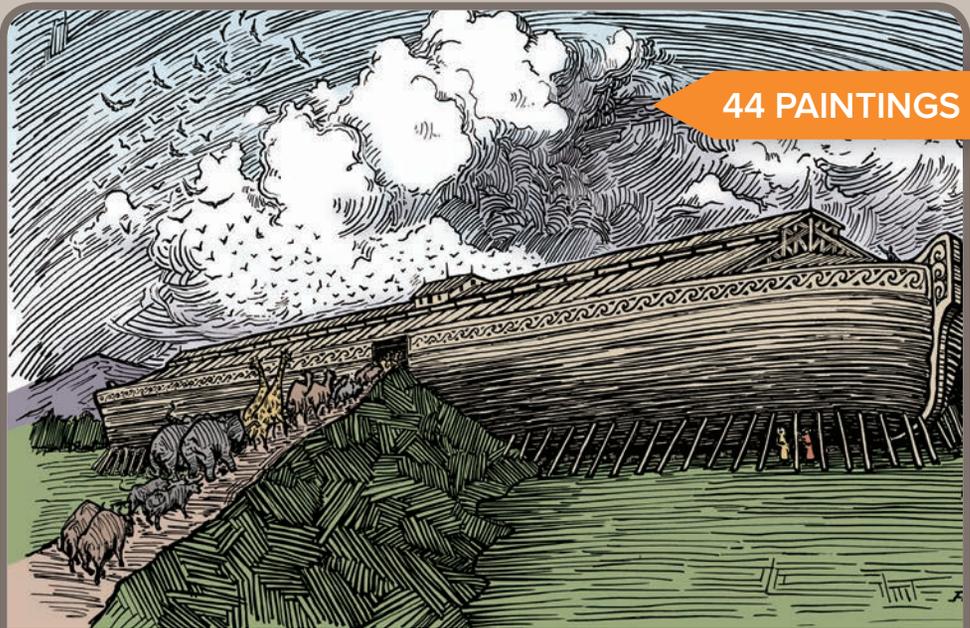
The Table of Nations shows that the Bible is firmly based on historical events. It provides the historical context for understanding Abraham, whose family became a nation through whom God would bless all peoples of the earth.



## 21 ILLUSTRATIONS/RECONSTRUCTIONS



Paintings from the tomb of Knumhotep found in the noblemen cemetery of Beni-Hasan, a village on the east bank of the Nile River of Cairo. The paintings date from the Middle Kingdom of Egypt (ca 1099 BC) and show a group of 37 Asiatics as they enter Egypt. with an idea of how Abraham might have dressed.



## 44 PAINTINGS

A reconstruction of the ark Noah built. The dimensions of the ark made it eminently seaworthy. The vessel in the *Epic of Gilgamesh*, a that has some parallels to Noah's, is a cube. Such a vessel would have rolled over at the slightest disturbance.



94 PHOTOGRAPHS

61 TIMELINES

craftsman. This indicates that he has infinite power and perfect control over everything. He is separate from the ship between is found in the of the great flood.

2100 BC

Job 2100?–1900?

Abraham 2166–1991

Isaac

11TH DYNASTY OF EGYPT 2134–1991

3RD DYNASTY OF UR 2113–2000

Abraham moves from Haran to Canaan. 2091

Destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah 2085

God's covenant with Abraham 2081?

Earliest pottery in South America 2200

Construction of Ziggurat at Ur in Sumer 2100

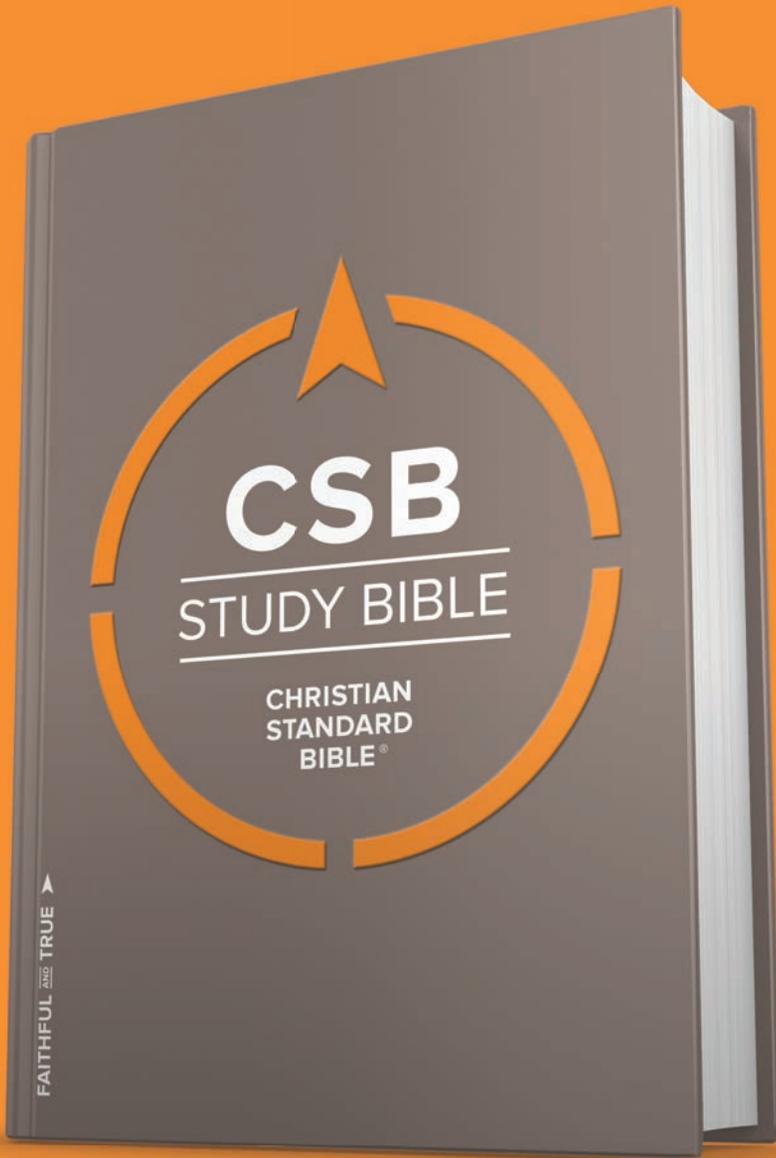
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to explain how God performed the supernatural act of shutting Noah in. This divine act highlights the truth found elsewhere in the Bible: "Salvation belongs to the LORD" (Jnh 2:9). **7:17-20** More than twenty feet is literally fifteen cubits, which is about 22½ feet. For more on the scope of Noah's flood, see note at 6:17. **7:21** Through the use of expanded restatement the author brings the detailed account of the flood's destruction to a climax. **7:22** For dramatic effect a second expanded expression of the flood's destructive effects immediately follows the one in the previous verse. **7:23** The overpowering presentation of death is contrasted with Noah's preservation. **7:24** Though the text does not explicitly say so, the total of 150 days seems to include the forty days of rain (see note at v. 12). The Hebrew word translated as **surged** emphasizes the power of the waters. **8:1** **Remembered** does not suggest that God had ever forgotten about Noah; when used of God, "remember" suggests the initiation of a miraculous, saving act of God. Other instances of God "remembering" as the first step in providing divine help for his people include his intervention in the lives of Lot (19:29), Rachel

Using language that reflects God's initial act of creating the universe (Gn 1:2), God caused (Hb) *ruach*—"Spirit"—wind to cause the waters of the flood to surge. **8:2** Following the 150 days of ever surging waters, a turnabout occurred: all the sources of water (from above and below) stopped and the water began to subside. The initial downpour ended after forty days and nights (7:12), so presumably the rains that are said to have ceased in the present verse were only sporadic showers. **8:3** Just as the flood had increased upon the earth for 150 days, so it steadily receded from the earth for 150 days, until the levels had decreased significantly. **8:4** Exactly five months after the flood had begun (7:11), the ark came to rest . . . on the mountains of Ararat—modern Turkey or Armenia. **8:5-6** This is the only mention of a window (Hb *hallon*) in the ark. Noah opened the window to determine the earth's readiness to receive the ark's cargo of people and animals. **8:7** Rabbis have suggested that Noah first sent out a raven, a ritually unclean bird, be-

34 EXPANDED ARTICLES

cause it was back and forth could find no rest. **8:9** Though (v. 4) and mountains had dove to find **8:10-11** When its second firm that trees grow) by this passage olive branch **8:12** When time and it life-sustaining earth's more **8:13-14** On birthday he confirmed w the plains b





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	ISBN	BINDING MATERIAL	PRICE
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# INTRODUCTION TO GENESIS

The book of Genesis is the great book of beginnings in the Bible. True to the meanings of its Hebrew and Greek names (Hb *bereshith*, “In Beginning” [based on 1:1]; Gk *Geneseos*, “Of Birth” [based on 2:4]), Genesis permits us to view the beginning of a multitude of realities that shape our daily existence: the creation of the universe and the planet earth; the origins of plant and animal life; and the origins of human beings, marriage, families, nations, industry, artistic expression, religious ritual, prophecy, sin, law, crime, conflict, punishment, and death.



A caravan of camels casts a long shadow in the desert.

**CIRCUMSTANCES OF WRITING**

**AUTHOR:** Since pre-Christian times authorship of the Torah, the five books that include the book of Genesis, has been attributed to Moses, an enormously influential Israelite leader from the second millennium BC with an aristocratic Egyptian background. Even though Genesis is technically anonymous, both the Old and New Testaments unanimously recognize Moses as the Torah's author (Jos 8:35; 23:6; 1Kg 2:3; 8:9; 2Kg 14:6; 23:25; 2Ch 23:18; 25:4; 30:16; 34:14; 35:12; Ezr 3:2; 6:18; Neh 8:1; 9:14; Dn 9:11,13; Mal 4:4; Mk 12:19,26; Lk 2:22; 20:28; 24:44; Jn 1:17,45; 7:19; Ac 13:39; 15:21; 28:23; Rm 10:5; 1Co 9:9; Heb 10:28). At the same time, evidence in Genesis suggests that minor editorial changes dating to ancient times have been inserted into the text. Examples include the mention of "Dan" (14:14), a city that was not named until the days of the judges (Jdg 18:29), and the use of a phrase that assumed the existence of Israelite kings (Gn 36:31).

**BACKGROUND:** The Torah (a Hebrew term for "law" or "instruction") was seen as one unit until at least the second century BC. Sometime prior to the birth of Christ, the Torah was divided into five separate books, later referred to as the Pentateuch (literally, five vessels). Genesis, the first book of the Torah, provides both the universal history of humankind and the patriarchal history of the nation of Israel. The first section (chaps. 1–11) is a general history commonly called the "primeval history," showing how all humanity descended from one couple and became sinners. The second section (chaps. 12–50) is a more specific history commonly referred to as the "patriarchal history," focusing on the covenant God made with Abraham and his descendants: Isaac, Jacob, and Jacob's 12 sons. Genesis unfolds God's plan to bless and redeem humanity through Abraham's descendants. The book concludes with the events that led to the Israelites being in the land of Egypt.

**MESSAGE AND PURPOSE**

**CREATION:** God is the sovereign Lord and Creator of all things. God created everything out of nothing. No preexistent material existed. He is the Creator, not a craftsman. This indicates that he has infinite power and perfect control over everything. He is separate from the

created order, and no part of creation is to be considered an extension of God. All that God created is good, because he is a good and majestic God. God is Lord, maintaining sovereignty and involvement with his creation. God's control over human history is so complete that even the worst of human deeds can be turned to serve his benevolent purposes (50:20).

**HUMAN LIFE:** Adam and Eve were created in the image of God, unique from the rest of creation, to have fellowship with him. Humans are a paradox. On the one hand, people are the capstone of all God's creation, created in God's image (1:26-27) and possessing Godlike authority over all the created order within their realm (1:28-29; 9:1-3). On the other hand, they are sinners—beings who have used their God-given resources and abilities in ways that violate God's laws (2:17; 3:6) and hurt other people (3:8-11; 6:5,11-12). Even so, during their lifetime God expects people to follow his laws (4:7), and he blesses those who live according to his ways (6:8-9; 39:2,21). God wants to work through individuals to bring a blessing to every human life (18:18; 22:18; 26:4). Nevertheless, Genesis teaches that because of sin all human beings must die (2:17; 3:19; 5:5,8,11). Since all human life is created in the image of God, no person or class of humans is superior to others. Humanity was created to live in community. The most fundamental unit of community is the family: a husband (male) and wife (female) with children.

**SIN:** Evil and sin did not originate with God. Adam and Eve were created innocent and with the capacity to make choices. Sin entered the world at a specific place and time in history. Adam and Eve chose freely to disobey God, fell from innocence, and lost their freedom. Their sinful nature has passed to every other human being. Sin resulted in death, both physical and spiritual. Sin has led to a world of pain and struggle.

**COVENANT:** Genesis is a narrative of relationships, and certainly relationships grounded in covenants with God. These covenants provide a unifying principle for understanding the whole of Scripture and define the relationship between God and man. The heart of that relationship is found in the phrase, "They will be my people, and I will

2100 BC		2000 BC	
Job 2100?–1900?	Abraham 2166–1991	Isaac 2066–1886	Jacob 2006–1859
<b>11TH DYNASTY OF EGYPT 2134–1991</b>	<b>3RD DYNASTY OF UR 2113–2006</b>	<b>12TH DYNASTY OF EGYPT 1991–1786</b>	
Abraham moves from Haran to Canaan. <b>2091</b>		Contraceptives are developed in Egypt. <b>2000</b>	
Destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah <b>2085</b>		Chinese create first zoo, Park of Intelligence. <b>2000</b>	
God's covenant with Abraham <b>2081?</b>		Babylonians and Egyptians divide days into hours, minutes, and seconds. <b>2000</b>	
Earliest pottery in South America <b>2200</b>		Mesopotamians learn to solve quadratic equations. <b>2000</b>	
Construction of Ziggurat at Ur in Sumer <b>2100</b>		Code of medical ethics, Mesopotamia <b>2000</b>	
		Courier systems of communication are developed in both China and Egypt. <b>2000</b>	

be their God” (Jr 32:38; cp. Gn 17:7-8; Ex 6:6-7; Lv 26:12; Dt 4:20; Jr 11:4; Ezk 11:20). God’s covenant with Abraham is a major event both in Genesis and throughout the Bible. God called Abraham out of Ur to go to Canaan, promising to make him a great nation that in turn would bless all nations (Gn 12:1-3). God repeats his oath in Genesis 22:18, adding further that it would be through Abraham’s offspring (Hb zera’ “seed”) that all nations would someday be blessed. Paul applies the singular noun *seed* as a reference to Christ (Gl 3:16). It is through Christ, Abraham’s prophesied descendant, that the blessings of the Abrahamic Covenant would come to every nation.

### CONTRIBUTION TO THE BIBLE

Genesis lays the groundwork for everything else we read and experience in Scripture. Through Genesis we understand where we came from, how we got in the fallen state we are in, and the beginnings of God’s gracious work on our behalf. Genesis unfolds God’s original purpose for humanity.

Genesis provides the foundation from which we understand God’s covenant with Israel that was es-

tablished with the giving of the law. For the Israelite community, the stories of the origins of humanity, sin, and the covenant relationship with God helped them understand why God gave them the law.

### STRUCTURE

Genesis is chiefly a narrative. From a narrative standpoint, God is the only true hero of the Bible, and the book of Genesis has the distinct privilege of introducing him. God is the first subject of a verb in the book and is mentioned more frequently than any other character in the Bible. The content of the first eleven chapters is distinct from the patriarchal stories in chapters 12–50. The primary literary device is the catchphrase “these are the family records.” The phrase is broader in meaning than simply “generation,” and refers more to a narrative account. This was a common practice in ancient Near East writings. This phrase also serves as a link between the key person in the previous narrative and the one anticipated in the next section. Genesis could be described as historical genealogy, which ties together creation and human history in one continuum.

### Outline

- I. Creation of Heaven and Earth (1:1–2:3)
  - A. Creator and creation (1:1-2)
  - B. Six days of creation (1:3-31)
  - C. Seventh day—day of consecration (2:1-3)
- II. The Human Family In and Outside the Garden (2:4–4:26)
  - A. The man and woman in the garden (2:4-25)
  - B. The man and woman expelled from the garden (3:1-24)
  - C. Adam and Eve’s family outside the garden (4:1-26)
- III. Adam’s Family Line (5:1–6:8)
  - A. Introduction: Creation and blessing (5:1-2)
  - B. “Image of God” from Adam to Noah (5:3-32)
  - C. Conclusion: Procreation and perversion (6:1-8)
- IV. Noah and His Family (6:9–9:29)
  - A. Righteous Noah and the corrupt world (6:9-12)
  - B. Coming judgment but the ark of promise (6:13–7:10)
  - C. Worldwide flood of judgment (7:11-24)
- D. God’s remembrance and rescue of Noah (8:1-14)
- E. Exiting the ark (8:15-19)
- F. Worship and the word of promise (8:20-22)
- G. God’s covenant with the new world (9:1-17)
- H. Noah’s sons and future blessing (9:18-29)
- V. The Nations and the Tower of Babylon (10:1–11:26)
  - A. Table of Nations (10:1-32)
  - B. Tower of Babylon (11:1-9)
  - C. Family line of Abram (11:10-26)
- VI. Father Abraham (11:27–25:11)
  - A. Abram’s beginnings (11:27-32)
  - B. The promissory call and Abram’s obedience (12:1-9)
  - C. Abram and Sarai in Egypt: Blessing begins (12:10–13:1)
  - D. Abram and Lot part: Promises recalled (13:2-18)
  - E. Abram rescues Lot: Abram’s faithfulness (14:1-24)

1900 BC

Jacob wrestles with God. **1903?**  
 Potter’s wheel is introduced to Crete. **1900**  
 Use of the sail in the Aegean **1900**  
 First Chinese city is founded at Erlitou on Yellow River. **1900**  
 Egyptian town of El Lahun gives evidence of town planning with streets at right angles. **1900**  
 Mesopotamian mathematicians discover what later came to be called the Pythagorean theorem. **1900**

1800 BC

Joseph 1915-1805

Khnumhotep II, an architect of Pharaoh Amenemhet II, develops encryption. **1900**  
 Amorite Ascendancy **1894–1595**  
 Musical theory, Mesopotamia **1800**  
 Multiplication tables, Mesopotamia **1800**  
 Babylonians develop catalog of stars and planets. **1800**  
 Book of the Dead, Egypt **1800**  
 Horses are introduced in Egypt. **1800**  
 Wooden plows, Scandinavia **1800**

- F. Covenant promises confirmed (15:1-21)
- G. Abram's firstborn son, Ishmael (16:1-16)
- H. Covenant sign of circumcision (17:1-27)
- I. Divine judgment and mercy (18:1-19:38)
- J. Abraham and Sarah in Gerar: Promises preserved (20:1-18)
- K. Abraham's promised son: The birth of Isaac (21:1-21)
- L. Treaty with Abimelech (21:22-34)
- M. Abraham's test (22:1-19)
- N. Family line of Rebekah (22:20-24)
- O. Sarah's burial site (23:1-20)
- P. A wife for Isaac (24:1-67)
- Q. Abraham's death and burial (25:1-11)
- VII. Ishmael's Family Line (25:12-18)
- VIII. Isaac's Family: Jacob and Esau (25:19-35:29)
  - A. Struggle at birth and birthright (25:19-34)
  - B. Isaac's deception and strife with the Philistines (26:1-35)
  - C. Stolen blessing and flight to Paddan-aram (27:1-28:9)
  - D. Promise of blessing at Bethel (28:10-22)
  - E. Laban deceives Jacob (29:1-30)
  - F. Birth of Jacob's children (29:31-30:24)
  - G. Birth of Jacob's herds (30:25-43)
  - H. Jacob deceives Laban (31:1-55)
  - I. Struggle for blessing at Peniel (32:1-32)
  - J. Restored gift and return to Shechem (33:1-20)
  - K. Dinah, deception, and strife with the Hivites (34:1-31)
  - L. Blessing and struggle at birth (35:1-29)
- IX. Esau's Family (36:1-8)
- X. Esau, Father of the Edomites (36:9-37:1)
- XI. Jacob's Family: Joseph and His Brothers (37:2-50:26)
  - A. The early days of Joseph (37:2-36)
  - B. Judah and Tamar (38:1-30)
  - C. Joseph in Egypt (39:1-23)
  - D. Joseph, savior of Egypt (40:1-41:57)
  - E. The brothers' journeys to Egypt (42:1-43:34)
  - F. Joseph tests the brothers (44:1-34)
  - G. Joseph reveals his identity (45:1-28)
  - H. Jacob's migration to Egypt (46:1-27)
  - I. Joseph, savior of the family (46:28-47:12)
  - J. Joseph's administration in Egypt (47:13-31)
  - K. Jacob's blessings (48:1-49:28)
  - L. The death and burial of Jacob (49:29-50:14)
  - M. The final days of Joseph (50:15-26)

## THE CREATION

**1** In the beginning<sup>a</sup> God created the heavens and the earth.<sup>A,B</sup>

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

<sup>6</sup> Then God said, “Let there be an expanse between the waters, separating water from water.”<sup>f</sup> <sup>7</sup> So God made the expanse and separated the water under the expanse from the water above the expanse.<sup>g</sup> And it was so. <sup>8</sup> God

called the expanse “sky.”<sup>h</sup> Evening came and then morning: the second day.

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

<sup>14</sup> Then God said, “Let there be lights in the expanse of the sky to separate the day from

<sup>A:1</sup> Or *created the universe*   <sup>B:1</sup> Or *“heavens.”*

**1:1** This opening verse of the Bible, seven words in the Hebrew, establishes seven key truths upon which the rest of the Bible is based.

First, God exists. The essential first step in pleasing God is acknowledging his existence (Heb 11:6). Second, God existed before there was a universe and will exist after the universe perishes (Heb 1:10-12). Third, God is the main character in the Bible. He is the subject of the first verb in the Bible (in fact, he is the subject of more verbs than any other character) and performs a wider variety of activities than any other being in the Bible. Fourth, as Creator, God has done what no human could ever do; in its active form the Hebrew verb *bara'*, meaning “to create,” never has a human subject. Thus *bara'* signifies a work that is uniquely God’s. Fifth, God is mysterious; though this particular Hebrew word for God is plural, the verb form of which “God” is the subject is singular. This is perhaps a subtle allusion to God’s Trinitarian nature: He is three divine persons in one divine essence. Sixth, God is the Creator of heaven and earth. He does not just modify preexisting matter but calls matter into being out of nothing (Ps 33:6,9; Heb 11:3). Seventh, God is not dependent on the universe, but the universe is totally dependent on God (Heb 1:3).

**1:2** Bible translations since the time of the Septuagint, the translation of the OT into Greek (ca 175 BC), have rendered the Hebrew verb in this verse as *was*. However, in an effort to explain the origins of evil and/or find biblical evidence for an old earth, some Bible scholars have suggested that this verb should be translated as “became.” Citing portions of Is 14:12-21 and Ezk 28:12-19, they believe a time gap, possibly a vast one, exists between the first two verses of the Bible, during which Satan led a rebellion in heaven against God. This allows interpreters to suggest that the early earth became **formless and empty** because Satan’s rebellion marred God’s good creation. However, the construction of this sentence in the original Hebrew favors the traditional translation (“was” rather than “became”).

The sense of v. 2 is that God created the earth “formless and empty” as an unfinished and unfilled state. Working through an orderly process over a period of six days, God formed (days 1-3) and filled (days 4-6) his created handiwork. The “forming” was accomplished by means of three acts of separating or sorting various elements of creation from one another. The “filling” was carried out through five acts of populating the newly created domains. **Watery depths**, a single word in Hebrew, suggests an original state of creation that was shapeless as liquid water. The Hebrew verb translated **was hovering**, used also in Dt 32:11, suggests that the Spirit of God was watching over his creation just as a bird watches over its young.

**1:3** A foundational teaching of the Bible is that God speaks and does so with universe-changing authority. The command in this verse is just two words in Hebrew.

**1:4** Another basic truth of the Bible is that **God saw**; this means he is fully aware of his creation. Later writers directly declared that God is aware of events occurring throughout the earth (2Ch 16:9; Zch 4:10). The term **good**, used here for the first of seven times in this chapter to evaluate God’s creative work, can be used to express both high quality and moral excellence. The physical universe is a good place because God made it. God found satisfaction in his labor. This is the first instance where **God separated** the twin realms of light and darkness, day and night. God’s activity in the material world parallels the role he also performs in the moral universe, that of the righteous Judge distinguishing between those who live in moral light and those who do not (1Th 5:5).

**1:5** In ancient Israel, the act of naming an object, place, or person indicated that you held control over it (35:10; 41:45; Nm 32:42; Dt 3:14; Jos 19:47; 2Kg 23:34; 24:17). When God named the light and the darkness, he asserted his lordship and control over all of time. **There was an evening**. In ancient Israelite and modern Jewish tradition, sundown is the transition point from one day to the next. Scholars

differ over the meaning of “day” in the phrases “one day . . . the second day,” etc. Some argue for twenty-four-hour periods, but other options are possible, especially since (1) there was at first no sun by which to distinguish twenty-four-hour periods, (2) “day” means the period of daylight in 1:5a, and (3) “day” refers to the whole creation period in 2:4 (“at the time” is lit “on the day”). Consequently, some scholars understand the “days” of creation as extended periods of uncertain length or as a rhetorical device by which the account of creation is structured.

**1:6** Based on a verb that can refer to covering something with a thin sheet of metal (Nm 16:39; Is 40:19), the noun **expanse** always refers to the vast spread of the open sky.

**1:7** God’s second act of separation was to divide atmospheric water from terrestrial water. Thus he began the process of giving form to the material world. The clause **it was so**, found six times in this chapter, emphasizes God’s absolute power over creation.

**1:8** **Sky** can refer to the earth’s atmospheric envelope (v. 20), outer space (v. 15), or “heaven,” the spiritual realm where God lives (Ps 11:4).

**1:9** God’s third and final act of separation created oceans and continents.

**1:10** In his third and final act of naming, God demonstrated his authority over all of the earth. This contrasts with what Israel’s polytheistic neighbors believed about the range of divine powers. Their gods were not all-powerful, but instead exercised authority over a limited territory. The God of Gn 1 holds dominion over everything at all times and in all places.

**1:11-13** In preparation for the introduction of animal and human life, God provided an abundant supply of food. The consistent biblical teaching is that “like begets like” (Lk 6:44; Jms 3:12); Gn 1:11-12 establishes that principle for plant life. While five of the six days contain at least one act of creation evaluated as **good**, only the third and sixth days have this statement more than once.

**1:14-15** The events of day four complement those of day one, filling the day and night with finished forms of light. The various **lights**, or

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

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

earth.”<sup>f</sup> <sup>23</sup> Evening came and then morning: the fifth day.

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

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

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

<sup>28</sup> God blessed them, and God said to them, “Be fruitful, multiply, fill the earth,<sup>k</sup> and subdue it. Rule the fish of the sea, the birds of the sky,

<sup>a</sup>1:14 Or for the appointed times <sup>b</sup>1:20 Lit with swarms of <sup>c</sup>1:21 Or created sea monsters <sup>d</sup>1:26 Or human beings; Hb 'adam, also in v.27 <sup>e</sup>1:26 Or as <sup>f</sup>1:26 Syr reads sky, and over every animal of the land <sup>g</sup>1:26 Or scurry <sup>h</sup>1:27 Or man as his own image; he created him as

“light-giving objects,” were worshiped as gods in the cultures that surrounded ancient Israel. In Genesis, however, the sun, moon, and stars are portrayed as servants of God that would fulfill three roles: separating the newly created realms of **day** and **night**; marking time so that those who worshiped the Creator could keep their festivals in each of the **seasons** (cp. Lv 23:4,44); and providing **light on the earth**.

**1:16-19** Compared to the elaborate worship that all the other ancient nations give to the sun, moon, and stars, the simplicity of God’s creative word is striking. They are purely inanimate objects created and ruled by God.

**1:20** The fifth day’s events complement those of day two, filling the newly formed heavenly domains above and the watery regions below.

**1:21** The reuse of the verb **created** (Hb *bara'*; cp. v. 1) emphasizes God’s authority over the **large sea-creatures**. This point was especially significant to the ancient Israelites, whose neighbors worshiped Rahab, a mythical sea monster.

**1:22-23** The first of three blessings God pronounced in the creation narrative occurred when **God blessed** the water animals and birds. This blessing is similar to the one for people, but lacks the commands to “subdue” and “rule” (v. 28).

**1:24-25** The term **living creatures** in vv. 20 and 24 is the same as is translated “living being” in 2:7. The sixth day is for creating land creatures, including people. The three groups of animals are domesticated livestock, crawlers, and wild animals.

**1:26** God’s use of plural pronouns (us . . . our . . . our) to refer to himself has raised many questions

(3:22; 11:7; Is 6:8). At least five different suggestions have been put forward to explain them: they may be references to (1) the Trinity; (2) God and his angels; (3) God and creation; (4) God’s majesty as expressed by a literary device known as the “plural of majesty”; or (5) a polytheistic view of God. Since the Bible teaches elsewhere that there is only one God (Dt 6:4; Mk 12:29; 1Co 8:4), the fifth option is not tenable.

The two Hebrew words translated as **image** and **likeness** are often understood as having the same meaning. But some interpreters suggest that “image” refers to the ability to reason, with “likeness” referring to the spiritual dimension. What exactly is the “image” of God? Since the Bible teaches that God is Spirit (Jn 4:24), many commentators believe it refers to the non-material aspects of a person—our moral sensibilities, intellectual

abilities, will, and emotions. Based on God’s commands in Gn 1:28, others have suggested that it consists of the role humans are to play on earth—their rulership over the planet and its resources, and secondarily the physical, mental, and spiritual abilities that enable them to fulfill that role. The NT teaches that Christians will someday bear the image of Christ (1Co 15:49; 1Jn 3:2).

**1:27** The creation of humanity is the crowning event of chap. 1, as shown by the fact that **created** is repeated three times. The verb **created** (Hb *bara'*) is the same one used in 1:1, referring to a kind of creative activity that only God can do. The term **man** (Hb *'adam*) is used elsewhere in the Hebrew Bible to refer to humanity in general, not just males (7:21); all people, both male and female, are created **in the image of God** (cp. Jms 3:9). It should not be concluded that God is both male and

female. Christians are generally agreed that God does not have a literal physical body. He is in no way limited by space but is everywhere fully present (Ps 139:7-10; Ac 17:28). Therefore, he cannot be said to be literally either male or female, or both. People are the only beings that are created in the image of God (Gn 9:3-6). The Bible never lumps people into the category of animals. Instead, it separates the creation of people from all other beings and attributes the most privileged roles in creation to humans alone.

**1:28** In this the longest of the five blessings found in the account of creation, **God** gave humanity five different commands. Implicit in the first three commands is God’s blessing on the institu-

### yom

Hebrew pronunciation	[YOHM]
CSB translation	day, time
Uses in Genesis	152
Uses in the OT	2,301
Focus passage	Genesis 1:5,8,13-14,16,18-19,23,31

**Yom** means *day*, the Hebrew *day* lasting from one evening to the next (Gn 1:5). *Yom* describes a working *day* (Ex 20:9) or *day* of the *month* (Zch 1:7). It indicates a *time* (Pr 24:10) or *occasion* (Nm 10:10). *In the day* often appears as *when* (Zch 8:9). The plural can represent *age* (Jb 32:7), *lifetime* (Jos 24:31), or *reign* (Is 1:1). The plural denotes a number of *days* (Neh 1:4), a *time period* (Lv 25:8), *some time* (Gn 40:4), a *year* (Lv 25:29), or *years* (Ex 2:11). With the definite article *yom* suggests *today* (Dt 4:39), *now* (Neh 1:6), *whenever* (1Sm 1:4), *one day* (Jb 1:6), or *by day* (Neh 4:22). *Yom* could characterize a particular event such as the *day* of Jezreel (Hs 1:11). Similarly, the *Day/day* of Yahweh, or the **LORD**, is a *time* or *day* that belongs to the Lord in a special way (Zph 1:14).

and every creature that crawls<sup>a</sup> on the earth.”

<sup>29</sup> God also said, “Look, I have given you every seed-bearing plant on the surface of the entire earth and every tree whose fruit contains seed. This will be food for you,<sup>a</sup> <sup>30</sup> for all the wildlife of the earth, for every bird of the sky, and for every creature that crawls on the earth — everything having the breath of life in it — I have given<sup>b</sup> every green plant for food.”<sup>b</sup> And it was so. <sup>31</sup> God saw all that he had made, and it was very good indeed. Evening came and then morning: the sixth day.

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

#### MAN AND WOMAN IN THE GARDEN

<sup>4</sup> These are the records<sup>h</sup> of the heavens and the earth, concerning their creation. At the time<sup>f</sup> that the LORD God made the earth and

<sup>a</sup>1:29 Gn 9:3; Ps 104:14-15; 136:25; 145:15-16  
<sup>b</sup>1:30 Ps 147:9  
<sup>c</sup>1:31 1Tm 4:4  
<sup>d</sup>2:1 Neh 9:6; Ps 33:6; Is 34:4; 45:12  
<sup>e</sup>2:2 Ex 20:8-11; 31:17; Dt 5:12-14; Heb 4:4  
<sup>f</sup>2:3 Ex 31:17  
<sup>g</sup>Ex 20:11; 31:17; Ps 121:2  
<sup>h</sup>2:4 Gn 5:1; 6:9; 10:1; 11:10,27; 25:12,19; 36:1,9; 37:2  
<sup>i</sup>2:5 Gn 1:11-12  
<sup>j</sup>2:7 Gn 3:19,23; 18:27; Ps 103:14; Ec 12:7; 1Co 15:47  
<sup>k</sup>Gn 7:22; Jb 33:4; Is 2:22  
<sup>l</sup>1Co 15:45  
<sup>m</sup>2:8 Gn 13:10; Is 51:3; Ezk 28:13; 31:8; Jb 2:3  
<sup>n</sup>2:9 Gn 3:22; Rv 2:7; 22:2,14  
<sup>o</sup>Pr 3:18  
<sup>p</sup>2:11 Gn 10:7,29; 25:18; 15m 15:7

the heavens,<sup>5</sup> no shrub of the field<sup>i</sup> had yet grown on the land,<sup>6</sup> and no plant of the field had yet sprouted, for the LORD God had not made it rain on the land, and there was no man to work the ground.<sup>6</sup> But mist would come up from the earth and water all the ground.<sup>7</sup> Then the LORD God formed the man out of the dust from the ground<sup>j</sup> and breathed the breath of life into his nostrils,<sup>k</sup> and the man became a living being.<sup>l</sup>

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

<sup>10</sup> A river went<sup>p</sup> out from Eden to water the garden. From there it divided and became the source of four rivers.<sup>11</sup> The name of the first is Pishon, which flows through the entire land of Havilah,<sup>12</sup> where there is gold.<sup>12</sup> Gold from that land is pure;<sup>k</sup> bdellium<sup>l</sup> and onyx<sup>m</sup> are also there.<sup>13</sup> The name of the second river is

<sup>a</sup>1:28 Or and all scurrying animals that scurry <sup>b</sup>1:30 I have given added for clarity <sup>c</sup>2:2 Sam, LXX, Syr read sixth <sup>d</sup>2:2 Or ceased, also in v. 3 <sup>e</sup>2:3 Lit work that God created to make <sup>f</sup>2:4 Lit creation on the day <sup>g</sup>2:5 Or earth <sup>h</sup>2:10 Or goes <sup>i</sup>2:10 Lit became four heads <sup>j</sup>2:11 Or of the Havilah <sup>k</sup>2:12 Lit good <sup>l</sup>2:12 A yellowish, transparent gum resin <sup>m</sup>2:12 Identity of this precious stone uncertain

tions of marriage and the family. The final two commands, to **subdue** the earth and **rule** the animal kingdom, express God’s blessing on the use of the planet’s renewable and non-renewable natural resources. Of course, only the wise use of these resources permits people to fulfill God’s command to fill the earth. A similar command to the survivors of the flood is shorter, having only the first three verbs in it (9:1).

**1:29-30** The repeated use of Hebrew *kol*, “all, every, entire,” in vv. 29-30 shows that the point is to emphasize God’s abundant and generous provision for all his creatures, rather than to specify what they were or were not supposed to eat. While **seed** and **fruit** are listed here, Kenneth Mathews explains, “God’s dietary standards for mankind specifically include meat in the postdiluvian world” (Gn 9:3).

**1:31** This is the seventh, final, and most elaborate use of the word **good** in the account of the seven days of creation in that it adds **very** to good.

**2:1** This verse serves as a complement to 1:1. Together, the two set the first six days of creation apart from the sacred seventh day.

**2:2** This is the first use of the number seven in the Bible, a number that will play an especially significant role in the religious and social life of ancient Israel (4:15; 7:2-4,10; 21:28-31; 29:18-20). On the seventh day God **rested**, thus setting an example for people—who are made in his image—to follow (Ex 20:8-11; Dt 5:12-14). Though God rested **from all his work that he had done**, this is not to say that God has abandoned the universe. In the NT Jesus affirmed that God is still at work in the world,

even on the Sabbath (Jn 5:16-17). Also, God’s “rest” does not imply that he was tired. It literally means “cease” and implies only that his creative work was complete.

**2:3** This is the only instance during the creation process when God **blessed** a unit of time. The term **holy** is applied in the Bible to something set aside for service to God.

**2:4** The Hebrew word *toledoth*, translated here as **records**, is used eleven times in the book of Genesis to introduce new units of material (5:1; 6:9; 10:1; 11:10,27; 25:12,19; 36:1,9; 37:2). Here it introduces a detailed elaboration of some key aspects of the creation account that opens the book of Genesis (1:1-2:3). Special emphasis is placed on the events of day six. Verse 4 includes the first use of God’s personal name, rendered in English as **the LORD**, the most commonly used noun in the OT. The Hebrew spelling is transliterated as “YHWH,” a word Jews considered so sacred that they would not permit themselves to pronounce it. Its accurate pronunciation is thus unknown, though common suggestions include “Jehovah” and “Yahweh.”

**2:5** The **shrub of the field** and the **plant of the field** are not the same as the vegetation described in Gn 1:11-12 but are the plants that will make up the Garden of Eden.

**2:6** This source of water, a bountiful blessing that provided moisture for **all the ground** in the time of human innocence, later became a source of judgment on humanity’s sin (7:11).

**2:7** The Hebrew verb translated here as **formed** is used elsewhere in the Bible to describe the potter’s profession (Jr 18:4; Zch 11:13); God acts here as the divine potter, skillfully fashioning **man out of the dust from the**

**ground**. But the Bible makes it very clear that people are more than just material beings. It was only when God **breathed** into the man’s nostrils the **breath of life** that Adam became alive. God is Spirit (Jn 4:24); thus, when God breathed into him, Adam and all later humans became a unique mix of the physical and the spiritual. The Hebrew phrase translated as **living being** is used elsewhere in Genesis to describe other types of living beings (1:20,24,30; 9:12,15-16). Nevertheless, humans are considered to be in a class by themselves since they alone are made in God’s image.

**2:8** The location of **Eden** is unknown; suggestions include Armenia, Iraq, Africa, and Arabia. Changes in geography caused by the flood in Noah’s day (7:11) make it unlikely that Eden will ever be discovered. The Hebrew word *eden* literally means “pleasantness.”

**2:9** God’s concern for beauty is seen in the fact that the trees he caused to grow were **pleasing in appearance**. The Lord’s love of beauty will later be extended to Israel’s religion, which will make use of furnishings fashioned by expert craftsmen using expensive materials (Ex 25-40). Of course, God’s beautiful created works were also practical, being **good for food**.

**2:10** The abundance of the waters supplied in the garden of Eden is indicated by the fact that it served as the headwaters for **four rivers**.

**2:11** The location of the **Pishon** river is unknown. A land known as **Havilah** existed in the region of the Arabian peninsula at a later point in time (1Sm 15:7), but the pre-flood land may have represented a different locale.

**2:12** The gold and gems of Eden foreshadow the splendor of the tabernacle and temple

# THE UNIQUENESS OF THE GENESIS CREATION STORY

*Kenneth A. Mathews*

**W**hile there are many similarities between parts of Genesis and ancient Near Eastern (ANE) myths, there are also fundamental differences. These are seen especially in the significantly different views of the Creator and creation. Five features in particular distinguish the biblical creation account and perspective. So distinctive theologically is the biblical teaching from that of Israel's neighbors that it is best explained as the result of divine revelation, not the imagination or "religious genius" of the biblical author.

## THE IDENTITY OF GOD

The basic identity of God as revealed in Genesis is distinct from all other ANE conceptions. The Lord God did not have an origin and did not have a female counterpart. In fact, Genesis does not present any kind of theogony (origin of the gods). God simply always existed. The concept of fertility was a common explanation among the ancients for how the world was created. It was believed that gods and goddesses joined in sexual union and thus produced the world, just as man and woman can come together to create a child. Israel's God, however, was revealed to be asexual, neither male nor female. According to other ANE religions the world (or parts of it, like the sun) was a divine "Thou," whereas in Genesis the world was revealed to be an "it," a non-supernatural reality brought into existence by a supernatural God.

## NO RIVAL GODS

While polytheistic views dominated the ANE, Genesis revealed that God has no divine rivals. A common explanation for creation among the ancients was that an epic battle had raged between creator gods and anti-creation deities. Ultimately, the creator god overcame the anti-creation forces/gods, in some cases using the slain bodies of their enemies to make the stuff of the world. In Genesis there is no rival opposing the Creator. All creation obeyed the voice of God, as expressed in the recurring phrase, "and it was so" (1:7).

## CREATION OUT OF NOTHING

In Genesis the Creator by inherent authority as Sovereign Lord spoke creation into a functional, well-ordered existence. There was no eternal pre-created matter, such as was believed in the ancient myths. Genesis says God spoke all things into origination. This does not mean he uttered words that possessed inherent magical powers. Rather, the irrevocable power of God's creation words was grounded in the authority of God himself. Unlike the nature deities whose existence was limited to the world system, God existed before creation and above creation. Also, creation was not the emanation of divine person or power. It was separate from him, a new reality subject to his will.

## THE VALUE OF HUMANITY

In Genesis the Creator bestowed special value on humanity. Human beings in the ANE view were not indispensable to the operation of the world, whereas in Genesis they were essential as its chief caretakers. The Lord blessed humanity, assigning man and woman the responsibility to propagate and to rule over the earth (1:26-28). ANE myths explained the purpose of humanity as servants who met the servile interests of the gods. The Bible elevates the person and role of humans who were "crowned . . . with glory and honor" (Ps 8:5), made in the divine image. God prepared the resplendent Garden of Eden for humanity, giving humanity meaningful work and purpose (Gn 2:8-18). Also, Genesis presents the first humanity as individuals who were the progenitors of the human race.

## THE SABBATH

In Genesis the Creator provided the seventh day as a holy day of rest and celebration (2:1-3), which was later memorialized in Israel's Sabbath (Ex 20:8-11). The Sabbath was unique to Israel, not tied to the movement of the stars, such as in the ancient preoccupation with astrology. The Lord was revealed as Master of the material universe *and* of time. All creation was invited to join in the knowledge of God and in the worship of him as Creator and Sustainer of all things.

Gihon, which flows through the entire land of Cush.<sup>14</sup> The name of the third river is Tigris,<sup>a</sup> which runs east of Assyria. And the fourth river is the Euphrates.<sup>b</sup>

<sup>15</sup> The LORD God took the man and placed him in the garden of Eden to work it and watch over it. <sup>16</sup> And the LORD God commanded the man, “You are free to eat from any tree of the garden,<sup>c</sup> <sup>17</sup> but you must not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, for on the day you eat from it, you will certainly die.”<sup>d</sup> <sup>18</sup> Then the LORD God said, “It is not good for the man to be alone. I will make a helper corresponding<sup>e</sup> to him.” <sup>19</sup> The LORD God formed out of the ground every wild animal and every bird of the sky, and brought each to the man to see what he would call it.<sup>f</sup> And whatever the man called

<sup>a</sup>2:14 Dn 10:4  
<sup>b</sup>Gn 15:18  
<sup>c</sup>2:16 Gn 3:1-2  
<sup>d</sup>2:17 Gn 3:5; Dt 30:15,19-20; Rm 6:23; 1Tm 5:6; Jms 1:15  
<sup>e</sup>2:18 Pr 31:11-12; 1Co 11:9; 1Tm 2:13  
<sup>f</sup>2:19 Ps 8:6  
<sup>g</sup>2:21 Gn 15:12  
<sup>h</sup>2:22 1Co 11:8,12  
<sup>i</sup>2:23 Eph 5:28-30

a living creature, that was its name.<sup>20</sup> The man gave names to all the livestock, to the birds of the sky, and to every wild animal; but for the man<sup>a</sup> no helper was found corresponding to him.<sup>21</sup> So the LORD God caused a deep sleep to come over the man,<sup>g</sup> and he slept. God took one of his ribs and closed the flesh at that place.<sup>22</sup> Then the LORD God made the rib he had taken from the man into a woman and brought her to the man.<sup>h</sup> <sup>23</sup> And the man said:

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

<sup>24</sup> This is why a man leaves his father and mother and bonds with his wife, and they

<sup>a</sup>2:20 Or for Adam

and the priestly garments. They symbolize the presence of God and show Eden to function as the original temple of God.

**2:13** The locations of the **Gihon** river and **Cush** are unknown. A later Cush was located in the region of modern Ethiopia and Sudan (Est 1:1).

**2:14** The **Tigris** and **Euphrates** rivers, as well as **Assyria**, probably correspond to geographical features associated with modern Iraq.

**2:15** The Hebrew word translated as **placed** literally means, “caused to rest”; this pre-sin state of rest anticipates the rest (“relief”; 5:29) that again would come to humanity because of righteous Noah, as well as the rest God again would give Israel following its episode of calf worship (Ex 32:1-21; 33:14). As a being created in God’s image, Adam, like God, was to be a worker. Without the taint of sin, **work** was an undiluted blessing. The verb translated here as “work” literally means “serve.” Adam’s second task in the garden was to **watch over** it. The verb is used elsewhere to refer to the action of God toward his people (Ps 121:3-4) or the work of a military guard (Sg 5:7).

**2:16** The seriousness of God’s order is reflected in the fact that it is introduced by a two-verb phrase in Hebrew, rendered simply as **commanded** in the CSB. This formula was used frequently to express royal decrees (1Sm 18:22; 2Sm 18:5). God gave Adam both freedom and limits. The God-given freedoms vastly outnumbered the limitations. After all, Adam was **free to eat from any tree of the garden** except one.

**2:17** The only limit God placed on Adam was eating from the **tree of the knowledge of good and evil**, which apparently imparted divine wisdom (3:22). Eating the forbidden fruit represented Adam’s rejection of God as the source of divine wisdom and his choice to pursue wisdom apart from God.

The penalty for disobedience was stated especially forcefully in the original language, with a two-verb construction, “dying you shall die” (**you will certainly die**). Death would certainly come to Adam and all humanity after him; but the death that God warned about would be more than physical (3:19). Besides severing the cord of life, sin would shatter the harmonious relationship that existed between Adam and his environment (3:17-18), his wife (3:16), and God. Although Adam and Eve did not die physically **on the day** they ate the fruit, they died spiritually, and all their descendants have been spiritually dead unless they are made alive by God’s Spirit. See Jn 5:24-25; Rm 6:13; 7:13,24; Eph 2:1-5; Col 2:13; 1Tm 5:6; 1Jn 3:14; Jd 12; Rv 3:1.

**2:18** The theme of God providing for Adam’s needs (see note at 2:9) is picked up again here, as God declared that Adam’s being alone is **not good**. God created the man with a need to relate to one **corresponding to him**, and now God will meet that need.

**2:19** Like man, animals were **formed out of the ground**, but they received neither the breath of life from God (v. 7) nor the image of God. By giving names to the animals, Adam showed that he ruled the animals and that he perceived the nature of each animal (see note at 1:5).

**2:20** Adam’s understanding of the nature of the animals he named only highlighted the differences that existed between him and the rest of God’s creatures: **no helper was found corresponding to him**.

**2:21** At what must have been a moment of loneliness in Adam’s life, God stepped in to create one who would perfectly meet Adam’s need. Because **God took one of his ribs** to use as his raw material, the woman would correspond perfectly—though not identically—to Adam. Like Adam, the woman possessed God’s image. The fact that she was not taken either from the man’s head or his foot may suggest that the woman was not to rule over the man (1Co 11:3), nor was the man to oppress the woman (1Pt 3:7).

**2:22-23** Adam’s first recorded words express his delight with God’s handiwork and his recognition of the unique suitability of God’s last recorded acts in the creation accounts. As with no other work of divine craftsmanship, this one was singularly suited for the man, being **bone of his bone and flesh of his flesh**. Adam expresses dominion by choosing a name for God’s final created being, but the name he chose suggests that he viewed her as his equal. The Hebrew term *’ishshah*, **woman**, identifies her as the feminine complement to *’ish*, the man.

**2:24** God’s timeless design for marriage is declared here. The **one flesh** relationship certainly involves sexual union, but also includes a husband and wife

## ’ishshah

Hebrew pronunciation	[eesh SHAH]
CSB translation	woman
Uses in Genesis	152
Uses in the OT	781
Focus passage	Genesis 2:22-25

**’ishshah** may not be related to a Hebrew word for *man* in Gn 2:22-25 that looks and sounds like it (*’iysh*). *’ishshah* resembles a word for *woman* in several Semitic languages, and may derive from a verb meaning “be weak” that could also lie behind *’enosh*, “man” (Jb 25:4,6). The phrase “born of woman” (Jb 14:1) points to mankind’s weaknesses. *’ishshah* has two basic meanings, *woman* and *wife*. Both ideas are present in the word’s first occurrences (Gn 2:22-25). *’ishshah* connotes *fiancée* or *bride* (Dt 22:24; 24:5). It signifies *woman* without implying marriage (Ec 7:28). It may be untranslated when describing female bodily functions (Gn 31:35). Sometimes *’ishshah* describes a kind of *woman*, like a prophetess (Jdg 4:4). Fearful soldiers are compared to *women* (Nah 3:13). *’ishshah* functions as a feminine distributive meaning *each*, referring to women (Ru 1:8), animals, or even things. “Each to each” appears as *together* (Ex 26:5).

become one flesh.<sup>a</sup> <sup>25</sup> Both the man and his wife were naked, yet felt no shame.

<sup>a</sup>2:24 Mal 2:15; Mt 19:5; Mk 10:7-8; 1Co 6:16; Eph 5:31  
<sup>b</sup>3:1 Mt 10:16; 2Co 11:3; Rv 12:9; 20:2  
<sup>c</sup>3:3 Gn 2:17  
<sup>d</sup>3:4 Jn 8:44  
<sup>e</sup>3:6 1Tm 2:14; Jms 1:14-15; 1Jn 2:16  
<sup>f</sup>3:8 Jb 34:22-23  
<sup>g</sup>3:12 Jb 31:33; Pr 28:13  
<sup>h</sup>3:13 Rm 7:11; 2Co 11:3; 1Tm 2:14

**THE TEMPTATION AND THE FALL**

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

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

<sup>4</sup> “No! You will not die,” the serpent said to the woman.<sup>d</sup> <sup>5</sup> “In fact, God knows that when<sup>e</sup> you eat it your eyes will be opened and you will be like God,<sup>g</sup> knowing good and evil.”

<sup>6</sup> The woman saw that the tree was good for food and delightful to look at, and that it was desirable for obtaining wisdom. So she took some of its fruit and ate it; she also gave some to her husband, who was with her, and he ate it.<sup>e</sup> <sup>7</sup> Then the eyes of both of them were

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

**SIN’S CONSEQUENCES**

<sup>8</sup> Then the man and his wife heard the sound of the LORD God walking in the garden at the time of the evening breeze,<sup>c</sup> and they hid from the LORD God among the trees of the garden.<sup>f</sup>

<sup>9</sup> So the LORD God called out to the man and said to him, “Where are you?”

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

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

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

<sup>13</sup> So the LORD God asked the woman, “What is this you have done?”

And the woman said, “The serpent deceived me, and I ate.”<sup>h</sup>

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

<sup>a</sup>3:5 Lit on the day <sup>b</sup>3:5 Or gods, or divine beings <sup>c</sup>3:8 Lit at the wind of the day <sup>d</sup>3:10 Lit the sound of you

coming together in spiritual, mental, and emotional harmony.

**2:25** Because the devastating effects of sin had not yet ravaged nature or humanity, there was no need for clothing. Adam and Eve could live without the barriers needed to shield them from their environment and each other without a sense of shame. Later, in the time of the patriarchs and kings, clothing was associated with dignity. Accordingly, prisoners of war were not permitted to wear any clothing, slaves wore very little clothing, and higher social classes wore more clothing than anyone else in society.

**3:1** Though we know the serpent was an instrument of Satan (Rm 16:20; Rv 12:9; 20:2), it was just a created being. Its description as cunning suggests it offered a wisdom not based on the fear of God. It tried to take Eve’s focus off the abundance of God’s provision. **3:2-3** The woman’s claim that God said, **You must not . . . touch the tree, or you will die**, goes beyond anything recorded in God’s instructions to Adam. Therefore it seems that Adam had given his wife an additional command beyond what God said, or else Eve herself exaggerated the command as Satan tempted her to view God as selfish and overly restrictive. If Adam added to God’s command, he almost certainly had a good motive—after all, if Eve never touched the tree, she certainly would not eat its fruit. However, the sad truth is that when people add to the word of God, they create confusion and trouble.

**3:4-5** The serpent, recognizing the woman’s confusion, found a point of attack. Knowing that the woman would not die by merely touching the fruit, he boldly contradicted what she had reported to be God’s command. He then skillfully lied (Jn 8:44) by distorting God’s word (Mt 4:6), implying that God had prohibited people from eating the fruit only to keep them from becoming as knowledgeable as he. The woman was now fully deceived (1Tm 2:14).

**3:6** Since the woman did not die when she touched the fruit—in contradiction to what she had thought God said (v. 3.)—she ate it. Though Adam was with her at the time, he did nothing to stop her. Perhaps he wanted to eat

of it as much as the woman did, but fearing the consequences, used his wife as a “guinea pig” to make sure it would not cause instant death.

**3:7-8** As the serpent had indicated, **the eyes of both of them were opened, and they knew**, but instead of producing godlike power, the knowledge brought only a sense of human inadequacy, fear, and shame.

**3:9** God took the initiative in reaching out to sinful humanity. This pattern—humanity sinning, then God seeking out sinners—becomes the primary theme of the rest of the Bible. Its ultimate expression is found in Jesus Christ, who came to seek and to save people alienated from God because of their sin (Lk 19:10); in him God once again walked on the earth in search of sinners. The all-knowing God asked Adam, **Where are you?** for Adam’s benefit, to encourage Adam to face his sin.

**3:10** When Adam heard God, he was afraid. Rather than walking with God as righteous men of later generations would do (Enoch, 5:22; Noah, 6:9), Adam hid from him.

**3:11** Through the use of two direct questions God brought Adam to accountability for his sin. God does not overlook sin, but he can be gently firm in confronting it.

**3:12** Adam answered neither of God’s questions; instead, he sought to shift the blame for his sin first to **the woman**, and then to God.

**3:13** The woman passed the blame to **the serpent** and admitted that prior to eating, she was deceived (1Tm 2:14).

**nachash**

<i>Hebrew pronunciation</i>	[nah KHASH]
<i>CSB translation</i>	serpent, snake
<i>Uses in Genesis</i>	6
<i>Uses in the OT</i>	31
<i>Focus passage</i>	Genesis 3:1-2,4,13-14

Although *nachash* is the most prevalent of eight OT terms for snake (Nm 21:6), the usage is broader than that. The *nachash* in Gn 3:1,14 was the shrewdest animal and did not crawl on its belly before the curse. The *nachash* Leviathan was a sea monster (Is 27:1), and there were other sea serpents (Am 9:3). Associated with *nachash* are slithering motion (Pr 30:19), flying (Is 14:29), sudden attack (Gn 49:17), poisonous venom (Ps 58:4), sharp bite (Ps 140:3), hissing (Jr 46:22), eggs (Is 14:29), and licking of dust (Gn 3:14; Mc 7:17). Five times *nachash* occurs with words meaning “viper.” The Middle East has large desert areas that are habitats for serpents. The serpent of Genesis 3, an enemy of man linked with evil, is particularly identified with Satan in Rv 12:9, where he is also called a “dragon,” based on the Greek *drakon*, which can mean “serpent.”

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

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

- 16 He said to the woman: I will intensify your labor pains; you will bear children with painful effort.<sup>c</sup> Your desire<sup>d</sup> will be for your husband, yet he will rule over you.

- 17 And he said to the man, "Because you listened to your wife and ate from the tree about which I commanded you, 'Do not eat from it': The ground is cursed because of you.<sup>e</sup> You will eat from it by means of painful labor<sup>A</sup>

<sup>a</sup>3:14 Is 65:25; Mc 7:17  
<sup>b</sup>3:15 Heb 2:14; 1Jn 3:8  
<sup>c</sup>3:16 Jn 16:21; 1Tm 2:15  
<sup>d</sup>Gn 4:7  
<sup>e</sup>3:17 Gn 5:29; Rm 8:20-22; Heb 6:8  
<sup>f</sup>3:18 Gn 2:5  
<sup>g</sup>3:19 Ps 90:3; 104:29; Ec 12:7  
<sup>h</sup>3:22 Gn 2:9; Rv 2:7  
<sup>i</sup>3:24 Ex 25:18-22; Ps 104:4; Ezk 10:1-20; Heb 1:7

- all the days of your life.  
 18 It will produce thorns and thistles for you, and you will eat the plants of the field.<sup>f</sup>  
 19 You will eat bread<sup>g</sup> by the sweat of your brow until you return to the ground,<sup>g</sup> since you were taken from it. For you are dust, and you will return to dust.<sup>h</sup>

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

<sup>22</sup> The LORD God said, "Since the man has become like one of us, knowing good and evil, he must not reach out, take from the tree of life, eat, and live forever."<sup>23</sup> So the LORD God sent him away from the garden of Eden to work the ground from which he was taken. <sup>24</sup> He drove the man out and stationed the cherubim and the flaming, whirling sword east of the garden of Eden to guard the way to the tree of life.<sup>i</sup>

<sup>a</sup>3:17 Lit it through pain   <sup>b</sup>3:19 Or food   <sup>c</sup>3:20 Lit Living, or Life

**3:14** Though accountability began with God's confrontation of Adam, judgment began with the **serpent**. Because of the serpent's key role (being used of Satan) in bringing sin into the human experience, it would be permanently consigned to the position of ultimate shame, under the foot. Just as conquered kings were made to lie on the ground under the foot of their conquerors (Jos 10:24), so now the serpent would live under the feet of humanity.

**3:15** **Hostility** between the first woman and the serpent would be passed on to future generations. This verse is known in Christendom as the *protoevangelium*, or "first good news," because it is the first foretelling of the gospel of Jesus Christ. Using an emphatic Hebrew construction, God announced here that a male descendant—**He**—would someday deal the serpent (meaning Satan) a fatal blow. The NT writers understood Jesus Christ to have fulfilled this prophecy (Heb 2:14; 1Jn 3:8). In an extended sense, the NT also indicates that God would work through the church—those indwelt by the Spirit of Christ—to destroy the works of the devil (Rm 16:20). The assertion that the snake would only strike his opponent's **heel** (as opposed to **head**) suggests that the devil will be defeated in the ensuing struggle (Rv 2:2,7-10).

**3:16** Even though the woman had been deceived into eating the forbidden fruit, she was still held accountable for her act. Notably, however, the word *cursed* is not contained in God's words to her (vv. 14,16). Two penalties were imposed; both struck at the heart of a woman's roles in life. More than would have been the case had sin not entered creation, bearing children would add to the sum of **painful effort**

in the universe (God said he would **intensify**, not **originate**, woman's **labor pains**). Marriage would also be marred; though the woman's **desire** would be for her **husband**, sin would mar God's plan for marriage and create tormenting inequality and subjugation. The latter is a description of the ravaging effect of sin on a husband-wife relationship, not a prescription for abusing one's wife. The NT teaches that marriage should reflect the relationship of Christ with the church (Eph 5:24-25) and be characterized by a husband's understanding of and respect for his wife (1Pt 3:7).

**3:17** Because Adam **listened** to and obeyed his **wife** in preference to what God **commanded** (2:17), a curse would strike at the heart of a fundamental relationship in his life as well. Adam's relationship with the ground would now be damaged by sin. **All the days** of his **life** he would experience **painful labor** (cp. the woman's labor pains, v. 16) as he worked to bring forth the fruit of the earth. Because of sin, all creation is **cursed** and longs for its day of deliverance (Rm 8:19-22).

**3:18** Prior to the first couple's sins God is only recorded as having put trees in the garden (2:8-9); now there would also be **thorns and thistles**. Prior to sin, humanity had only to reach up to get food; now they would have to bend their backs to gather **plants of the field**.

**3:19** The simple plucking of fruit in order to **eat** food (lit "**bread**") would now be replaced by backbreaking labor and the **sweat of the brow**. Working daily in the soil, Adam would be continually reminded that he was **dust** and that he would **return to dust**.

**3:20** The new name Adam gave his wife emphasizes the woman's life-giving role that

counteracts the curse of sin, which is death. Yet the divine order calls for a reciprocity exhibited in male servant leadership and female submission, both of which are modeled in Jesus himself.

**3:21** By making **clothing from skins**, the **LORD God** graciously provided for humanity's need in a way superior to what Adam and Eve had done with fig leaves. The use of animal skins anticipates the OT system of animal sacrifices (Lv 1; 3-7; Nm 15:1-31). In the NT, the apostle Paul spoke of a day when God would clothe his people with immortality (1Co 15:53-54; 2Co 5:4), thus providing the complete undoing of the curse of humanity's sin.

**3:22** Because of sin, people now knew **good and evil** experientially. Since the gift of life was directly tied to obedience, man's sin meant that the penalty of death must be enforced. Expulsion was at the same time an act of mercy. Banning the humans from the **tree of life** allowed for their redemption rather than for them to live a life of perpetual sin in an unredeemed condition.

**3:23** As the Hebrew text ironically expresses it, **the LORD God sent Adam from the garden** so that he would not send forth ("reach out"; v. 22) his hand for the garden's fruit.

**3:24** Following their sin, the first couple went **east**, a direction associated with departure from God in numerous biblical examples. Other instances of eastward movement in Genesis include Cain's journeys after judgment (4:16), humanity's migration toward Babylon (11:2), and the migration of Keturah's sons (25:6). **Cherubim** are used as an artistic motif in the tabernacle (Ex 25:18-22; 26:1) and are also mentioned in Ezk 10 and 11. The ironies

**CAIN MURDERS ABEL**

**4** The man was intimate with his wife Eve, and she conceived and gave birth to Cain. She said, “I have had a male child with the LORD’s help.”<sup>a,2</sup> She also gave birth to his brother Abel. Now Abel became a shepherd of flocks, but Cain worked the ground.<sup>3</sup> In the course of time Cain presented some of the land’s produce as an offering to the LORD.<sup>a,4</sup> And Abel also presented an offering — some of the firstborn of his flock and their fat portions.<sup>b</sup> The LORD had regard for Abel and his offering,<sup>c,5</sup> but he did not have regard for Cain and his offering. Cain was furious, and he looked despondent.<sup>8</sup>

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

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

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

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

<sup>a,4:1</sup> Lit the LORD <sup>b,4:5</sup> Lit and his face fell <sup>c,4:6</sup> Lit why has your face fallen <sup>d,4:8</sup> Sam, LXX, Syr,Vg; MT omits “Let’s go out to the field.” <sup>e,4:11</sup> Lit blood from your hand <sup>f,4:13</sup> Or sin <sup>g,4:15</sup> LXX, Syr,Vg read “Not so!” <sup>h,4:15</sup> Or suffer severely

<sup>a,4:3</sup> Ex 23:19; 34:26; Neh 10:35  
<sup>b,4:4</sup> Ex 13:12; Nm 18:17; Pr 3:9  
<sup>c,4:6</sup> Heb 11:4  
<sup>d,4:6</sup> Jnh 4:4  
<sup>e,4:7</sup> Gn 3:16  
<sup>f,4:8</sup> Mt 23:35; Lk 11:51; 1Jn 3:12-15; Jd 11  
<sup>g,4:10</sup> Nm 35:33; Dt 21:1-9; Heb 12:24; Rv 6:9-10  
<sup>h,4:12</sup> Dt 28:16-18; Is 26:21  
<sup>i,4:14</sup> Nm 35:26-27  
<sup>j,4:15</sup> Ex 9:4; Ezk 9:4,6; Rv 13:16-17

<sup>10</sup> Then he said, “What have you done? Your brother’s blood cries out to me from the ground!”<sup>g,11</sup> So now you are cursed, alienated from the ground that opened its mouth to receive your brother’s blood you have shed.<sup>e</sup>

<sup>12</sup> If you work the ground, it will never again give you its yield. You will be a restless wanderer on the earth.”<sup>h</sup>

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

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

**THE LINE OF CAIN**

<sup>17</sup> Cain was intimate with his wife, and she conceived and gave birth to Enoch. Then Cain became the builder of a city, and he named the city Enoch after his son.<sup>18</sup> Irad was born

continue as the man who was once commanded to “watch over” the garden (Gn 2:15) is now banned from the garden.

**4:1** Adam and Eve now begin to fulfill God’s original command to them, to “be fruitful” and “multiply” (1:28). Eve, whose name means “life,” now becomes the life-giver. Eve knew that the child was more than the result of her and her husband’s love; he came into being **with the LORD’s help**. A wordplay in the Hebrew suggests that the name Cain (*qayin*) came from the verb *had* (*qaniti*) in Eve’s comment, **I have had a male child**.

**4:2** The name Abel means “breath”; the term is used elsewhere in the OT to refer to that which passes away quickly and is insubstantial (Ps 62:10; Ec 1:2).

**4:3** Cain’s sacrifice marks the first mention of an offering to the LORD in the Bible. The Hebrew term used here suggests a freewill gift given to an authority.

**4:4-5** Ironically, the first recorded offering given to God was also the first one rejected by him. Since grain offerings were authorized in the law of Moses, the fact that Cain’s offering was of vegetation rather than an animal is not why God **did not have regard** for it. Cain’s furious reaction suggests that the offering was rejected because of sin in his heart, not the nature of his offering. See note at vv. 6-7.

**4:6-7** The Bible makes it clear that God had rejected Cain’s offering because of Cain’s wicked lifestyle (1Jn 3:12). The animal-like description of sin as **crouching** is reused in 49:9 to describe a lion. The parallel use of **desire** in

this verse and 3:16 suggests that sin wishes to be as intimate with humanity as a woman is with her husband. The only way to avoid this is to be its master, not its companion.

**4:8** In a move that demonstrates premeditation, Cain led Abel to the field and attacked him in a place where there were no human witnesses. Though the blood of animals had been shed prior to this (v. 4), Cain’s killing of his brother brought about the first death of a human. The curse of human death pronounced against Adam (2:17; 3:19) had now been realized.

**4:9** God’s use of questions with guilty sinners continues here (v. 6; cp. 3:9-13). By claiming he did not know where his brother was, Cain added lying to his sin of murder. God once made Adam a guardian (Hb *shamar*) of the garden (2:15). Cain now asked if he was to be his brother’s guardian (Hb *shamar*). The Bible’s answer to Cain’s question is yes (Lv 19:18; Mt 22:39; Gl 5:14).

**4:10** Unlike his father Adam (3:12), Cain never confessed his guilt, even though God directly confronted him with his sin. Though Abel never spoke in the preceding narrative, his blood now cried out **from the ground**.

**4:11** God’s judgment began with a curse whose wording in the Hebrew parallels the curse placed on the snake. This is particularly fitting since both were liars and murderers (Jn 8:44). It is possible to translate God’s statement here as “You are more cursed than the ground.” The curse against a murderer is repeated in the law of Moses (Dt 27:24).

**4:12** Cain’s punishment destroyed his live-

lihood as a farmer and turned him into a **restless wanderer**.

**4:13** Cain’s response has several possible English renderings. The CSB—which reflects the unrepentant attitude Cain showed earlier—expresses Cain’s anguish, but no remorse. The Septuagint and Martin Luther translated it as, “My sin is too great to be forgiven,” while early rabbis took it as a question: “Is my sin too great to forgive?” In view of Cain’s previous and later actions, the CSB’s translation seems best.

**4:14** Just as his father Adam had been driven out (Hb *garash*) of the garden, Cain noted that God was **banishing** (Hb *garash*) him **from the face of the earth**. Since he would **hide** (or possibly, “be hidden”) from God’s protective presence, he feared that other descendants of Adam and Eve (5:4) would kill him to avenge Abel’s murder.

**4:15** True to his compassionate and forgiving nature (Ex 34:6-7), God made two provisions for Cain to protect him despite his sin.

**4:16** Cain’s departure **from the LORD’s presence** was both physical and spiritual (Jnh 1:3,10). *Nod* means “wandering.” The land of Nod is never mentioned again in the Bible. Perhaps the phrase simply referred to any location in which Cain resided. The notation that Cain departed to live **east of Eden** identifies him with other sinners who also moved east (see note at 3:24).

**4:17** The parallel tracks of Adam’s and Cain’s lives—sin, judgment by God, banishment, and eastward movement—continue with the notation that after these things **Cain was intimate**

to Enoch, Irad fathered Mehujael, Mehujael fathered Methushael, and Methushael fathered Lamech. <sup>19</sup> Lamech took two wives for himself, one named Adah and the other named Zillah. <sup>20</sup> Adah bore Jubal; he was the father of the nomadic herdsmen. <sup>21</sup> His brother was named Jubal; he was the father of all who play the lyre and the flute. <sup>22</sup> Zillah bore Tubal-cain, who made all kinds of bronze and iron tools. Tubal-cain's sister was Naamah.

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

Adah and Zillah, hear my voice;  
wives of Lamech, pay attention  
to my words.

For I killed a man for wounding me,  
a young man for striking me.

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

<sup>a</sup>4:26 Lk 3:38  
<sup>b</sup>Gn 12:8; 26:25; 1Kg  
18:24; Ps 116:17;  
Jl 2:32; Zph 3:9;  
1Co 1:2  
<sup>c</sup>5:1 Gn 2:4

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

#### THE LINE OF SETH

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

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

<sup>a</sup>4:20 Lit *the dweller of tent and livestock* <sup>b</sup>4:25 The Hb word for *given* sounds like the name "Seth." <sup>c</sup>4:25 Lit *seed* <sup>d</sup>5:1 Lit *written family*  
<sup>e</sup>5:1 Or *mankind* <sup>f</sup>5:1 Or *Adam, human beings* <sup>g</sup>5:2 Hb *adam*

with his wife (cp. v. 1). In spite of his grave sin, Cain still fulfilled the divine command to be fruitful and multiply (1:28). But Cain's efforts to become **the builder of a city** were one more expression of disobedience to God, for God had ordained Cain to be a wanderer (v. 12). The city of **Enoch** is not mentioned elsewhere in the Bible, and its location is unknown.

Cain's genealogy in vv. 17-24 has similarities with Seth's genealogy (5:3-32). Two of the names in both lines are identical (Enoch, Lamech) and others are similar (Cain/Kenan; Methushael/Methuselah). In addition, the seventh member of both genealogies (Cain's Lamech, Seth's Enoch) are given special emphasis, and both conclude with a person who has three named sons. Notable differences exist as well: Seth's genealogy is longer and contains life span details, but it omits any mention of occupations or wives' names.

**4:18** Three individuals here—**Irad . . . Mehujael, and Methushael**—are mentioned in the Bible only in this verse.

**4:19** More details are provided in this genealogical section for **Lamech**, the seventh member of Adam's line through Cain, than for any other. His three named sons made crucial contributions to human culture. However, the description of Lamech's life paints a troubling picture of an individual who lacked respect for marriage or human life. By taking **two wives for himself** Lamech became the first polygamist, a violation of God's intentions for marriage (2:22; Mk 10:6-8).

**4:20** **Jabal** brought about key advances in the profession of the **nomadic herdsmen**—those who cared for sheep, goats, and cattle (*Hb miqneh*). This represents an advance beyond what Abel had done since he is only known to have tended sheep and goats (v. 2; *Hb tso'n*).

**4:21** **Jubal** advanced civilization in the area of the musical arts, playing a key role in de-

veloping two of the most important musical instruments of the ancient world, **the lyre and the flute**.

**4:22** **Tubal-cain's** metallurgical advances in creating **bronze** (made by combining copper and tin) and smelting **iron** would prove crucial for crafting tools and weapons.

**4:23** Lamech's so-called "Song of the Sword," the longest recorded speech by a human to this point in the Bible (twenty-one Hebrew words), represents the dark climax of the Cainite genealogy. His level of retaliation against **a man** and a **young man** goes far beyond the biblical limits (Ex 21:23-25), and his boast of killing for vengeance foreshadows the conditions that led to the flood in Noah's day (Gn 6:11).

**4:24** Using twisted logic, Lamech seemed to suggest that God would provide him with greater protection than he did **Cain** since he had killed double the number of men.

**4:25** The name **Seth** (*Hb sheth*) is a wordplay on the verb translated **has given** (*Hb shath*). Once again (v. 1), Eve recognized God as the ultimate source of her offspring. The expectation that Seth would be more righteous than Cain is established by Eve's statement that **God gave him to her in place of Abel**. In fact, the family line that ultimately produced Jesus is traceable through Seth (Lk 3:38).

**4:26** The name **Enosh**, like the name *Adam*, means "humanity." In a very real sense Enosh's birth marks a new and brighter beginning for humanity, as **people now began to call on the name of the LORD**, "Yahweh." Yahweh is God's personal name (Ex 3:15).

**5:1** This is the second of eleven (*Hb toledoth* sections in Genesis (2:4; 6:9; 10:1; 11:10,27; 25:12,19; 36:1,9; 37:2). The Hebrew term *toledoth* ("family records") refers to "those who were given birth." Each section contains genealogical information and/or accounts regarding the descendants of the people or things named in the section title.

Only the Sethite genealogy is called **the family records of Adam**, even though Cain's descendants are equally related. The reason for this is undoubtedly the contrasting descendants within the brothers' genealogies; only offspring in Seth's line are noted as being righteous. In this genealogy, emphasis is given to the fact that Adam was created in God's **likeness**, a characteristic that would be passed along to future generations (v. 3).

**5:2** Key themes of chap. 1 are repeated and extended in the Sethite genealogy: (1) God created both **male and female**, thus making it possible for humanity to fulfill the divine mandate to create offspring; (2) people, though made in God's image, are not God; **they were created**; (3) humanity has been specially **blessed** by God; and (4) humanity is under God's authority, as demonstrated by the fact that God assigned them the name **mankind**.

**5:3** Adam's role in Seth's life both compares and contrasts with God's role with Adam. Whereas God "created" Adam, Adam **fathered** Seth. Whereas Adam was made in God's image, Seth was made in Adam's **image**. Like God, Adam **named** the one he was responsible for bringing into being.

**5:4** The phrase **fathered other sons and daughters** is repeated ten times in the Sethite genealogy, but it never occurs in the Cainite genealogy. The clear implication is that the line of Seth more faithfully fulfilled God's command to be fruitful and multiply (1:28).

**5:5** Only three individuals are said to have lived longer than Adam's **930 years**. They are Noah (950), Jared (962), and Methuselah (969). The notation that **he died** emphasizes the solemn truth of God's curse following Adam's sin (3:19). The fact that it is repeated seven other times in this chapter demonstrates the lasting consequences of Adam's sin.

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

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

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

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

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

<sup>21</sup> Enoch was 65 years old when he fathered Methuselah. <sup>22</sup> And after he fathered

<sup>a</sup>5:22 Gn 6:9; 17:1; 24:40; 48:15; Mc 6:8; Mal 2:6; 1Th 2:12  
<sup>b</sup>5:24 2Kg 2:11; Heb 11:5  
<sup>c</sup>5:29 Gn 3:17-19; 4:11  
<sup>d</sup>6:2 Jb 1:6; 2:1; 38:7

Methuselah, Enoch walked with God<sup>a</sup> 300 years and fathered other sons and daughters. <sup>23</sup> So Enoch's life lasted 365 years. <sup>24</sup> Enoch walked with God; then he was not there because God took him.<sup>b</sup>

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

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

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

#### SONS OF GOD AND DAUGHTERS OF MANKIND

**6** When mankind began to multiply on the earth and daughters were born to them, <sup>2</sup> the sons of God<sup>d</sup> saw that the daughters of mankind were beautiful, and they took

<sup>a</sup>5:29 In Hb, the name *Noah* sounds like "bring us relief."

**5:6-31** The name **Kenan** (Hb *qeynan*) is closely linked to Cain (Hb *qayin*), and may mean "metalworker."

The name **Mahalalel** may mean "one who praises God."

The name **Enoch** means "dedication."

**Enoch**, as the seventh member of the Sethite genealogy, is given special emphasis. The name **Methuselah** may mean either "man of the spear" or "man of Shelah."

Enoch's life stands in stark contrast to Lamech, the seventh member of Cain's line. Whereas Lamech was notorious for his immorality and violence, **Enoch walked with God**, much as Adam must have done before his sin in the garden (3:8) and as Noah did later (6:9). The phrase "walked with God" suggests living a life consistent with God's will as well as experiencing fellowship with him. Perhaps it was Enoch's entrance into parenthood with the birth of **Methuselah** that inspired him to take his relationship with God seriously. Imagine the level of spiritual maturity Enoch must have attained after 300 years of living wholeheartedly for God! Jude 14 indicates that Enoch was a prophet.

The description of Enoch's life differs from the others in two remarkable ways: (1) His righteousness is highlighted through the double notation that **Enoch walked with God**. (2) The description of the end of his life is mysterious: **he was not there because God took him**. The NT confirms the meaning of this phrase: "Enoch was taken away, and so he did not experience death" (Heb 11:5). Enoch's experience, like Elijah's later (2Kg 2:11), anticipates an experience reserved for Christians living at the end of time (1Co 15:51-55; 1Th 4:17).

Methuselah's **969 years** marks him as the oldest person in the Bible. Ancient genealogies commonly attribute long life spans to people. While the Bible's numbers are exceptionally large compared to modern life spans, they seem much more credible than those found in the Sumerian king list, which states that one individual reached the age of seventy-two thousand!

The **Lamech** of the Sethite genealogy (v. 28) stands in sharp contrast to the Lamech of the Cainite genealogy. Both Lamechs are the only individuals in their respective genealogies to have quotations attributed to them, but Cain's Lamech spoke of murder and vengeance (4:23-24), while the Lamech in this chapter spoke words of hope and deliverance. The name **Noah** means "rest/relief." Prophetically, Lamech declared that the son born to him would live up to his name: he would **bring . . . relief to humanity from the agonizing labor** that had resulted from Adam's sin. The Hebrew verb "relief" is more commonly translated "comfort."

A final point of comparison between the Cainite and Sethite Lamechs is the use of sevens. The first Lamech mentioned Cain's sevenfold curse and pronounced a 77-fold curse on anyone who would bring death to him, while Seth's Lamech lived **777 years** before death came to him. For the numbers-conscious original audience, the author's inclusion of a figure consisting of three sevens would have trumped the first Cain's numbers and would have added a sense of completeness and perfection to the portrait of this man's life.

**5:32** The mention of **Noah** at the end of the Sethite genealogy serves as both a conclusion

to this section of Genesis and a subtle introduction of the central human character in its next major section. A similar technique will be used in the case of Terah and Abraham (cp. 5:32 and 6:9 with 11:26-27).

**6:1-4** The first four verses of this chapter serve as a transition introducing the account of God's greatest act of nature-based judgment on sinful humanity. Positively, these opening verses demonstrate humanity's faithfulness in fulfilling God's command to "multiply, fill the earth" (1:28). This brief portion of Genesis is one of the most controversial sections of the entire Bible. Major disagreements surround each of these verses. Careful study of the Hebrew text does not end the debates; if anything, it only sharpens them. The controversies are listed below.

**6:2** This verse begins to build the case that there was something terribly wrong about the way in which God's command to multiply was being fulfilled. Using language that parallels the sequence leading to humanity's first sin in the garden (3:6), the **sons of God** first saw something that they thought was good, and then **took what they desired for themselves**.

Controversy (cp. Jdg 14:1-2) surrounds the phrase "the sons of God." Three different basic positions have been staked out regarding the identity of these "sons." They have been understood as heavenly beings (an ancient Jewish position, still accepted by many today), as kings or men of high social status, and as men from the godly family line of Seth.

Favoring their identity as heavenly beings—likely angels—is the fact that elsewhere in the OT the phrase "sons of God" refers only to heavenly creatures (Jb 1:6; 2:1; 38:7) and that

any they chose as wives<sup>a</sup> for themselves.<sup>a</sup>  
<sup>3</sup> And the LORD said, “My Spirit will not remain<sup>b</sup> with<sup>c</sup> mankind forever,<sup>b</sup> because they are corrupt.<sup>d,c</sup> Their days will be 120 years.”<sup>4</sup> The Nephilim<sup>e</sup> were on the earth both in those days and afterward, when the sons of God came to the daughters of mankind, who bore children to them. They were the powerful men of old, the famous men.

<sup>a</sup>6:2 1Pt 3:19-20; Jd 6  
<sup>b</sup>6:3 G1 5:16-17; 1Pt 3:20  
<sup>c</sup>Ps 78:39  
<sup>d</sup>6:5 Gn 8:21; Ps 14:1-3; Pr 6:18; Mt 15:19; Rm 1:28-32  
<sup>e</sup>6:6 Nm 23:19; 1Sm 15:11,29; 2Sm 24:16; J1 2:13

## JUDGMENT DECREED

<sup>5</sup> When the LORD saw that human wickedness was widespread on the earth and that every inclination of the human mind was nothing but evil all the time,<sup>6</sup> the LORD regretted that he had made man on the earth,<sup>e</sup> and he was deeply grieved.<sup>f</sup> <sup>7</sup> Then the LORD said, “I will wipe mankind, whom I created, off the face of the earth, together with the animals, creatures that crawl, and birds of the sky — for

<sup>a</sup>6:2 Or women <sup>b</sup>6:3 Or strive <sup>c</sup>6:3 Or in <sup>d</sup>6:3 Lit flesh <sup>e</sup>6:4 Possibly means “fallen ones”; traditionally, “giants”; Nm 13:31-33 <sup>f</sup>6:6 Lit was grieved to his heart

the NT refers to fallen angels (2Pt 2:4; Jd 6). Those who accept this view hold that the sin that prompted God’s anger in this passage was a violation of Gn 2:24, brought about by sexual relations between human and angelic beings, resulting in the creation of the Nephilim. But this view has its difficulties. For instance, Jesus indicated that angels do not marry (Mt 22:30) and Paul used the phrase “sons of God” to refer to godly people, not angels (G1 3:26).

The view that the “sons of God” are kings or aristocrats is supported by the fact that *Elohim*, the common Hebrew word for “God,” is sometimes applied to persons who have great social power (Ps 82:6-7; Jn 10:34-35). Advocates of this position say that the “daughters of mankind” were people of lower social status. Thus the passage is thought to indicate possible abuse of lower class women by licentious men of privilege. Interpreters who take this view do not necessarily connect the Nephilim with these marriages.

The third position is the most popular view among evangelical Christians. It assumes that the “sons of God” were descendants of godly Seth, while the “daughters of mankind” were descendants of ungodly Cain. Assuming the descendants of both men kept true to the moral examples set by their respective ancestors, the union of these two spiritually incompatible lines was contradictory to God’s will (2Co 6:14) and resulted in the total corruption of humanity, represented by the Nephilim.

**6:3** The meaning of this verse is one of the most disputed in the Bible: Is it about God shortening humanity’s life spans, or about God setting a time for the universal flood? There is no general agreement as to its meaning, so the various Bible translations reflect translators’ differing viewpoints. Accordingly, disagreement exists among translators regarding the reference to **Spirit**; some understand the Hebrew word to refer to the animating force present in living beings—thus rendering it “spirit” (KJV)—while many others, such as the CSB, understand it to refer to the Holy Spirit. Closely related to this issue is the appropriate

translation of the phrase rendered in the CSB as **remain with**. Significant variations include “abide in” (ESV) and “contend with” (NIV). Complicating the issue still further is the Hebrew word *basar*, which is normally translated “flesh” (KJV) but which can be taken figuratively to refer to that which is **corrupt**.

**6:4** Two major questions arise in this verse: who are the **Nephilim** and what if anything is the connection of the Nephilim to the **sons of God** and the **daughters of mankind**? The word *Nephilim* is actually a transliteration—not a translation—of the Hebrew word; translated, it means “fallen ones,” a phrase that could mean morally or physically degraded individuals, or possibly angels who fell from heaven (Is 14:12).

In spite of its literal meaning, many versions (e.g., KJV, NLT) have followed the Septuagint in translating it as “giants,” a guess seemingly based on the mention of Nephilim in Nm 13:33. This proposal appears unlikely, however, since no Nephilim would have survived the flood (Gn 7:22-23) and thus could not have lived during the post-flood events narrated in Numbers. Further, the Nephilim are never mentioned as one of the groups to be wiped out by the Israelites when they entered Canaan. Their mention in Nm 13 probably came from the lips of a fear-crazed spy who misinterpreted what he had seen in Canaan.

Were the Nephilim products of the marriages between the sons of God and the daughters of mankind (v. 2)? Possibly, but in the Hebrew text there is no explicit connection between them. Moreover, the fact that they **were on the earth . . . in those days**, i.e., before and during the sinful unions, leads some to suggest that their origins are elsewhere. Whatever their ancestry, as **powerful and famous** men they played a significant role in pre-flood society.

**6:5** God, who alone can observe both people’s outward actions (Jb 34:21) and their thoughts (1Sm 16:7), **saw** what was visible—that **human wickedness was widespread**—and what was invisible—that **every inclination of the human mind was nothing but evil all the time**. The word translated “mind” is literally “heart,” reflecting the ancient conception that this organ was the seat of the intellect, emotion, and will.

**6:6** For the first time in the Bible, **the LORD regretted** something **that he had made**. However, his regret did not stem from something he had done wrong, but rather from what humanity was doing wrong. The fact that people had become totally preoccupied with evil **grieved him deeply**, much as Israel’s sin would later grieve him (Ps 78:40-41; Is 63:10).

**6:7** Humanity was created to obey, worship, and fellowship with God. However, the magnitude of people’s sin had progressively increased from that of eating forbidden fruit (3:6), to murder (4:8), to polygamy and multiple murders (4:23), and finally to worldwide preoccupation with evil (6:6). God’s patience had come to an end, and the curse pronounced against Adam would now be amplified in a single catastrophic act. Since humanity was the capstone of God’s creation, the elimination of people would take away any need for the ecological support system that sustained them; therefore, it was expedient to destroy **the animals, creatures that crawl, and birds** as well. Even as Adam’s sin had caused him to lose the garden of Eden and Cain’s sin drove him from the soil, the sins of humanity would now cause them to lose the earth.

## ‘atsab

Hebrew pronunciation	[ah TSAV]
CSB translation	<i>grieve</i>
Uses in Genesis	3
Uses in the OT	15
Focus passage	Genesis 6:6

**‘atsab** is in a word family concerned with emotional and physical pain. The active regular verb means *infuriate* (1Kg 1:6) and *experience pain* (1Ch 4:10); the passive connotes *wounded* (Is 54:6). Reflexive-passive forms indicate *be grieved* (Gn 6:6; 45:5) or *grieve* (Neh 8:10). *‘Etešeb* (6x) is *painful effort* (Gn 3:16; Pr 10:22), *hard work* (Ps 127:2), *hard-earned pay* (Pr 5:10), and *harsh* (Pr 15:1). *‘Atstsebet* (5x) denotes *sorrows* (Ps 16:4), *wounds* (Ps 147:3), *pains* (Jb 9:28), *grief* (Pr 10:10), and *sad* (Pr 15:13). *‘Otšeb* (3x) suggests *offensive* (Ps 139:24). It is *pain* (1Ch 4:9), and the name *Jabez* is derived from it. *‘Itstšabon* (3x) implies *painful effort* (Gn 3:16), *painful labor* (Gn 3:17), or *agonizing* (Gn 5:29). *‘Atšeb* refers to *oppressed workers* (Is 58:3). *Mo’atšebah* signifies *place of torment* (Is 50:11). The word family shows that labor involves pain.

I regret that I made them.”<sup>8</sup> Noah, however, found favor with the LORD.<sup>a</sup>

<sup>a</sup>6:8 Gn 19:19; Ex 33:17; Lk 1:30  
<sup>b</sup>6:9 Gn 2:4  
<sup>c</sup>Ps 37:39; 2Pt 2:5  
<sup>d</sup>Gn 17:1; Dt 18:13; Jb 1:1  
<sup>e</sup>Gn 5:22  
<sup>f</sup>6:12 Jb 22:15-17; Ps 14:2-3; 53:2-3  
<sup>g</sup>6:17 Gn 7:4; 2Pt 2:5

**GOD WARNS NOAH**

<sup>9</sup>These are the family records<sup>b</sup> of Noah. Noah was a righteous man,<sup>c</sup> blameless among his contemporaries;<sup>d</sup> Noah walked with God.<sup>e</sup>

<sup>10</sup>Noah fathered three sons: Shem, Ham, and Japheth.

<sup>11</sup>Now the earth was corrupt in God’s sight, and the earth was filled with wickedness.<sup>f</sup>

<sup>12</sup>God saw how corrupt the earth was, for every creature had corrupted its way on the earth.<sup>g</sup> <sup>13</sup>Then God said to Noah, “I have decided to put an end to every creature, for the

earth is filled with wickedness because of them; therefore I am going to destroy them along with the earth.

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

<sup>17</sup>“Understand that I am bringing a flood — floodwaters on the earth<sup>g</sup> to destroy every creature under heaven with the breath of life

<sup>a</sup>6:11 Or *injustice*, also in v. 13 <sup>b</sup>6:14 Unknown species of tree; perhaps pine or cypress <sup>c</sup>6:15 Or *300 cubits long, 50 cubits wide, and 30 cubits high*  
<sup>d</sup>6:16 Or *window, or hatch*; Hb uncertain <sup>e</sup>6:16 Lit *to a cubit*

**6:8** This contrast to the rest of humanity anticipates Noah’s contrasting destiny. The word **favor** means undeserved blessing given by a powerful being to one who is less powerful. Noah did not earn his salvation, but his life did demonstrate that he possessed saving faith (Heb 11:7). A wordplay exists in Hebrew between the words for “Noah” and “favor,” as both contain the same two consonants but use them in reverse order: n-ch/ch-n.

**6:9-10** The family records of Noah is the third of eleven (Hb) *toledoth* sections in Genesis (2:4; 5:1; 10:1; 11:10,27; 25:12,19; 36:1,9; 37:2).

**6:11-12** Within these two verses three different forms of the verb **corrupt** are used to describe what humanity had done to itself and the world in Noah’s day. The Hebrew word translated “corrupt” means “to bring to ruin, to destroy.”

**6:13** For the first time in the Bible—but by no means the last (18:17; Am 3:7)—God is shown expressing to one person what his intentions were for others. Noah is thus established as a prophet, a role that he would faithfully fulfill (2Pt 2:5). As indicated first in Gn 6:5-7, God would **put an end to every creature . . . because of human sin**. But judgment would not be limited to people; God would also **destroy . . . the earth**.

Sadly, one of the victims of human sin is the earth on which we live (Lv 26:18-20; Is 24:4-7; Jr 12:11; Hs 4:1-3).

**6:14** Because of God’s grace (v. 8) and Noah’s relationship with God (v. 9), Noah and his family would be saved in an **ark**, along with the land and air animals. The Hebrew term translated “ark” is used only in the Noah account and the story of Moses’s early childhood (Ex 2:3); as used in the Bible it refers to a watertight vessel used to preserve human life from impending disaster. **Gopher** is the transliteration of a Hebrew word whose meaning is unknown; gopher wood may be pine or cypress or something extinct.

**6:15** Noah was to **make** the ark rectangular and barge-like in

shape, six times longer than it was wide, and ten times longer than it was high. These ratios have been used to produce seaworthy craft for centuries. In the Hebrew text the measurements are expressed as “cubits,” a cubit being the length from a person’s elbow to the end of the fully extended middle finger—about eighteen inches. The 450-foot length made the ark the largest ship known to be constructed in ancient times. The ark was to contain an unspecified number of rooms—literally, “nests”—and was to have two layers of pitch, (that is, asphalt or bitumen) painted over the boards.

**6:16** The Hebrew word translated **roof** can also be translated “window” or “hatch.” If the term means “roof,” then the text probably indicates that it was to extend **eighteen inches** over the sides of the boat. If the term means “window,” then it refers to an eighteen-inch high gap separating the four sides of the boat from its roof.

**6:17** Only after he commanded Noah to make the ark did God tell him why it was to be built: God was **bringing a flood**—a term used only in connection with the massive, all-destroying flood in Noah’s day. **Everything on earth will perish**. The biblical language here and elsewhere in Gn 6-8 most naturally indicates that

Noah’s flood covered the entire globe. The apostle Peter seems to affirm this (2Pt 2:5; 3:6). That the flood was global has been the dominant Christian understanding throughout history and remains so today. Defenders of this view offer models to explain the flood’s impact on the geological column. They also tackle questions such as how much water was required to flood the entire globe. If geography today reflects pre-flood geography, scientists estimate that Earth would have needed four times the current quantity of water for the flood to cover the highest mountains (Gn 7:19-20). In this light some defenders of a global flood have suggested that pre-flood geography differed from today’s geography. Specifically, they suggest that Earth’s landscape was flatter in the pre-flood era, thus requiring less water to flood, and that the violent flood created many of today’s geographical and geological features. Others take a different approach, suggesting that pre- and post-flood geography is largely the same, that the flood did indeed require a greater quantity of water than is now present on Earth, and that by an unknown mechanism Earth’s quantity of water has greatly diminished after the flood.

Citing the flexible application of some terms used to describe the flood (e.g., *kol ha’arets* is rendered as “throughout the earth” in 7:3 but legitimately can refer to limited areas of land), the inclusion of details that could indicate a regional flood (e.g., the dove returning with a “plucked olive leaf” in its beak just as soon as the waters subsided despite the fact that low-lying areas where olive trees now grow would have been fully submerged for roughly a year, 8:11), and the difficulty of finding traces of a global flood in earth’s geological record, some evangelicals conclude that Noah’s flood covered only that portion of the earth that was inhabited by humans. In this view the flood destroyed all humans except

**tamiym**

Hebrew pronunciation	[tah MEEM]
CSB translation	<i>blameless, mature, perfect</i>
Uses in Genesis	2
Uses in the OT	91
Focus passage	Genesis 6:9

**Tamiym**, an adjective from *tamam*, “be complete,” has both physical and spiritual significance. Fifty-one occurrences describe animals as *unblemished* (Ex 12:5) or *without blemish*, thus qualified to be sacrificial victims. Related ideas are *entire* (Lv 3:9), *complete* (Lv 23:15), *whole* (Pr 1:12; Ezk 15:5), and *full* (Lv 25:30). A frequent spiritual meaning is *blameless, devout, or upright* (Gn 6:9; 17:1; Jb 12:4). A synonym is *yashar* (“upright”; Pr 2:21). This is God’s standard for human behavior (Dt 18:13) echoed in the NT by the word translated “perfect” (*teleios*) in Mt 5:48. **Tamiym** means *perfect* when describing God’s ways, knowledge, or word (Dt 32:4; 2Sm 22:31; Jb 37:16). He can make our way *perfect* (2Sm 22:33). **Tamiym** can function nominatively as *integrity or sincerity* (Jos 24:14; Am 5:10), and adverbially as *honestly* (Jdg 9:16).

in it. Everything on earth will perish.<sup>18</sup> But I will establish my covenant with you,<sup>a</sup> and you will enter the ark with your sons, your wife, and your sons' wives.<sup>19</sup> You are also to bring into the ark two of all the living creatures, male and female, to keep them alive with you.<sup>20</sup> Two of everything — from the birds according to their kinds, from the livestock according to their kinds, and from the animals that crawl on the ground according to their kinds — will come to you so that you can keep them alive.<sup>21</sup> Take with you every kind of food that is eaten; gather it as food for you and for them."<sup>22</sup> And Noah did this.

<sup>a</sup>6:18 Gn 9:9-16; 17:7  
<sup>b</sup>6:22 Gn 7:5  
<sup>c</sup>7:1 Mt 24:38-39; Lk 17:26-27; Heb 11:7  
<sup>d</sup>7:2 Gn 8:20; Lv 11:1-31; Dt 14:3-20

He did everything that God had commanded him.<sup>b</sup>

#### ENTERING THE ARK

**7** Then the LORD said to Noah, "Enter the ark, you and all your household, for I have seen that you alone are righteous before me in this generation.<sup>c</sup> <sup>2</sup>You are to take with you seven pairs, a male and its female, of all the clean animals,<sup>d</sup> and two of the animals that are not clean, a male and its female,<sup>3</sup> and seven pairs, male and female, of the birds of the sky — in order to keep offspring alive throughout the earth.<sup>4</sup> Seven

the persons on Noah's ark, but did not need to cover the whole globe to do so, since the flood of Noah occurred before the dispersion of the nations in Gn 10.

**6:18** The term **covenant** refers to a binding, formal agreement between two parties—a sort of treaty, pact, or contract.

**6:19** God's preservation of Noah meant that earth and humanity would still need the ecological support network of animals. Consequently, Noah was to **bring into the ark** one **male** and one **female** of **all the living creatures**. Representatives of all vulnerable species were to be preserved.

**6:20-21** Noah would not have to go on safaris to collect the various animals. They would **come to him** so he could **keep them alive**. On at least three other occasions in the Bible God directed animals to go to people (Ex 16:13; Nm 11:31; 1Kg 17:2-6).

**6:22** As other heroic men of the Bible would do in later times—Moses and Aaron (Ex 7:6), Aaron's sons (Lv 8:36), Joshua (Jos 11:9), Gideon (Jdg 6:27), Samuel (1Sm 16:4), David (2Sm 5:25), and Elijah (1Kg 17:5)—Noah **did everything that God had commanded him**. An undetermined amount of time had passed between this verse and the previous verses in this chapter. Certainly the construction of the ark would have been a lengthy endeavor.

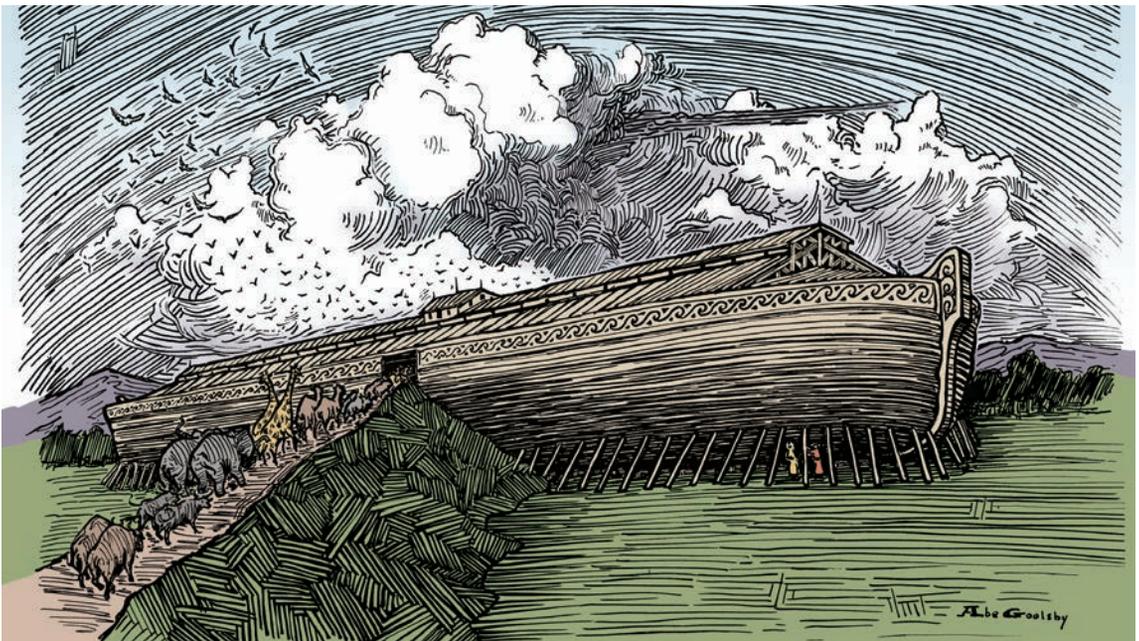
**7:1** Following the ark's completion, **the LORD** gave **Noah** the order to begin the complex process of boarding the craft. Because of Noah's **righteous** walk with God he and his **household** would be saved. The concept of sparing many because of the righteousness of a few occurs elsewhere in the Bible (18:24-32).

**7:2-3** While one male and one female of every species of air and land animal were to be

taken aboard the ark, **all the clean animals**—both those of the land and among the **birds of the sky**—were to have **seven pairs** of males and females onboard. The concept of clean animals is explained elsewhere in the Torah (Lv 11:1-46); essentially, these were animals that were fit for human consumption and could be offered as sacrifices to God. On the meaning of **throughout the earth**, see note at 6:17.

**7:4** The advance warning God gave Noah here about the onset of rain was necessary, for it almost certainly would have taken **seven days** to finish boarding the ark. Loading, securing, and tending to the dietary needs of all the wild animals onboard the three-level barge-like structure was a complicated and dangerous task.

Here rain was the mechanism for the deadly act of judgment that would **wipe off**



A reconstruction of the ark Noah built. The dimensions of the ark made it eminently seaworthy. The vessel in the *Epic of Gilgamesh*, an account of a flood that has some parallels to Noah's, is a cube. Such a vessel would have rolled over at the slightest disturbance.

days from now I will make it rain on the earth forty days and forty nights, and every living thing I have made I will wipe off the face of the earth.”<sup>a</sup> And Noah did everything that the LORD commanded him.<sup>a</sup>

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

<sup>a</sup>7:5 Gn 6:22  
<sup>b</sup>7:11 Gn 8:2; Pr 8:28;  
 Am 9:6  
<sup>c</sup>2Kg 7:19; Ps 78:23;  
 Is 24:18; Mal 3:10

## THE FLOOD

<sup>11</sup>In the six hundredth year of Noah’s life, in the second month, on the seventeenth day of the month, on that day all the sources of the vast watery depths burst open,<sup>b</sup> the floodgates of the sky were opened,<sup>c</sup> and the rain fell on the earth forty days and forty nights. <sup>13</sup>On that same day Noah along with his sons Shem, Ham, and Japheth, Noah’s wife, and his three sons’ wives entered the ark with him. <sup>14</sup>They entered it with all the wildlife according to their kinds, all livestock according to their kinds, all the creatures that crawl on the earth according to their kinds, every flying creature — all the birds and every winged

from the face of the earth . . . every living thing. Elsewhere in the OT God caused burning sulfur (19:24) and hailstones (Ex 9:18,23) to “rain” from the sky as a mechanism of judgment against sinners. The rains would continue unabated for **forty days and forty nights**. The number forty played a significant role throughout the OT: Isaac and Esau were forty when they married (25:20; 26:34), Moses was on Mount Sinai forty days and nights receiving the law from God (Ex 24:18; 34:28; Dt 9:11,18,25), Israel spent forty years in the wilderness following their disobedience (Nm 32:13), the Philistines oppressed Israel for forty years (Jdg 13:1), and several

judges and kings ruled over Israel for forty years (Othniel, Jdg 3:11; Deborah, Jdg 5:31; Gideon, Jdg 8:28; Eli, 1Sm 4:8; David, 2Sm 5:4; Solomon, 1Kg 11:42; Joash, 2Kg 12:1; Saul, Ac 13:21).

**7:5** This is parallel to 6:22.

**7:6-10** Noah’s age at the onset of the flood—**six hundred years old**—will be used to indicate the duration of the flood (8:13). No other human after Noah will be said to live to this age. On the scope of the flood, see note at 6:17.

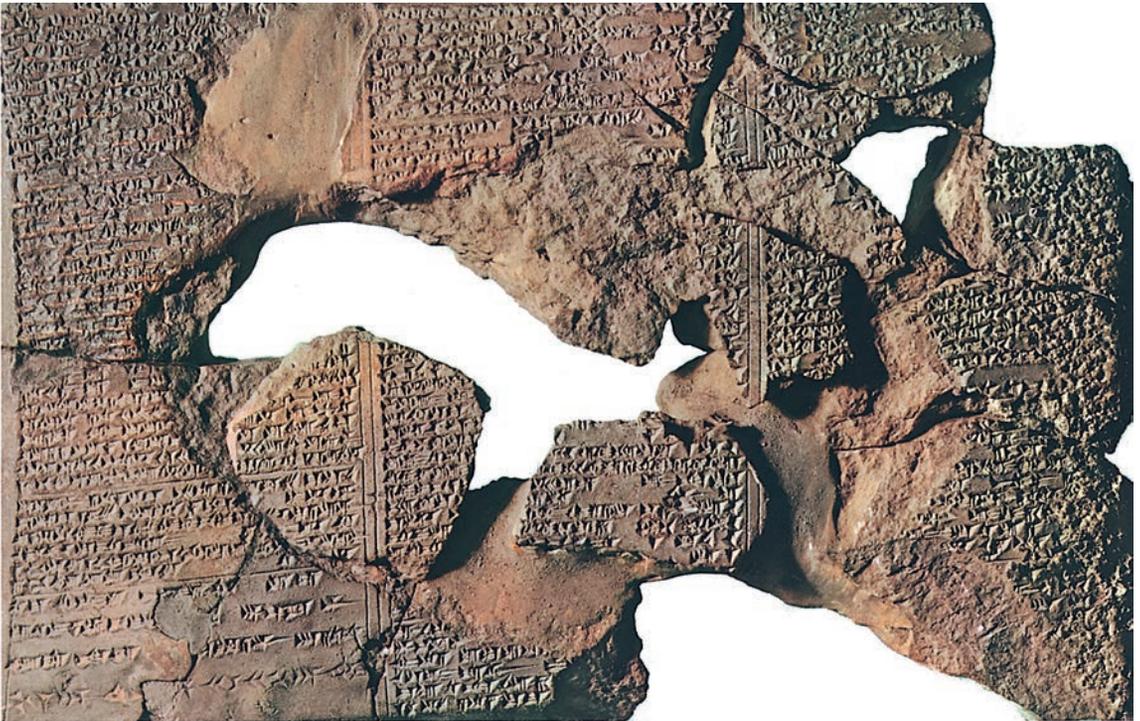
**Seven days later**, exactly when God said it would occur, the **floodwaters** began.

**7:11** Water came from two different sources—one below and one above. Exactly what

is meant by **all the sources of the vast watery depths** is unknown; the phrase appears to refer to a massive outflow of pressurized water from underground sources that **burst out** of the ground with devastating effect. No known phenomenon in nature today corresponds to this description.

**7:12** Exactly as God had indicated (v. 4), **the rain fell on the earth forty days and forty nights**. God’s word to Noah is once again shown to be trustworthy.

**7:13-15** **The same day Noah** completed the task of loading the ark; that is, the seventh day (v. 10) after God’s command was given, Noah and his family **entered** the ark.



A reproduction of tablet eleven of the *Epic of Gilgamesh*, a Babylonian account of the great flood.

creature — according to their kinds.<sup>15</sup> Two of every creature that has the breath of life in it came to Noah and entered the ark.<sup>16</sup> Those that entered, male and female of every creature, entered just as God had commanded him. Then the LORD shut him in.

<sup>17</sup>The flood continued for forty days on the earth; the water increased and lifted up the ark so that it rose above the earth.<sup>18</sup> The water surged and increased greatly on the earth, and the ark floated on the surface of the water.<sup>19</sup> Then the water surged even higher on the earth, and all the high mountains under the whole sky were covered.<sup>20</sup> The mountains were covered as the water surged above them more than twenty feet.<sup>21</sup> Every creature perished — those that crawl on the earth, birds, livestock, wildlife, and those that swarm<sup>8</sup> on the earth, as well as all mankind.<sup>22</sup> Everything with the breath of the spirit of life in its nostrils<sup>9</sup> — everything on dry land died.<sup>23</sup> He wiped out every living thing that was on the face of the earth, from mankind to livestock, to creatures that crawl, to the birds of the sky, and they were wiped off the earth. Only Noah was left, and those that were with him in the ark.<sup>24</sup> And the water surged on the earth 150 days.

#### THE FLOOD RECEDES

**8** God remembered Noah,<sup>c</sup> as well as all the wildlife and all the livestock that were with him in the ark. God caused a wind<sup>c</sup> to pass over the earth,<sup>d</sup> and the water began to

<sup>17:22</sup> Gn 2:7  
<sup>17:23</sup> 1Pt 3:20;  
2Pt 2:5  
<sup>18:1</sup> Gn 19:29; Ex  
2:24; 1Sm 1:19; Ps  
105:42  
<sup>19</sup> Ex 14:21; 15:10; Jb  
12:15; Ps 29:10; Is  
44:27; Nah 1:4  
<sup>20</sup> 8:2 Gn 7:11  
<sup>21</sup> 8:3 Gn 7:24  
<sup>22</sup> 8:4 2Kg 19:37; Is  
37:38; Jr 51:27

subside.<sup>2</sup> The sources of the watery depths and the floodgates of the sky were closed, and the rain from the sky stopped.<sup>e</sup> <sup>3</sup>The water steadily receded from the earth, and by the end of 150 days the water had decreased significantly.<sup>f</sup> <sup>4</sup>The ark came to rest in the seventh month, on the seventeenth day of the month, on the mountains of Ararat.<sup>g</sup>

<sup>5</sup>The water continued to recede until the tenth month; in the tenth month, on the first day of the month, the tops of the mountains were visible.<sup>6</sup> After forty days Noah opened the window of the ark that he had made,<sup>7</sup> and he sent out a raven. It went back and forth until the water had dried up from the earth.<sup>8</sup> Then he sent out a dove to see whether the water on the earth's surface had gone down,<sup>9</sup> but the dove found no resting place for its foot. It returned to him in the ark because water covered the surface of the whole earth. He reached out and brought it into the ark to himself.<sup>10</sup> So Noah waited seven more days and sent out the dove from the ark again.<sup>11</sup> When the dove came to him at evening, there was a plucked olive leaf in its beak. So Noah knew that the water on the earth's surface had gone down.<sup>12</sup> After he had waited another seven days, he sent out the dove, but it did not return to him again.<sup>13</sup> In the six hundred and first year,<sup>h</sup> in the first month, on the first day of the month, the water that had covered the earth was dried up. Then Noah removed the ark's cover and saw that the surface of the ground was drying.<sup>14</sup> By

<sup>a</sup>7:20 Lit *surged 15 cubits* <sup>b</sup>7:21 Lit *all the swarming swarms* <sup>c</sup>8:1 Or *spirit*; Gn 1:2 <sup>d</sup>8:13 = of Noah's life

**7:16 Shut him in**—The author gave no details to explain how God performed the supernatural act of shutting Noah in. This divine act highlights the truth found elsewhere in the Bible: “Salvation belongs to the LORD” (Jnh 2:9).

**7:17-20 More than twenty feet** is literally fifteen cubits, which is about 22½ feet. For more on the scope of Noah's flood, see note at 6:17.

**7:21** Through the use of expanded restatement the author brings the detailed account of the flood's destruction to a climax.

**7:22** For dramatic effect a second expanded expression of the flood's destructive effects immediately follows the one in the previous verse.

**7:23** The overpowering presentation of death is contrasted with Noah's preservation.

**7:24** Though the text does not explicitly say so, the total of 150 days seems to include the forty days of rain (see note at v. 12). The Hebrew word translated as *surged* emphasizes the power of the waters.

**8:1 Remembered** does not suggest that God had ever forgotten about Noah; when used of God, “remember” suggests the initiation of a miraculous, saving act of God. Other instances of God “remembering” as the first step in providing divine help for his people include his intervention in the lives of Lot (19:29), Rachel

(30:22), and the Israelites in Egypt (Ex 2:24). Using language that reflects God's initial act of creating the universe (Gn 1:2), God caused (Hb) *ruach*—“Spirit” or *wind*—to pass over the waters of the earth. Immediately the water began to subside.

**8:2** Following the 150 days of ever-surging waters, a turnaround occurred: all the sources of water (from above and below) stopped and the water began to subside. The initial downpour ended after forty days and nights (7:12), so presumably the rains that are said to have ceased in the present verse were only sporadic showers.

**8:3** Just as the flood had increased upon the earth for 150 days, so it **steadily receded from the earth for 150 days**, until the levels had decreased significantly.

**8:4** Exactly five months after the flood had begun (7:11), **the ark came to rest . . . on the mountains of Ararat**—modern Turkey or Armenia.

**8:5-6** This is the only mention of a **window** (Hb *haddon*) in the ark. Noah opened the window to determine the earth's readiness to receive the ark's cargo of people and animals.

**8:7** Rabbis have suggested that Noah first **sent out a raven**, a ritually unclean bird, be-

cause it was expendable. The fact that it **went back and forth** from the ark means that it could find no suitable habitat.

**8:8** Perhaps simultaneous with the release of the raven or soon thereafter, Noah **sent out a dove**. Since the dove ate seed and insects, it would provide a useful indication of **whether the water on the earth's surface had gone down**.

**8:9** Though the ark was now resting on Ararat (v. 4) and mountaintops were visible (v. 5), the waters had not yet receded enough for the dove to find a **resting place for its foot**.

**8:10-11** When the dove returned to Noah from its second foray with an **olive leaf**, this confirmed that the lower elevations (where olive trees grow) were now above water. Inspired by this passage, the image of a dove with an olive branch in its mouth has become a universal symbol of peace.

**8:12** When Noah sent the dove out a third time and it **did not return**, it was clear that life-sustaining conditions now existed at the earth's more temperate, lower elevations.

**8:13-14** On Noah's six hundred and first birthday he **removed the ark's cover** and confirmed what the dove had indicated—that the plains beneath the mountain range were

## THE HISTORICAL RELIABILITY OF THE OLD TESTAMENT

*Kenneth A. Kitchen*

**“R**eliability” is the quality of being dependable and truthful. Is the Old Testament (OT) reliable in what it says about God’s dealings with humanity in the ancient Near East? Discoveries from that early world often illustrate the factual reality of OT history.

### PRIMEVAL HISTORY

Shared memories represent one proof of the reliability of the OT. Far antiquity saw the passing of countless

human generations, but they kept a living memory of momentous events. For instance, other cultures told stories that are strikingly similar to Noah’s flood. This is indirect proof for the reliability of the OT. The Genesis schema of documenting creation and listing two sets of eight or ten representative generations living before and after the flood also finds commonality in ancient Sumerian and Babylonian literature. This demonstrates that the OT fits the literary forms and practices of the era it documents. Finally, long lives like Methuselah’s 969 years are no bar to personal historicity; ancient Sumerian documents maintain that King (En)-me-bara-gisi reigned for 900 years. The 900-year reign is not credible, but King (En)-me-bara-gisi was not fictional. He is known to be historical because archaeologists have discovered inscriptions bearing his name. It was a widespread ancient convention to “stretch” spans of true events and ages of people that hailed from primeval times.

### PATRIARCHAL HISTORY

With Abraham we enter the era of the patriarchs (ca 2000–1600 BC). Historical records are more plentiful from this point on in history. The patriarchs herded sheep and cattle, ranging from Ur (modern Iraq) down to Egypt. Data from Ur during this era record large flocks of sheep, which fits with OT depictions. Archives from Mari mention Haran, where Abraham once lived. From the time of Abraham down to Jacob, Canaan was a land of independent “city-states” like Shechem, (Jeru)salem, and Gerar. These population centers were sustained by pastures, frequented by local herdsmen and visitors like Abraham and his descendants (Gn 37:12–13). Egyptian “excretion-texts” provide extrabiblical evidence of this practice. The war between the Canaanite kings and eastern rulers from Babylonia (Shinar, Ellasar—see Gn 14) and Iranian Elam is true to this period. The Mari archives verify that this was the only period in which Elam’s forces reached so far west and when many war alliances flourished. Patriarchal customs involving things like marriage and covenant-formation reflect this period, as does the sum of 20 shekels paid to purchase Joseph (Gn 37:28). Egyptian details mentioned in the OT (personal names, deadly famines, the practice of “reading” dreams, etc.) match what is learned about Egypt from other ancient sources.

In Egypt the enslaved Hebrews labored to build cities such as Rameses and Pithom. One view is that this took place under Ramesses II (1279–1213 BC). Another view is that the exodus took place around 1446 BC. Archaeology reveals that Rameses included



The Merneptah Stele (above) dates to the late thirteenth century BC. Pharaoh Merneptah (1212–1203 BC) memorializes his victories against Libya and in Canaan on this granite stela. Outside the Bible, this is the earliest reference to Israel to date: “Israel is laid waste, its seed is not.” The Merneptah Stele was discovered in 1896 by Flinders Petrie at Thebes and is currently in the Cairo Museum, Egypt.

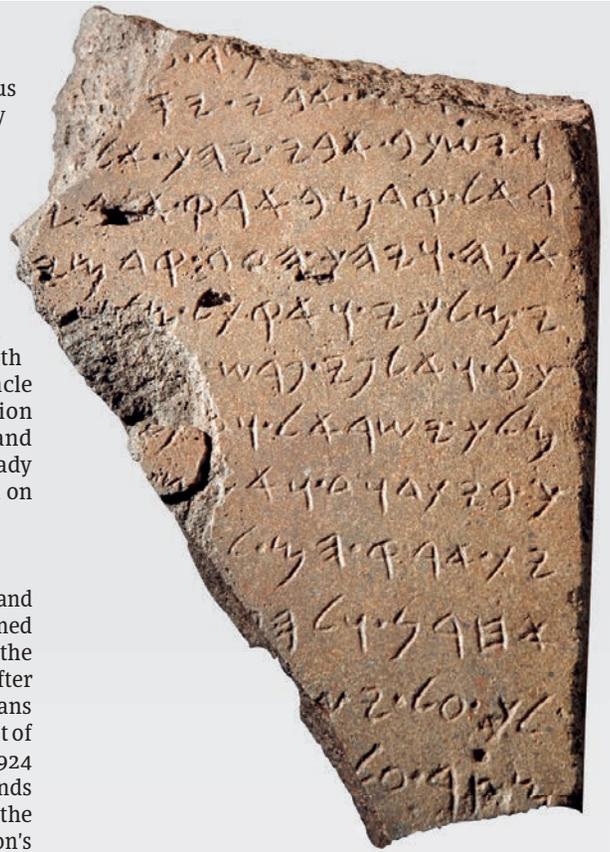
chariotry-stables (see Ex 14:25). During the exodus from Egypt, God led the Hebrews not by the nearby northern route to Canaan (cp. Ex 13:17-18), which was infested with Egyptian military stations, but by Mount Sinai, which was safely south of Egyptian control.

The covenant Moses mediated between God and Israel at Mount Sinai includes features (historical introduction, identification of witnesses, the naming of covenant blessings and curses) that reflect known usage in the fourteenth and thirteenth centuries BC, and the tabernacle (Ex 25:9; 26:1ff) echoes a long regional tradition (ca 2800–1000 BC) of building sacred tents and sanctuaries. By 1209 BC, tribal Israel was already in Canaan. Extrabiblical proof for this is found on Pharaoh Merneptah's Victory Stele.

### HISTORICAL ISRAEL

After the troubled times of the judges, Saul, David, and Solomon ruled Israel. "The House of David" is named on an Aramean stele from Dan, and likewise on the stele of Mesha, king of Moab. Less than 50 years after David, the place-name "Heights of Davit" (Egyptians used *t* for final *d*) is included in the geographic list of Palestine drawn up for Shoshenq I ("Shishak" ca 924 BC). The design of Solomon's temple reflected trends that were current in neighboring Syria, though the temple's décor was modest by comparison. Solomon's wisdom-writings fit his epoch in format and content. After Solomon's death (930 BC), Israel and Judah split into two kingdoms. The Assyrians advanced southward and came into repeated contact with Hebrew rulers. Thus Ahab and Jehu of Israel are mentioned in texts of Shalmaneser III, while his successors mention Jehoash, Menahem, Pekah, and Hoshea. We have Hebrew seals identifying servants of Jeroboam II and Hoshea. From Judah, Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah are included on official seal-impressions, while Assyrian records name (Jeho)-ahaz, Hezekiah, and Manasseh. All these kings appear in the same sequence and epochs in both biblical and Assyrian records.

Mesha of Moab left a stele mentioning Omri and Ahab of Israel. In turn, the narratives in Kings and Chronicles mention, in correct periods and order, the following kings of Egypt: Shoshenq I [Shishak], Osorkon IV [So], Taharqa [Tirhakah], Necho (II), and Hophra [Apries]. Also mentioned are Assyrian rulers Tiglath-pileser III, Shalmaneser (V), Sargon (II), Sennacherib, and Esar-haddon. Finally, the Babylonian rulers Merodach-baladan (II), Nebuchadrezzar (II), and Evil-Merodach are named. Various events are documented in both biblical and external sources through 200 years for Israel and 340 years for Judah. The falls of Samaria (722/720 BC) and Judah (605–597 BC) are mentioned in Assyrian and Babylonian chronicles respectively.



The House of David Inscription is the earliest reference to David outside the Bible. This inscription was part of a victory monument erected by an Aramean king in the ninth century BC. He celebrates victories over a "king of Israel" and a king of the "House of David"—a reference to Judah. This artifact was discovered in 1994 at Tell Dan in Northern Israel. It resides currently in the Israel Museum, Jerusalem.

We have discovered ration-tablets from Babylon for the banished Judean king Jehoiachin and his family for 594–570 BC. The well-documented Persian triumph in 539 BC enabled many exiles to return to Judah and rebuild Jerusalem and its temple, just as the OT says. Other biblical figures now verified through archaeological discoveries include: Sanballat I of Samaria from Aramaic papyri; the later family of Tobiah of Ammon from tombs at Iraq al-Amir; and Gashmu/Geshem as an Arabian king in Qedar, from a bowl belonging to his son Qaynu.

The historicity of the OT should be taken seriously. As for the OT text itself, the Dead Sea Scrolls (ca 150 BC–AD 70) provide good evidence of a carefully transmitted core-text tradition through almost a thousand years down to the Masoretic scribes (ca eighth–tenth centuries AD). Thus, the basic text of OT Scripture can be established as essentially soundly transmitted, and the evidence shows that the form and content of the OT fit with known literary and cultural realities of the ancient Near East. For more, see K. A. Kitchen, *On the Reliability of the Old Testament*.

the twenty-seventh day of the second month, the earth was dry.

**THE LORD'S PROMISE**

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

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

<sup>22</sup> As long as the earth endures, seedtime and harvest, cold and heat,

<sup>a</sup>8:17 Gn 1:22,28; 9:1  
<sup>b</sup>8:21 Ex 29:18; Lv 1:9; Ezk 16:19; 20:41; 2Co 2:15; Eph 5:2; Php 4:18  
<sup>c</sup>Gn 3:17; 5:29; 6:7; Is 54:9  
<sup>d</sup>Gn 6:5; Ps 51:5; Jr 17:9; Rm 1:21; 3:23; Eph 2:1-3  
<sup>e</sup>Gn 9:11,15  
<sup>f</sup>8:22 Jr 33:20,25  
<sup>g</sup>9:1 Gn 1:28; 8:17; 9:7; 35:11  
<sup>h</sup>9:3 Dt 12:15; 1Tm 4:3-4  
<sup>i</sup>9:1-3 Gn 1:28-30  
<sup>j</sup>9:4 Lv 3:17; 7:20; 17:10-16; 19:26; Dt 12:16,23; 15:23; 15M 14:34; Ac 15:20,29  
<sup>k</sup>9:5 Ex 21:28  
<sup>l</sup>Gn 4:2,8  
<sup>m</sup>9:6 Ex 21:12-14; Lv 24:17; Nm 35:33; Mt 26:52  
<sup>n</sup>Gn 1:26-27  
<sup>o</sup>9:7 Gn 1:28  
<sup>p</sup>9:9 Gn 6:18; 8:22; 17:2; Ex 6:4; 19:5; Lv 26:9

summer and winter, and day and night will not cease."<sup>f</sup>

**GOD'S COVENANT WITH NOAH**

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

<sup>6</sup> Whoever sheds human blood, by humans his blood will be shed,<sup>n</sup> for God made humans in his image.<sup>n</sup> <sup>7</sup> But you, be fruitful and multiply; spread out over the earth and multiply on it."<sup>o</sup>

<sup>8</sup> Then God said to Noah and his sons with him,<sup>9</sup> "Understand that I am establishing my covenant<sup>p</sup> with you and your descendants after you,<sup>10</sup> and with every living creature that

<sup>a</sup>8:17 Lit *creatures of all flesh* <sup>b</sup>9:2 Lit *are given in your hand* <sup>c</sup>9:5 Lit *And your blood belonging to your life I will seek* <sup>d</sup>9:5 Lit *any human; from the hand of a man his brother I will seek the life of the human.*

**drying.** Some fifty-seven days (one 29½ day cycle of the moon plus 27 days) later, the earth was dry.

**8:15-19** Perhaps this is the first time God had spoken to Noah since before the flood; during the entire year of the catastrophic flood no record shows that God communicated directly with the patriarch or his family. What faith Noah demonstrated during that terrifying time in the ark's dark interior!

**8:20** Noah's first act following his departure from the ark was to worship God by giving a burnt offering. Since every kind of clean animal and bird—that is, one of every mammal that chewed the cud and possessed split hoofs, as well as one representative of every kind of bird that did not eat carrion—was offered, it must have been an impressive sacrifice.

**8:21** Using anthropomorphic language—words that describe God's actions in human terms—the text notes that the LORD smelled the pleasing aroma. The phrase means that God accepted Noah's sacrifice. Elsewhere in the Torah, God's refusal to smell a sacrifice meant he rejected the offering (Lv 26:31). Acceptable offerings in other parts of the Bible are said to have a pleasing aroma (Ex 29:25; Lv 1:9; 2:2; 3:16; Nm 18:17). Following Noah's sacrifice the Lord made a solemn promise never again to curse the ground as he had done following Adam's sin (Gn 3:17; 5:29). Almost with a sense of resignation, God noted that the inclination of the human heart was evil from youth

onward (Ps 14:1; Rm 3:9,23). The flood did not significantly change the human heart (cp. Gn 6:5). Yet in spite of humanity's sinful nature, God's grace and love would prevail: He would never again destroy all life as he had done in Noah's day.

**8:22** The terrifying chaos of the flood would give way to the predictable, comforting rhythms of life—the harvest, the seasons, day and night—for as long as the earth endures.

**9:1-2** This blessing fortifies the parallels between Noah and Adam (1:28), as both blessings began with the command to be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth. However, in Noah's day the blessing is altered. Mankind is still to take dominion over creation (1:28), but due to the presence of sin, the harmony that existed in the garden of Eden had ended; now animals were filled with the fear and terror of humans. Terrorized animals can be dangerous; even so, God placed the animals under people's authority, ensuring that humans would prevail over the animal kingdom.

**9:3** The original dietary regulations given to Adam and Eve (1:29) were now expanded. Animal proteins would join green plants within the human diet. The phrase referring to animal food sources can be translated literally as "every creeping/gliding animal" and would normally be understood to refer to smaller animals on land or sea, but it is usually understood here to mean every creature that moves. Israelites would later be limited to eating only clean animals (Lv 11).

**9:4** Though meat would be permissible as food, blood would not. God required Noah and his offspring to drain the lifeblood from any animal before eating it. This guideline would be expanded and clarified in Israel's Sinai law code (Lv 7:26-27; 17:10-14; 19:26; Dt 12:16,24; 15:23). To avoid offending Jewish Christians, first-century Gentile Christians were also encouraged not to eat blood (Ac 15:20,29).

**9:5-6** Because God made humans in his image, the taking of a human life by either an animal or another person was not treated like the death of an animal. Any animal and any human who killed a human was to have its own blood . . . shed . . . by humans as a just punishment. This verse establishes that unauthorized taking of a human life is a capital offense and implicitly authorizes properly credentialed authorities to execute murderers. Other verses in the law of Moses reinforced this concept (Ex 20:13; 21:23; Dt 19:21). No such law exists for the killing of animals; the Bible consistently teaches that humans are of superior worth to animals.

**9:7** God's blessing of humanity in Noah's day begins (v. 1) and ends with the command to be fruitful and multiply. This repetition underscores the sacredness and desirability of human reproduction within God's plan.

**9:8-11** These verses are the formal conclusion of the covenant first mentioned in 6:18. The initial expression of the covenant unconditionally offered safety in the ark to Noah's family and many classes of animals. In the style of a royal

is with you — birds, livestock, and all wildlife of the earth that are with you — all the animals of the earth that came out of the ark.

<sup>11</sup> I establish my covenant with you that never again will every creature be wiped out by floodwaters; there will never again be a flood to destroy the earth.”<sup>a</sup>

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

#### PROPHECIES ABOUT NOAH'S FAMILY

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

<sup>a</sup>9:15 *Lit and creatures of all flesh* <sup>b</sup>9:16 *Lit creatures of all flesh* <sup>c</sup>9:20 *Or Noah began to be a farmer and planted* <sup>d</sup>9:26 *As a wish or prayer; others interpret the verbs in vv. 26-27 as prophecy: Canaan will be . . .* <sup>e</sup>9:27 *In Hb, the name Japheth sounds like the word "extend."*

grant or unilateral agreement, this portion of the Noahic covenant unconditionally promises that **there will never again be a flood** of the same destructive scale as Noah's flood.

**9:12-17** Accompanying the covenant was a visible confirmation of the agreement between God and the earth that would continue for all future generations: God's bow in the clouds represented his promise that he would never again send a flood to destroy every creature. From this point forward the rainbow would have profound significance as an affirmation of God's grace and peace. Elsewhere in the Bible the rainbow is associated with the presence of God or his angelic representative (Ezk 1:28; Rv 4:3; 10:1). This covenant is one of three in the Bible that were accompanied by a sign; the other signs were circumcision (Gn 17:11) and the Sabbath (Ex 31:16-17).

**9:18-19** Beginning with repeated material (5:32; 6:10), the writer launches into a new narrative designed to prepare readers for God's judgment on the nation of Canaan. The familiar genealogy is extended with the note that **Ham was the father of Canaan**. At the same time v. 19 prepares readers for chap. 10. **9:20** The parallels continue between Noah and Adam as Noah is now shown to be a farmer (lit **man of the soil** [Hb *'adamah*]) in the new world prepared for him by God.

**9:21** As Adam had sinned through the consumption of fruit (3:6), so Noah drank some of

the wine and became drunk. After sin entered the world, shattering innocence, nakedness was associated with shame (cp. 2:25; 3:10). In this case Noah brought the shame on himself through his sinful drunkenness. A minimum of two years likely elapsed between vv. 20 and 21 since grapevines must grow that long before they can produce grapes.

**9:22** Noah “uncovered himself” and Ham saw Noah naked. This passage does not say that Ham “uncovered the nakedness of Noah,” which would be a euphemism for perverted sexual activity (Lv 18:6-19). A parent's sin often becomes a child's stumbling block (Ex 34:7). In this case, Ham dishonored his father and thus sinned (Ex 20:12; Dt 5:16) in two ways: First, he dishonored his father by staring at his nakedness (Hab 2:15). Second, he increased both his sin and his father's shame by reporting his father's condition to others. Later, the law stipulated curses for dishonoring a parent (Ex 21:17; Dt 27:16).

**9:23** Shem and Japheth demonstrated their nobler natures by reacting to their father's condition far differently from Ham. First, they did not look upon their father's shameful condition. Second, **they covered their father's nakedness**, thus ending his shame. Their action parallels God's clothing of Adam following Adam's sin (3:21).

**9:24-27** When Noah learned what his youngest son had done, he placed the curse on

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

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

Canaan is cursed.<sup>h</sup>

He will be the lowest of slaves to his brothers.<sup>i</sup>

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

Blessed be the LORD, the God of Shem; Let Canaan be<sup>b</sup> Shem's slave.

<sup>27</sup> Let God extend Japheth;<sup>e</sup> let Japheth dwell in the tents of Shem; let Canaan be Shem's slave.

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

#### THE TABLE OF NATIONS

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

Ham's son, **Canaan**, who would be the **lowest of slaves to his brothers**, that is, the slave of the descendants of Shem and Japheth. This curse on Canaan had prophetic implications. In later centuries the Canaanites, the descendants of Canaan, were pressed into slavery by the Israelites (Jos 17:13; Jdg 1:28-35; 1Kg 9:20-21). This curse does not refer to the descendants of Ham who settled in Africa.

**9:28-29** Noah's 950 years mark him as the third-oldest human in biblical history, behind Methuselah (969 years) and Jared (962 years).

**10:1** The family records of Noah's sons is the fourth of eleven (Hb) *toledoth* sections in Genesis (2:4; 5:1; 6:9; 11:10,27; 25:12,19; 36:1,9; 37:2). The purpose of this section is twofold: to show that Noah's sons fulfilled the command to be fruitful, multiply, and spread out over the earth (9:7), and to distinguish the “unchosen” lines of Noah's descendants (the Japhethites and Hamites) from the line that would be both the recipient and the agent of God's special blessing to the rest of humanity (the Shemites). Gn 10:1-32 lists a total of seventy descendants in the family lines of **Shem, Ham, and Japheth**. Seventy, a multiple of two numbers that suggest completeness (seven, the number of days of creation week; ten, the number of fingers), would have suggested to ancient Israelites a satisfying completeness to the quantity of persons and nations that came into being after the flood. This is labeled a list of clans,

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

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

<sup>a</sup>10:2-5 1Ch 1:5-7; Ezk 38:1-6  
<sup>b</sup>10:4 1Kg 10:22; Is 2:16  
<sup>c</sup>10:6-7 1Ch 1:8-10  
<sup>d</sup>10:10 Gn 11:9  
<sup>e</sup>Gn 11:2; 14:1  
<sup>f</sup>10:11 Mc 5:6  
<sup>g</sup>10:13-18 1Ch 1:11-16  
<sup>h</sup>10:14 Jr 47:4; Am 9:7

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

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

<sup>a</sup>10:4 Some Hb mss, Sam, LXX read *Rodanim*; 1Ch 1:7 <sup>b</sup>10:10 Or *Uruk* <sup>c</sup>10:10 Or *Arkkad* <sup>d</sup>10:10 Or *and all of them* <sup>e</sup>10:10 Or *in Babylonia* <sup>f</sup>10:13 = Egypt

languages, nations, and lands (vv. 5,20,31; cp. Rv 14:6). Thus some of the names refer to the regions where that person's descendants settled; some refer to people groups.

**10:2-5** Fourteen of Japheth's descendants are listed here. **Peoples of the coasts and islands** refers to people living in areas reachable by ship, especially in the Mediterranean basin. The fact that each group had its own language suggests that this listing refers to the situation after the Tower of Babylon event (11:1-9).

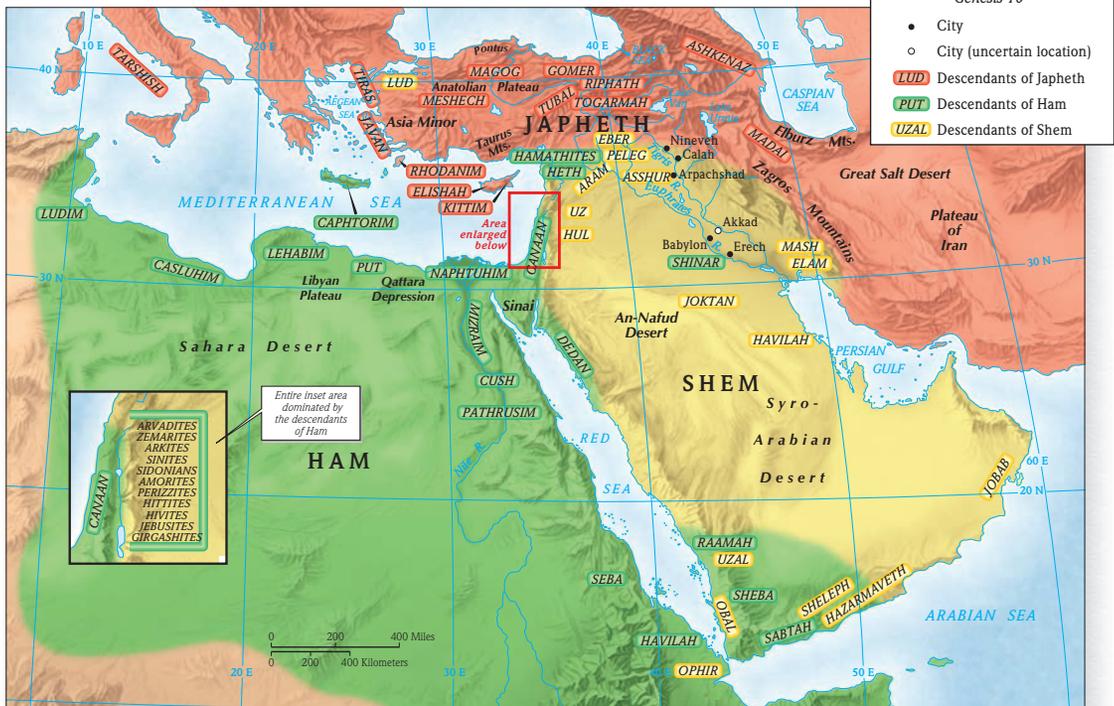
**10:6-7** Thirty of Ham's descendants are included in this list. The geographic or ethnic identifications of most of the names have

been lost in history, but they are associated with regions in Africa and Arabia. **Mizraim** is the Hebrew word for Egypt. **Havilah** probably refers to a different geographic region than the Havilah of 2:11. Two different persons by the name of **Sheba** are listed in Genesis genealogies (v. 28; 25:3); **Dedan** is also found in 25:3. It is best to understand each of these as different persons, and the founders of different people groups.

**10:8-12** Nimrod . . . began to be powerful in the land, that is, he was successful as an aggressive empire builder. Like many other ancient Egyptian and Mesopotamian kings,

he was also famous as a powerful hunter. Nimrod's origins are from Cush, that is, Africa; his empire was Asian, stretching across the Tigris-Euphrates river basin. The order of place names suggests that Nimrod's empire expanded from south to north, and included **Babylon** and **Nineveh**, the capital cities of two of Israel's most formidable future enemies. **Shinar** corresponds to the ancient regions of Sumer and **Accad**; **Erech** to ancient Uruk; **Calah** to Nimrod; **Rehoboth-ir** may be ancient Asshur.

**10:15-20** The most complex portion of the Hamite list is the **Canaan** branch, with eleven



The Table of Nations shows that the Bible is firmly based on historical events. It provides the historical context for understanding Abraham, whose family became a nation through whom God would bless all peoples of the earth.

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

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

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

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

<sup>24</sup> Arpachshad fathered <sup>a</sup> Shalah, <sup>d</sup> and Shalah fathered Eber. <sup>25</sup> Eber had two sons. One was named Peleg, <sup>b</sup> for during his days the earth was divided; <sup>e</sup> his brother was named Joktan. <sup>26</sup> And Joktan fathered Almodad, Sheleph, Hazarmaveth, Jerah, <sup>27</sup> Hadoram, Uzal, Diklah, <sup>28</sup> Obal, Abimael, Sheba, <sup>29</sup> Ophir, Havilah, and Jobab. All these were Joktan's sons. <sup>30</sup> Their settlements extended from Mesha to Sephar, the eastern hill country.

<sup>a</sup>10:16 Gn 15:19-21

<sup>b</sup>10:21 Gn 11:13-14

<sup>c</sup>10:22-29 1Ch

1:17-23

<sup>d</sup>10:24 Gn 11:12;

Lk 3:35

<sup>e</sup>10:25 Gn 11:8; Ps

55:9

<sup>f</sup>10:32 Gn 9:19

<sup>g</sup>11:2 Gn 10:10; 14:1;

Dn 1:2

<sup>h</sup>11:3 Gn 14:10; Ex 2:3

<sup>i</sup>11:4 Dt 1:28; 9:1; Ps

107:26

<sup>j</sup>11:5 Gn 18:21; Ex

3:8; 19:11, 18, 20

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

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

## THE TOWER OF BABYLON

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

<sup>5</sup> Then the LORD came down <sup>l</sup> to look over the city and the tower that the humans <sup>f</sup> were building. <sup>6</sup> The LORD said, "If they have begun to do this as one people all having the same language, then nothing they plan to do will be impossible for them. <sup>7</sup> Come, let's go down there and confuse their language so that they

<sup>a</sup>10:24 LXX reads *fathered Cainan, and Cainan fathered*; Gn 11:12-13; Lk 3:35-36 <sup>b</sup>10:25 = Division <sup>c</sup>11:1 Lit *one lip and the same words* <sup>d</sup>11:2 Lit *they* <sup>e</sup>11:2 Or *migrated eastward* <sup>f</sup>11:5 Or *the descendants of Adam*

named descendants or people groups. The relative size and detail reinforces the significance of the Canaanites for later Israelite history. This genealogical section indicates that many of the earliest inhabitants of Canaan were non-Semitic peoples.

**10:21-31** The genealogy of Shem, portions of which will be repeated in 11:10-17, represents the "chosen" line of Noah's descendants. From Shem's line will come Abraham, the Israelites, and ultimately Jesus. Larger and more complex than the Shemite genealogy in chap. 11 (26 vs. 12 names) this presentation differs from the other mainly in that it includes the "unchosen" branches of Shem's lineage, especially that of Joktan with his thirteen sons. The mention of all the sons of Eber brings attention to the point in Shem's line where the "chosen" branch splits from the rest of the family. The word *Hebrew* is often understood to be derived from Eber's name.

Names in the Shemite genealogy that scholars have linked to various people groups or locations include **Elam**, modern southwest Iran; **Asshur**, along the Tigris river in Iraq; **Aram**, eastern Iraq near the Iranian border; **Uz**, the Arabian peninsula or Edom; and **Mash**, central Asia Minor. All of the thirteen sons of Joktan that can be confidently connected to a location are associated with locations in the Arabian peninsula.

The name **Ophir** may not be connected with the Ophir mentioned elsewhere in Scripture (1Kg 9:28; Jb 22:24; Ps 45:9) since the latter name appears to be a distant location, possibly in Africa or India. Joktan's **Havilah**

should not be equated with Cush's Havilah, though the two share the same name.

**10:21** The phrase **Japheth's older brother** is difficult in the Hebrew; several other versions (KJV, NKJV, NIV) understand it to mean that Japheth was the older brother.

**10:25** A wordplay exists between the name **Peleg** and the verbal phrase "was divided." Both are based on the Hebrew sound sequence *p-l-g*. Exactly what is meant by the **earth was divided** is uncertain. It may be a reference to the tower of Babylon event (11:9), a devastating earthquake, a large Mesopotamian canal project, or a political division.

**11:1-9** The account of Adam and Eve's sin in the garden of Eden (chap. 3) and the tower of Babylon narrative share many similarities in plot, vocabulary, and theme. Both show people acting with sinful pride to try to make themselves godlike, and both show God expelling sinners from their homes as punishment for their sin.

**11:1** The tower of Babylon incident occurred earlier than at least some of the events of chap. 10 since **the whole earth still had the same language and vocabulary** (10:5, 20, 31).

**11:2** **The land of Shinar** corresponds to ancient Babylonia and includes the region of the cities of Babylon, Erech, Accad, and Calneh (10:10). **Migrated from the east** can be translated "migrated eastward."

**11:3** Unlike the original readers' homeland of Israel, with its extensive quantity of limestone building material, the people of Babylonia used **oven-fired bricks**. Archaeological excavations have confirmed that ancient inhabi-

tants of the land used **asphalt for mortar**.

**11:4** The people's pride and ambition is expressed in three different ways: (1) the five-fold use of the first-person pronouns—**us** (three times), **ourselves** (twice), and **we**; (2) their desire to **build . . . a tower into the sky**, thus giving them access to "the heavens," the domain of God; and (3) their attempt at self-glorification—**let us make a name for ourselves**. Because they did it to avoid being **scattered throughout the earth**, all their efforts amounted to a rebellion against God and his command to fill the earth (9:1).

**11:5** In spite of their best efforts to elevate themselves to God's domain, the Lord still had to come down to **look over the city and the tower**. Human attempts to achieve glory, which belongs to God alone, always fall pitifully short.

**11:6** God's concern that **nothing** the people might **plan to do** would be **impossible for them** does not express a divine fear that humans might someday become as powerful as God. Rather, it conveys dismay that people, unchecked, would undertake extraordinary deeds of evil and defiance.

**11:7** On God's reference to himself in the plural, see note at 1:26. Perhaps the most dramatic Hebrew wordplay in the tower of Babylon episode involves the deliberate reversal of sounds between vv. 3 and 7. Humans created brick—a word that contains the sound sequence *l-b-n* in Hebrew—to rebel against God. In response God created confusion—a Hebrew word containing *n-b-l*—to reverse the evil human plot.

will not understand one another's speech."<sup>8</sup> So from there the LORD scattered them throughout the earth,<sup>9</sup> and they stopped building the city.<sup>9</sup> Therefore it is called Babylon,<sup>A,B,D</sup> for there the LORD confused the language of the whole earth, and from there the LORD scattered them throughout the earth.

#### FROM SHEM TO ABRAM

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

<sup>a</sup>11:8 Gn 11:4; Ps 92:9; Lk 1:51  
<sup>b</sup>11:9 Gn 10:10  
<sup>c</sup>11:10 Gn 2:4; 11:27  
<sup>d</sup>11:24 Jos 24:2  
<sup>e</sup>11:29 Gn 17:15; 20:12  
<sup>f</sup>Gn 22:20,23; 24:15  
<sup>g</sup>11:30 Gn 25:21; 29:31; Ex 23:26; Jdg 13:2-3; 1Sm 2:5; Jb 24:21; Is 54:1; Lk 1:36; 23:29; Gl 4:27; Heb 11:11  
<sup>h</sup>11:31 Gn 15:7; Neh 9:7; Ac 7:4  
<sup>i</sup>12:1 Gn 15:7; Ac 7:3; Heb 11:8  
<sup>j</sup>12:2 Gn 17:4-6; 18:18; 46:3; Dt 26:5  
<sup>k</sup>Gn 22:17  
<sup>l</sup>Zch 8:13

<sup>25</sup> After he fathered Terah, Nahor lived 119 years and fathered other sons and daughters.

<sup>26</sup> Terah lived 70 years and fathered Abram, Nahor, and Haran.

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

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

#### THE CALL OF ABRAM

**12** The LORD said to Abram: Go out from your land, your relatives, and your father's house to the land that I will show you.<sup>i</sup>

<sup>2</sup> I will make you into a great nation,<sup>j</sup> I will bless you,<sup>k</sup> I will make your name great, and you will be a blessing.<sup>l</sup>

<sup>3</sup> I will bless those who bless you,

<sup>a</sup>11:9 Hb *Babel* <sup>b</sup>11:9 In Hb, the name for "Babylon," *babel* sounds like the word for "confuse," *balal*. <sup>c</sup>11:12-13 LXX reads *years and fathered Cainan*. <sup>d</sup>After he fathered Cainan, Arpachshad lived 430 years and fathered other sons and daughters, and he died. Cainan lived 130 years and fathered Shelah. After he fathered Shelah, Cainan lived 330 years and fathered other sons and daughters, and he died; Gn 10:24; Lk 3:35-36

**11:8** What the people did not want, to be "scattered" (v. 4), was what happened after all.

**11:9** Most English versions refer to "Babel" here, but this is the same Hebrew word translated "Babylon" throughout the OT. The connection between the words **Babylon** and **confused** (Hb *babel* and *balal*) constitute another of the many wordplays in this chapter. The Lord's action had two positive outcomes: first, because it **confused the language of the whole earth**, it ended the possibility of large-scale evil ventures; second, it caused humanity to scatter **throughout the earth**, thus bringing people into compliance with God's command to fill the earth (9:1).

**11:10-26** The family records of Shem constitute the fifth of eleven (Hb) *toledoth* sections in Genesis (2:4; 5:1; 6:9; 10:1; 11:27; 25:12,19; 36:1,9; 37:2). Whereas the previous *toledoth* section ("the family records of Noah's sons," 10:1-11:9) presented Noah's "unchosen" descendants, this one traces the "chosen" offspring.

This genealogical table, which partially repeats information provided in 10:21-25, connects Noah's son Shem to Abram/Abraham. Though this list contains fewer names

(12 vs. 26) than the genealogy in chap. 10, it traces out more generations (10 vs. 6) and includes chronological data as well. Its style links it with the genealogy in chap. 5, which also traces the "chosen" line and contains ten generations. Whereas chap. 5 stretches from Adam to Noah (the pre-flood world), this table connects Seth to Abram/Abraham (the post-flood world).

**11:12** Departing from the Hebrew text, both Lk 3:35-36 and the septuagintal version of this verse indicate that Arpachshad's actual son was Cainan. Because the inspired NT author confirms the Septuagint's reading, Cainan should be accepted as Arpachshad's son. Thus it is best to accept Arpachshad as Shelah's father in an indirect sense, and to view the Hebrew version here as a stylized genealogy shaped for thematic purposes. A similar technique appears to have been used by Matthew in his presentation of Jesus's genealogy in Mt 1.

**11:17** Eber lived a total of 464 years. This distinguishes him as the longest living person in the Bible who was born after the flood.

**11:27-30** The family records of Terah is the sixth of eleven (Hb) *toledoth* sections in Gen-

esis (2:4; 5:1; 6:9; 10:1; 11:10; 25:12,19; 36:1,9; 37:2). Far more than a simple genealogical table, this section stretches across parts of fifteen chapters and includes a rich supply of information about the life of Terah's most famous son, **Abram** (later called Abraham). In the Hebrew, the spelling of the personal name **Haran** differs from the place name *Haran* (*charan*; v. 31).

**Nahor's wife . . . Milcah** eventually produced eight sons (22:20-23); her most famous son, Bethuel, became the father-in-law of Abraham's son Isaac (25:20).

In contrast to Milcah, **Sarai** (later called Sarah) was **unable to conceive**. This painful fact is emphasized by the biblical writer restating the fact: **she did not have a child**. God's provision of an heir for Abraham in spite of Sarah's barrenness is a major theme in the narratives that follow (15:2-4; 17:15-21; 21:10).

**11:31-32** Until Terah's death Abram was under the authority of his father. No clue is given as to why Terah chose to leave Ur or why he decided to settle in Haran.

**12:1-3** According to Ac 7:2, the **LORD** spoke to Abram while he was still in Mesopotamia (Gn 11:31). God gave Abram a one-verb command with four aspects to it. Abram was to **go out**



The distance from Ur to Haran was approximately 700 miles. Abraham's journey from Haran to Bethel was another 700 miles.

I will curse anyone who treats you with contempt,<sup>a</sup> and all the peoples<sup>A</sup> on earth will be blessed<sup>B</sup> through you.<sup>C,D</sup>

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

<sup>a</sup>12:3 Gn 27:29; Nm 24:9  
<sup>A</sup>Gn 18:18; 26:4; 28:14; Ac 3:25; Gl 3:8  
<sup>b</sup>12:4 Gn 11:27, 31  
<sup>c</sup>12:6 Gn 35:4; Dt 11:30; Heb 11:9  
<sup>d</sup>12:7 Gn 13:15; Ex 33:1; Ps 105:9-12; Ac 7:5; Gl 3:16  
<sup>e</sup>12:8 Gn 4:26; 21:33  
<sup>f</sup>12:10 Gn 26:1; 43:1  
<sup>g</sup>12:12 Gn 20:1-18; 26:6-11

called on the name of the LORD.<sup>9</sup> Then Abram journeyed by stages to the Negev.

**ABRAM IN EGYPT**

<sup>10</sup> There was a famine in the land,<sup>9</sup> so Abram went down to Egypt to stay there for a while because the famine in the land was severe.  
<sup>11</sup> When he was about to enter Egypt, he said to his wife Sarai, "Look, I know what a beautiful woman you are.<sup>12</sup> When the Egyptians see you, they will say, 'This is his wife.' They will kill me but let you live."<sup>13</sup> Please say you're my sister so it will go well for me because of you, and my life will be spared on your account."  
<sup>14</sup> When Abram entered Egypt, the Egyptians saw that the woman was very beautiful.<sup>15</sup> Pharaoh's officials saw her and praised her to Pharaoh, so the woman was taken to Pharaoh's household.<sup>16</sup> He treated Abram well because of her, and Abram acquired flocks and herds, male and female donkeys, male and female slaves, and camels.

<sup>A</sup>12:3 Lit *clans*    <sup>B</sup>12:3 Or *will find blessing*    <sup>C</sup>12:3 Or *will bless themselves by you*

from (1) his land, (2) his relatives, and (3) his father's house, (4) to a land chosen by God. Obedience to God often means leaving one thing in order to receive something else even better. Saying I will five times, God unilaterally promised Abram progeny, prominence, and protection.

**12:4** Having migrated with his father's household from Ur (11:31), Abram stayed an uncertain amount of time in Haran. Since Terah lived 145 years after the birth of Abram (11:26,32) and Abram was seventy-five years old when he left Haran, Abram literally fulfilled the command to leave his father's house (v. 1). It later becomes clear that, at this point, Abram did not fully understand God's commands and promises. In matters of faith, understanding often follows obedience.

**12:5** Abram was apparently his nephew Lot's protector since Lot's father had died in Ur (11:28). The group's journey to Canaan was about 450 miles.

**12:6** Shechem is in north central Israel on the slope of Mount Ebal. Abram's grandson Jacob would live for a time in this region as well (33:18-19). Later, Abram's great grandson Joseph would be buried there (Jos 24:32). The Canaanites were a distinct cultural group (Gn 15:21), but the term *Canaanite* is also an umbrella term for many different people groups who were living in the region, including the Hethites, Amorites, Perizzites, Gergashites, Hivites, and Jebusites.

**12:7** This is the first of three times Scripture indicates that the Lord physically appeared to Abram (cp. 17:1; 18:1). The Lord's promise to give the land of Canaan to Abram's offspring is the single

most repeated affirmation in the Torah. At least thirty-seven references are made to it in the books of Moses. The altar Abram built at Shechem is the first of four he is said to have built; others were set up between Bethel and Ai (v. 8), at Hebron (13:18), and at Mt. Moriah (22:9).

**12:8** As a shepherd, Abram frequently moved to new locations to provide food for his animals. Bethel, modern Beitin, was about twenty miles south of Shechem. This altar is the second of the four that Abram built in the land of Canaan (v. 7). When Abram called on the name of the LORD here, he identified himself as a true member of the godly line of Seth (4:26). This is the first of three occasions on which Abram is said to do this (13:4; 21:3).

**12:9** The Negev is the semidesert region west and south of the Dead Sea. About fifty miles south of Bethel, this area has been inhabited by nomads since ancient times.

**12:10** The only river that flowed year-round in Israel was the Jordan, and it was completely below sea level (minus 686 ft. at its highest point, and minus 1,300 at its lowest). Canaan relied heavily on rainfall for its drinking water and crops. When there was no rain there was a famine. To avoid the famine, Abram went down to Egypt, the location with the best water supply. This meant abandoning the land God had promised to his descendants.

**12:11** Even though Sarai was at least sixty-five years old at this time (Sarai was ten years younger than Abram [17:17], and he was at least seventy-five [v. 4]), she was still considered beautiful. Her desirability was due in part to the fact that she was the most powerful woman in a wealthy clan.

**12:12-13** By telling his wife to say that she was his sister, Abram was technically asking her to be truthful since Sarai was his half sister (20:12).

**12:14-15** Since Abram's group had many people and animals, they had to be given special permission to live and trade in Egypt. Important economic and political contracts in the ancient world were sometimes finalized by the weaker party giving a woman to the leader of the stronger party. The woman would then become part of the leader's harem (this probably explains why Solomon had seven hundred wives, 1Kg 11:3). Sarai was the most desirable woman in Abram's group, so when Pharaoh's officials . . . praised her to Pharaoh, she was taken to Pharaoh's harem.

**12:16** Perhaps because of gifts from Pharaoh, perhaps because of favorable business deals, Abram acquired much wealth.

**zera'**

Hebrew pronunciation	[ZEH ra]
CSB translation	seed, offspring
Uses in Genesis	59
Uses in the OT	229
Focus passage	Genesis 12:7

**Zera'** appears 15 times with related *zara'* (sow; Ex 23:10). *Zera'* means seed (Nm 24:7), seedtime (Gn 8:22), crop (Dt 22:9), or grain (Is 23:3). *Zera'* indicates human or animal seed (Jr 31:27), semen (Lv 22:4), or offspring (Gn 3:15; 46:6). It signifies child (Gn 4:25) or son (1Sm 1:11), descendants (Ps 18:50), heirs (2Kg 11:1), family (1Kg 11:14), a nation's kindred (Est 10:3), and people (Is 61:9). It connotes brood (Is 1:4), line or bloodline (Gn 19:32), lineage (Nm 16:40), race (Is 57:4), or ancestral families (Ezr 2:59). *Zera'* implies fertile (Ezk 17:5). *Zara'* (56x) also denotes sowed seed (Gn 26:12), plant, become pregnant (Lv 12:2), conceive (Nm 5:28), and have offspring (Nah 1:14). It functions figuratively (Hs 8:7). Particles with *zera'* indicate seed-bearing (Gn 1:12,29). *Zerua'* (3x) is sowing, what is sown, or vegetables (Dn 1:12).

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

#### ABRAM AND LOT SEPARATE

**13** Abram went up from Egypt to the Negev<sup>b</sup> — he, his wife, and all he had, and Lot with him. <sup>2</sup> Abram was very rich in

<sup>a</sup>12:17 Gn 20:18; 1Ch 16:21; Ps 105:14  
<sup>b</sup>13:1 Gn 12:9  
<sup>c</sup>13:4 Gn 12:7,8  
<sup>d</sup>13:6 Gn 36:7  
<sup>e</sup>13:7 Gn 26:20  
<sup>f</sup>Gn 12:6; 15:20-21

livestock, silver, and gold.<sup>3</sup> He went by stages from the Negev to Bethel, to the place between Bethel and Ai where his tent had formerly been,<sup>4</sup> to the site where he had built the altar. And Abram called on the name of the LORD there.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>5</sup> Now Lot, who was traveling with Abram, also had flocks, herds, and tents.<sup>6</sup> But the land was unable to support them as long as they stayed together, for they had so many possessions that they could not stay together,<sup>7</sup> and there was quarreling between the herdsmen of Abram's livestock and the herdsmen of Lot's livestock.<sup>e</sup> (At that time the Canaanites and the Perizzites were living in the land.)<sup>f</sup>

Abram would later use one of the **female slaves** in his group to produce a son (16:1-4,15).

**12:17** If Abram's wife Sarai remained in Egypt as part of Pharaoh's harem, then God's plan to provide Abram with an heir through her would never be fulfilled. To restore Sarai to Abram and bring the founders of the Israelite nation out of Egypt and back to the promised land, **the LORD struck Pharaoh and his household with severe plagues**. This act foreshadowed what God would do in Moses's day to bring the Israelites out of Egypt again (Ex 12:29), to take them to the promised land.

**12:18** Pharaoh connected the plagues with Sarai's entrance into his harem. An investi-

gation revealed that he had been tricked into marrying a woman who was the **wife** of another man.

**12:19-20** Even as **Pharaoh gave . . . orders and sent Abram, the first Israelite, away and all he had**, so a later Pharaoh would order the Israelites in Moses's day to leave Egypt (Ex 12:31-32) with all their belongings.

**13:1** Having been forced to go out from Egypt, Abram returned to the **Negev**, the last place he had lived in the promised land (12:9) before his departure to Africa.

**13:2-3** Abram moved northward to **Bethel**, an area of Canaan with greater rainfall—and thus more vegetation—than the **Negev**. This move was probably necessary in order to

feed the large flocks of Abram and his nephew Lot.

**13:4** Abram's physical return to the place where God first spoke to him in the promised land was paralleled by a spiritual recommitment of his life to God. For the first time since he left Canaan for Egypt, **Abram called on the name of the LORD**.

**13:5-6** Especially during the dry summer months, **the land** around Bethel and Ai was too dry for such a large number of flocks and people. To remain in the area, Abram and Lot would have to separate.

**13:7** With limited natural resources, **quarreling between Abram's and Lot's . . . herdsmen** was inevitable.



Paintings from the tomb of Knumhotep found in the noblemen cemetery of Beni-Hasan, a village on the east bank of the Nile River about 130 miles south of Cairo. The paintings date from the Middle Kingdom of Egypt (ca 1099 BC) and show a group of 37 Asiatics as they enter Egypt. This painting provides us with an idea of how Abraham might have dressed.



**MILITARY ROUTE  
OF THE KINGS  
FROM THE NORTH**

# INTRODUCTION TO PHILIPPIANS

Philippians is Paul's most warmly personal letter. After initial difficulties in the city of Philippi (Acts 16), a strong bond developed between Paul and the converts there. Paul wrote to thank the church for a gift it had recently sent him in prison and to inform them of his circumstances.



Philippi's acropolis seen from the hill where Cassius's forces camped in 42 BC. The Battle at Philippi was one of the strategic engagements between Julius Caesar's assassins, Brutus and Cassius, and his avengers, Mark Antony and Octavius. The victory of the latter forces was a critical step toward Octavius becoming Caesar Augustus (Lk 2:1).

**CIRCUMSTANCES OF WRITING**

**AUTHOR:** Paul the apostle wrote this short letter, a fact that no scholar seriously questions.

**BACKGROUND:** The traditional date for the writing of Philippians is during Paul's first Roman imprisonment (AD 60–62); few have challenged this conclusion.

Paul planted the church at Philippi during his second missionary journey (AD 50) in response to his “Macedonian vision” (Ac 16:9-10). This was the first church in Europe (Ac 16).

The text of this letter from Paul suggests several characteristics of the church at Philippi. First, Gentiles predominated. Few Jews lived in Philippi, and, apparently, the church had few. Second, women had a significant role (Ac 16:11-15; Php 4:1-2). Third, the church was generous. Fourth, they remained deeply loyal to Paul.

Philippi, the ancient city of Krenides, had a military significance. It was the capital of Alexander the Great, who renamed it for his father Philip of Macedon, and it became the capital of the Greek Empire (332 BC). The Romans conquered Greece, and in the civil war after Julius Caesar's death (44 BC), Antony and Octavius repopulated Philippi by allowing the defeated armies (Brutus and Cassius) to settle there (eight hundred miles from Rome). They declared the city a Roman colony. It flourished, proud of its history and entrenched in Roman political and social life. In his epistle to the Philippians, Paul alludes to military and political structures as metaphors for the church.

Paul thanked the church for their financial support (4:10-20). He also addressed disunity and the threat of heresy. Disunity threatened the church, spawned by personal conflicts (4:2) and disagreements over theology (3:1-16). The heresy came from radical Jewish teachers. Paul addressed both issues personally and warmly.

The church at Philippi sent Epaphroditus to help Paul in Rome. While there he became ill (2:25-28). The church learned of Epaphroditus's illness, and Paul wished to ease their concern for him. Some people possibly blamed Epaphroditus for failing his commission, but Paul com-

mended him and sent him home. Perhaps Epaphroditus carried this letter with him.

**MESSAGE AND PURPOSE**

One purpose of this letter was for Paul to explain his situation at Rome (1:12-26). Although he was concerned about the divided Christian community at Rome, his outlook was strengthened by the knowledge that Christ was being magnified. Paul's theology of life formed the basis of his optimism. Whether he lived or died, whether he continued his service to others or went to be in Christ's presence, or whether he was appreciated or not, he wanted Christ to be glorified. Within this explanation are several messages.

**UNITY:** Paul exhorted the church to unity (1:27–2:18). Two factors influenced him. The church at Rome was divided, and he lived with a daily reminder of the effects of disunity. Further, similar disunity threatened the Philippian church as two prominent women differed with each other. Selfishness lay at the heart of the problems at Rome and Philippi. Paul reminded the believers of the humility of Jesus. If they would allow the outlook of Christ to guide their lives, harmony would be restored. The hymn to Christ (2:5-11) is pivotal to the epistle.

Christian unity results when individuals develop the mind of Christ. In more difficult situations, the church collectively solved problems through the involvement of its leadership (4:2-3). Harmony, joy, and peace characterize the church that functions as it should.

**FREEDOM FROM LEGALISM:** Paul warned the church to beware of Jewish legalists (3:2-21). Legalistic Jewish teachers threatened to destroy the vitality of the congregation by calling it to a preoccupation with external religious matters. Paul countered the legalists with a forceful teaching about justification by faith. He chose to express his theology through his personal experience. He had personal experience with their message and found it lacking.

**SALVATION:** Salvation was provided by Christ, who became obedient to death (2:6-8). It was proclaimed by a host of preachers who were anxious to advance the gospel. It

**500–31 BC**

Settlers from Thasos occupy what would later be called Philippi and named it Krenides. **500**  
Philip II of Macedon invests in the development of the area and so the city was named in his honor. **358**  
The Romans win an overwhelming victory over the Macedonians at the battle of Pydna, after which Philippi came under Roman control. **168**  
The Battle of Philippi, a strategic turning point in Roman history, is fought between the army of Cassius and Brutus against that of Octavius and Mark Antony. **42**

**31 BC–AD 49**

A decade later Octavius (Augustus) prevails against Mark Antony in the Battle of Actium, after which Philippi became a colony where veterans of the Roman civil war were settled and enjoyed the privileges of those who lived in Rome. **31 BC**  
Jesus's trials, death, resurrection **Nisan 14–16** or **April 3–5, AD 33**  
**Pentecost AD 33**  
Saul's conversion on the Damascus Road **October AD 34**  
Paul, Barnabas, and John Mark make first missionary journey. **AD 47–49**  
Paul and Silas begin second missionary journey overland through Cilicia to Derbe, Lystra, Iconium, and Pisidian Antioch. **AD 49**

was promoted through varying circumstances of life—both good and bad—so that the lives of believers became powerful witnesses. Finally, salvation would transform Christians and churches into models of spiritual life.

**STEWARDSHIP:** Paul thanked the Philippian believers for their financial support. The church had sent money and a trusted servant, Epaphroditus, to care for Paul. Their generosity encouraged Paul at a time of personal need, and he took the opportunity to express the rewards of giving and to teach Christian living.

The church at Philippi had reached a maturity regarding material possessions. It knew how to give out of poverty. It knew the value of supporting the gospel and those who proclaim it, and it knew that God could provide for its needs as well. Paul also demonstrated his attitude toward material things. He could maintain spiritual equilibrium in the midst of fluctuating financial circumstances. Christ was his life, and Christ's provisions were all he needed. In everything, Paul's joy was that Christ was glorified in him.

**IMITATION:** The epistle abounds with Christian models for imitation. Most obviously, the church was to imitate Jesus, but other genuine Christians also merited appreciation. Paul, Timothy, and Epaphroditus embodied the selflessness that God desires in his people.

#### CONTRIBUTION TO THE BIBLE

Paul's letter to the Philippians teaches us much about genuine Christianity. While most of its themes may be

found elsewhere in Scripture, it is within this letter that we can see how those themes and messages impact life. Within the NT, Philippians contributes to our understanding of Christian commitment and what it means to be Christlike.

#### STRUCTURE

Philippians can be divided into four primary sections. Paul had definite concerns that he wanted to express, and he also wrote to warn about false teachers who threatened the church. Many of Paul's letters can be divided into theological and practical sections, but Philippians does not follow that pattern. Paul's theological instruction is woven throughout the fabric of a highly personal letter.

#### OUTLINE

- I. Salutation (1:1-2)
- II. Explanation of Paul's Concerns (1:3-2:30)
  - A. Paul's thanksgiving and prayer (1:3-11)
  - B. Paul's joy in the progress of the gospel (1:12-26)
  - C. Exhortation to Christlike character (1:27-2:18)
  - D. Paul's future plans (2:19-30)
- III. Exhortations to Christian Living (3:1-4:9)
  - A. Exhortations to avoid false teachers (3:1-21)
  - B. Miscellaneous exhortations (4:1-9)
- IV. Expression of Thanks and Conclusion (4:10-23)
  - A. Repeated thanks (4:10-20)
  - B. Greetings and benediction (4:21-23)

AD 49-52

Paul, Silas, and Timothy continue through North Galatia to Troas. **49**  
 Paul and his companions arrive in Philippi and plant the first Christian church in Europe. **50**  
 Paul's ministry in the Macedonia cities of Thessalonica and Berea **50**  
 Paul plants the church at Corinth. **50-51**  
 Paul concludes second missionary journey, returning to Antioch of Syria. **52**

AD 54-62

Paul's third missionary journey takes him to Ephesus. **54**  
 Paul's extended ministry in Ephesus **54-56**  
 Paul likely revisits Philippi collecting funds for the church at Jerusalem. **57**  
 Paul's first imprisonment in Rome **60-62**  
 Paul writes his letter to the church at Philippi. **62**

## GREETING

**1** Paul<sup>a</sup> and Timothy,<sup>b</sup> servants of Christ Jesus: To all the saints in Christ Jesus who are in Philippi,<sup>c</sup> including the overseers<sup>d</sup> and deacons.<sup>e</sup>

<sup>2</sup> Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

## THANKSGIVING AND PRAYER

<sup>3</sup> I give thanks to my God for every remembrance of you,<sup>a</sup> <sup>4</sup> always praying with joy for all of you in my every prayer, <sup>5</sup> because of your partnership in the gospel from the first day<sup>f</sup> until now.<sup>g</sup> <sup>6</sup> I am sure of this, that he who started a good work<sup>h</sup> in you<sup>8</sup> will carry it on to completion<sup>i</sup> until the day of Christ Jesus. <sup>7</sup> Indeed, it is right<sup>j</sup> for me to think this way about all of you, because I have you in my heart,<sup>c</sup> and you are all partners with me in grace, both in my imprisonment<sup>k</sup> and in the defense<sup>l</sup> and confirmation of the gospel. <sup>8</sup> For God is my witness,<sup>m</sup> how deeply I miss all of you<sup>n</sup> with the affection of Christ Jesus. <sup>9</sup> And I pray this: that your love<sup>o</sup> will keep on growing<sup>p</sup> in knowledge and every kind of discernment,<sup>q</sup> <sup>10</sup> so that you may approve the things that are superior<sup>r</sup> and may

<sup>a</sup>1:1 Ac 13:9  
<sup>b</sup>Ac 16:1; 1Tm 1:2  
<sup>c</sup>Ac 16:12-40; 20:3-6;  
 1Th 2:2  
<sup>d</sup>Ac 20:28; Ti 1:7  
<sup>e</sup>1Co 3:5  
<sup>f</sup>1:5 Ac 16:12-40  
<sup>g</sup>1Co 9:15-18;  
 2Co 11:7-9; Php  
 4:10,16,18  
<sup>h</sup>1:6 2Co 9:8; Gl 3:10  
<sup>i</sup>2Co 7:1  
<sup>j</sup>1:7 Rm 1:17  
<sup>k</sup>Php 1:13-14,17-  
 20,25,30; 2:17,24;  
 4:22  
<sup>l</sup>Ac 22:1  
<sup>m</sup>1:8 Rm 1:9  
<sup>n</sup>1Th 3:6  
<sup>o</sup>1:9 1Co 13:1  
<sup>p</sup>1Co 15:58  
<sup>q</sup>Eph 5:17  
<sup>r</sup>1:9-10 Rm 12:2  
<sup>s</sup>1:10 2Pt 3:1  
<sup>t</sup>Ac 24:16; 1Co 10:32  
<sup>u</sup>Php 1:6,15  
<sup>v</sup>1:11 Mt 3:8; Gl 5:22  
<sup>w</sup>Rm 1:17  
<sup>x</sup>Lk 9:32; Jn 17:24;  
 2Co 3:18; 2Pt 3:18  
<sup>y</sup>1:12 Mk 13:9; Ac  
 21-26  
<sup>z</sup>1:14 Lk 8:21; Jn 18:32;  
 Ac 17:11; Heb 4:12  
<sup>aa</sup>1:15 Rm 1:29; Ti 3:9  
<sup>ab</sup>1:16 1Co 13:1  
<sup>ac</sup>1:17 Rm 2:8  
<sup>ad</sup>1:18 1Th 2:5  
<sup>ae</sup>1:19 Jb 13:16-18

be pure<sup>s</sup> and blameless<sup>t</sup> in the day of Christ,<sup>u</sup> <sup>11</sup> filled with the fruit<sup>v</sup> of righteousness<sup>w</sup> that comes through Jesus Christ to the glory<sup>x</sup> and praise of God.

## ADVANCE OF THE GOSPEL

<sup>12</sup> Now I want you to know, brothers and sisters, that what has happened to me has actually advanced the gospel,<sup>y</sup> <sup>13</sup> so that it has become known throughout the whole imperial guard, and to everyone else, that my imprisonment is because I am in Christ. <sup>14</sup> Most of the brothers have gained confidence in the Lord from my imprisonment and dare even more to speak the word<sup>z</sup> fearlessly. <sup>15</sup> To be sure, some preach Christ out of envy and rivalry,<sup>aa</sup> but others out of good will. <sup>16</sup> These preach out of love,<sup>ab</sup> knowing that I am appointed for the defense of the gospel; <sup>17</sup> the others proclaim Christ out of selfish ambition,<sup>ac</sup> not sincerely, thinking that they will cause me trouble in my imprisonment. <sup>18</sup> What does it matter? Only that in every way, whether from false motives<sup>ad</sup> or true, Christ is proclaimed, and in this I rejoice. Yes, and I will continue to rejoice <sup>19</sup> because I know this will lead to my salvation<sup>ae</sup> through your prayers and help from

<sup>a</sup>1:3 Or for your every remembrance of me <sup>b</sup>1:6 Or work among you <sup>c</sup>1:7 Or because you have me in your heart <sup>d</sup>1:14 Other mss add of God <sup>e</sup>1:19 Or vindication

**1:1a** Timothy was with Paul and Silas when they planted the church at Philippi (2:19-24; Ac 16). **Servants** expresses humility.

**1:1b** **Saints** are believers. **Overseers and deacons** (lit “servants”) indicate an emerging church structure that became full-blown in later years. On qualifications for overseers, see 1Tm 3:1-7; Ti 1:5-9; for deacons, see 1Tm 3:8-13.

**1:2** **Grace and peace**, jointly from **God and Jesus Christ**, attest to the deity and equality of both.

**1:3-4** When a church embraced the Lord and the gospel message as enthusiastically as the Philippians did, it was cause for great thanksgiving, even if there was cause for concern over unity.

**1:5** **Partnership** (lit “fellowship”) expresses participation, including giving (4:10-20) and sending Epaphroditus (2:25). **From the first day** shows Paul’s continued joy in these believers, in spite of his initial difficulty in the city of Philippi (Ac 16).

**1:6-8** Paul’s confidence in prayer resulted from the principle that God finishes what he begins, and the fact that the Philippians demonstrated their Christian character by joining in the support of the gospel work.

**1:9-10** Paul prayed two petitions: a growing love (v. 9) and complete character (v. 10). **Love** (Gk *agapē*) is selfless action for another person. **Knowledge and discernment** together foster mature love. “Knowledge” is both intellectual and experiential. “Discernment”

occurs only here in the NT and connotes moral sensitivity. Love enriched by knowledge and moral discernment leads believers to experience what really matters. The word **pure** emphasizes personal integrity; **blameless** means good character that survives all accusations.

**1:11** The phrase **filled with the fruit of righteousness** expresses how a person attains purity and blamelessness. Righteousness is the character of those whom God declares righteous.

**1:12** Paul’s attitude was that all that had happened to him served to promote **the gospel**. Advancement meant to blaze a trail (e.g., for an army). Paul’s difficult circumstances opened new opportunities for gospel witness.

**1:13** The first opportunity (see v. 12 and note) for gospel witness involved the **imperial guard**, an elite military force charged with protecting the Roman emperor and his concerns. As the soldiers rotated shifts, each heard Paul’s message. Paul’s **imprisonment** was for **Christ** (lit “a prisoner of Christ”). The guard knew that Paul’s commitment to Christ had led to his arrest and imprisonment.

**1:14-17** The second opportunity for gospel witness involved the church itself. Responding to Paul’s imprisonment, Christians divided into those who supported him and those who opposed him. Paul’s imprisonment spawned renewed enthusiasm for preaching in both groups, but the group that opposed

him preached the gospel out of **envy and rivalry**. They hoped to cause Paul greater difficulty, perhaps an unfavorable trial verdict. Their motivation was **selfish ambition**, intending to **cause . . . trouble** by social turmoil. Paul does not say what drove the rivalry, but apparently they felt Christianity ought to have a different spokesperson than Paul. The group that supported Paul was motivated by **good will and love**. They realized Paul was **appointed** (lit “set”) by God for defending the gospel, especially to Gentiles. Neither of these groups is identified. Both seem to have held correct doctrine and proclaimed Christ, yet their disparate treatment of Paul indicates that even “correct” believers can behave wrongly.

**1:18** Paul accepted the message and work of both groups. Trusting God’s sovereignty, he refused to condemn improper motivations as long as the end result was **Christ . . . proclaimed**.

**1:19** Paul remained optimistic. **Salvation** may recall Job’s attitude (Jb 13:13-18). Paul expected exoneration because Christianity was not illegal throughout the Roman Empire at this time. Paul hoped for **prayers**, the “human” side, and **help**, divine assistance. “Prayers” implies intense intercession. God answers prayers with help, either something the Holy Spirit provides (a resource), or the presence of the Holy Spirit (the “Comforter”). The grammar of this verse joins “prayers” and “help,” indicating Paul’s dependence on both working together.

the Spirit<sup>a</sup> of Jesus Christ.<sup>b</sup> <sup>20</sup> My eager expectation and hope<sup>c</sup> is that I will not be ashamed about anything, but that now as always, with all courage, Christ will be highly honored in my body, whether by life<sup>d</sup> or by death.<sup>e</sup>

### LIVING IS CHRIST

<sup>21</sup> For me, to live is Christ<sup>f</sup> and to die is gain.<sup>g</sup>

<sup>22</sup> Now if I live on in the flesh, this means fruitful<sup>h</sup> work<sup>i</sup> for me; and I don't know which one I should choose. <sup>23</sup> I am torn between the two. I long to depart and be with Christ<sup>j</sup> — which is far better<sup>k</sup> — <sup>24</sup> but to remain in the flesh is more necessary for your sake. <sup>25</sup> Since I am persuaded of this, I know that I will remain and continue with all of you for your progress and joy in the faith,<sup>l</sup> <sup>26</sup> so that, because of my coming to you again, your boasting<sup>m</sup> in Christ Jesus<sup>n</sup> may abound.

<sup>27</sup> Just one thing: As citizens of heaven, live your life<sup>o</sup> worthy of the gospel of Christ. Then, whether I come and see you or am absent, I will hear about you that you are standing firm<sup>p</sup> in one<sup>q</sup> spirit, in one accord,<sup>r</sup> contending together for the faith<sup>s</sup> of the gospel,<sup>28</sup> not being

<sup>a</sup>1:19 G1:5-25  
<sup>b</sup>Ac 16:7; Rm 8:9;  
 1Pt 1:11  
<sup>c</sup>1:20 Ac 23:6; 1Th 1:3  
<sup>d</sup>1Jn 5:12  
<sup>e</sup>Jn 8:51  
<sup>f</sup>1:21 Rm 14:7-9; G1  
 2:19-20; Php 1:11,15;  
 Col 2:6-3:11  
<sup>g</sup>Rm 8:38-39; Php 3:7

<sup>h</sup>1:22 Mt 3:8; Rm  
 1:13; G1:5-22  
<sup>i</sup>Mk 14:6; G1:30; Jms  
 2:14-26

<sup>j</sup>1:23 Rm 6:8; 2Co  
 4:14; 13:4-5; 1Th  
 4:14; 5:9-10

<sup>k</sup>Jn 12:26  
<sup>l</sup>1:25 Mt 8:10; Ac  
 3:16; Rm 1:8; 1Co  
 2:5; G1:2:16; 1Tm 1:2;  
 Heb 4:2; Jd 3

<sup>m</sup>1:26 1Co 15:58  
<sup>n</sup>Rm 16:7; Eph 2:6;  
 1Pt 5:14

<sup>o</sup>1:27 Ac 23:1  
<sup>p</sup>1Co 16:13; G1:5:1;  
 Eph 6:13-17; Php 4:1;  
 2Th 2:15

<sup>q</sup>Jn 11:52  
<sup>r</sup>1Tm 3:9; 4:6; 5:8;  
 6:10,21

<sup>s</sup>1:28 1Co 16:9  
<sup>t</sup>Mt 7:13; Rm 9:22

<sup>u</sup>Ac 4:12; 2Co 7:10;  
 Heb 5:9

frightened in any way by your opponents.<sup>v</sup> This is a sign of destruction for them,<sup>w</sup> but of your salvation<sup>x</sup> — and this is from God.<sup>29</sup> For it has been granted to you on Christ's behalf not only to believe<sup>y</sup> in him, but also to suffer for him,<sup>30</sup> since you are engaged in the same struggle that you saw I had and now hear that I have.

### CHRISTIAN HUMILITY

**2** If then there is any encouragement in Christ, if any consolation of love,<sup>w</sup> if any fellowship with the Spirit,<sup>x</sup> if any affection and mercy,<sup>y</sup> <sup>2</sup> make my joy complete by thinking the same way,<sup>z</sup> having the same love,<sup>aa</sup> united in spirit, intent on one<sup>ab</sup> purpose. <sup>3</sup> Do nothing out of selfish ambition<sup>ac</sup> or conceit,<sup>ad</sup> but in humility<sup>ae</sup> consider others as more important<sup>af</sup> than yourselves. <sup>4</sup> Everyone should look out not only for his own interests,<sup>ag</sup> but also for the interests of others.<sup>ah</sup>

<sup>v</sup>1:29 Mk 11:24; Jn 3:16; Ac 10:43; Rm 9:10; 1Pt 1:8-10  
<sup>w</sup>2:1 Rm 5:8; 15:30; 2Th 2:16; 1Jn 3:16; 4:9-10,16  
<sup>x</sup>1Co 12:13; 2Co 13:13; Eph 4:3  
<sup>y</sup>Col 3:12  
<sup>z</sup>2:2 Rm 12:16; 15:5; 2Co 13:11; Php 4:2  
<sup>aa</sup>2Th 1:3; 1Jn 3:16  
<sup>ab</sup>Jn 11:52  
<sup>ac</sup>2:3 Rm 2:8  
<sup>ad</sup>G1:5:26  
<sup>ae</sup>Col 3:12  
<sup>af</sup>Rm 13:1; Php 3:8; 4:7; 1Pt 2:13  
<sup>ag</sup>2:4 Rm 15:1  
<sup>ah</sup>1Pt 19:18; Mk 10:45; 12:31; 1Co 10:24; 13:5; Php 2:21

<sup>a</sup>1:27 *Litsoul*

**1:20** Ashamed implies covering, running from battle, or embarrassment. Paul expected that Christ would be highly honored in his body. The physical body symbolizes earthly life. On earth, if Christ is not glorified in the body, he is not glorified at all. Further, Paul hoped Christ would also be glorified in his death.

**1:21-24** To live is Christ restates the theme of v. 20. If he carried on living, every aspect of Paul's life would continue to reveal Christ, which would make his life fruitful and worthwhile. Likewise, his death would be gain since it would usher him into Christ's presence. Paul felt torn between the two (lit "in a dilemma"), acknowledging the benefits of both outcomes. The phrase is more necessary for your sake expresses Paul's servant heart. A selfish outlook would make Paul prefer glorification and reward (via death) over continued life and ministry, but his priority was that Christ be honored and glorified.

**1:25-26** Because Paul knew his work, even among the Philippians, was unfinished, he was convinced that he would be released. He apparently planned a trip to Philippi following that release.

**1:27-28** Live your life (lit "conduct yourselves as citizens"; cp. Ac 23:1) alludes to Philippi's political history, reminding the church of its higher citizenship (in the kingdom of God). Paul's primary concern, that you are standing firm in one spirit, re-

flected military pride. Roman armies stood ready for combat regardless of the enemy's level of strength and preparedness or the distracting enticements of culture. The church must manifest the same readiness. "One spirit" expresses the believer's unified attitude. One accord (lit "same soul") means that believers share "life." Together they prevent divisiveness like Paul witnessed at Rome (vv. 14-17). Standing firm involves contending together. "Contending" comes from athletics where teams contended for a prize (cp. 4:3). Harmony, not individualism, achieves God's purposes. Standing also involves not being

frightened . . . by your opponents. Soldiers used "frightened" to describe horses that might easily be startled.

**1:29-30** Granted (lit "by grace") indicates that God "graces" Christians to believe and suffer on Christ's behalf. Both contribute to Christ's glory.

**2:1-2** Four if statements in this verse form the basis of Paul's appeal. These phrases express conditions that are assumed for the sake of argument. Both Paul and his readers will be inclined to believe the truth of these conditions. Make my joy complete, not "make Paul happy," reminded them that their steadfast-

## euangelion

Greek pronunciation	[yoo ahn GEHL ee ahn]
CSB translation	gospel
Uses in Philippians	12
Uses in the NT	76
Focus passage	Philippians 1:27

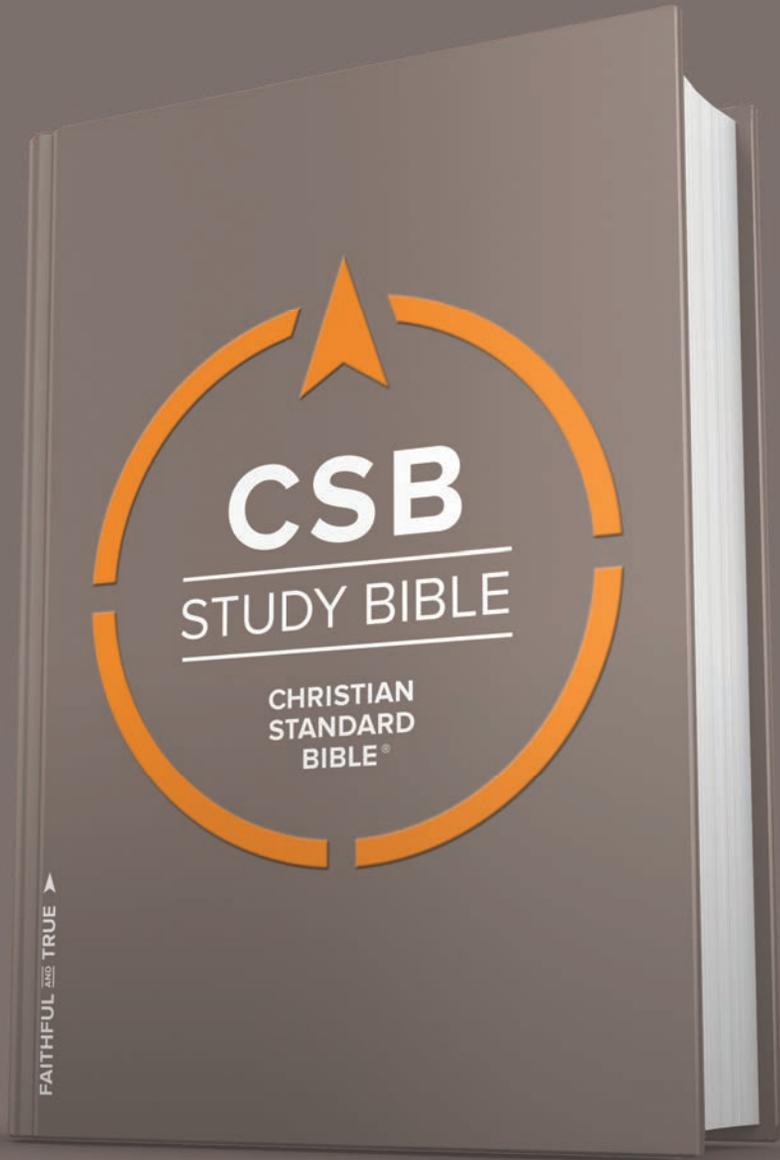
The Christian *euangelion* (*gospel*) is the universal good news of God's saving grace through faith in Christ, and the message of his kingdom over which Jesus reigns. Jesus preached the good news of God's coming kingdom (Mt 4:23), and substantiated his message by miracles (Mt 9:35). The *gospel* of the kingdom's arrival will be preached to the world (Mk 13:10) and is worthy of sacrificial labor (Mk 8:35). Paul believed the *gospel* was an extension of OT promises, where it lay hidden in mystery form (Rm 1:1-3; 16:25-26). Paul's *gospel* encompasses Jesus's entire life: his incarnation, sacrificial death, burial, resurrection, post-resurrection appearances, and ascension (Rm 1:1-6; 1Co 15:1-8; Php 2:9). It is the Spirit-empowered message (1Th 1:5) by which God calls the elect (2Th 2:13-14) and reconciles people to himself (2Co 5:18-21). Men will one day be judged by it (Rm 2:16; 2Th 1:8).

ness completed God's call on his life. Four actions on the Philippians' part explain what Paul meant. Two verbs translate the Greek word *phroneō*—thinking and being intent on. Beyond mere "thinking," this addresses values. The Philippians were to value the same way and with one purpose. Between these two, Paul included shared love and spirit.

**2:3-4** Selfish ambition or conceit recalls the problem Paul condemned (1:15,17). Humility, the antidote for wrong attitudes, results in considering others as more important. Additionally, humility considers the interests of others. Proper relationships include the contrast "not only, but also." Personal responsibilities demand consideration, but the concerns of others are equally important.



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