



GENESIS

PURPOSE

To teach the new nation of Israel about God's purpose for their journey to Canaan through a review of God's purpose in human history.

"In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth." These majestic words, the first ones in the Bible's first book, Genesis, tell us that everything and everyone had a beginning—except God. He has existed from eternity, and it is He who, by the word of His power, caused all things to be.

Because Genesis tells the story of God's creative work, it is sometimes called "The Book of Beginnings." But Genesis tells of more than the origin of the universe, of our world, of plants and animals, and of human beings. It also tells the story of the beginning of God's relationship with man. In Genesis we see a God who goes to extraordinary lengths to have a relationship with His created beings, even when they rebel against Him.

Genesis tells us the beginning of God's great work of redemption, of how He began to set apart a special people for Himself and set in motion the process that would culminate in the coming of Jesus Christ at the crux of history.

DISCOVER GOD IN GENESIS

The following aspects of God's character stand out in Genesis:

Power: God's power is unlimited. This is demonstrated in His creation of the universe. His power is manifested through His words: "Then God said, 'Let there be light,' and there was light" (Genesis 1:3). Through the prophet Isaiah, God said that His Word always accomplishes the purpose for which it is uttered (Isaiah 55:11). The fact that God's power is sufficient to bring order out of chaos and to create the world out of nothing (Genesis 1:1–2:3) should give us confidence that He is able to effect change in our lives.

Sovereignty: Because God created everything, the earth and all its inhabitants belong to Him. God in His sovereignty rules over them. His purposes are carried out both on a global basis (Creation, the Flood) and individually (the choosing of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and their descendants). In Genesis, we see God working behind the scenes to bring good out of evil (Genesis 50:20). God is powerful, yet personal, as He carries out His ultimate desires. When the unexplainable and unwanted intrude into our lives, we can find comfort in God's sovereign control over all things.

GROWING THROUGH GENESIS

Genesis is the foundational book for the rest of Scripture. Important themes throughout Scripture have their start in this “Book of Beginnings.”

Worldview: Genesis establishes why we should live with a theocentric (God-centered) view of life. The earth and its inhabitants are not an evolutionary accident, devoid of moral and spiritual meaning. Genesis establishes that our lives have significance because we are created in God’s image.

DISCOVERY VERSES

“And I will cause hostility between you and the woman, and between your offspring and her Offspring.

He will strike your head, and you will strike His heel.” (GENESIS 3:15)

In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. (GENESIS 1:1)

“I will bless those who bless you and curse those who treat you with contempt. All the families on earth will be blessed through you.” (GENESIS 12:3)

And Abram believed the LORD, and the LORD counted him as righteous because of his faith. (GENESIS 15:6)

Redemption: People were created by God to live forever in fellowship with Him. The chaos and troubles of our world are explained by the human choice to rebel against God. Genesis records the first redemptive acts by which God set in motion a plan to save our fallen race: His forgiveness and clothing of Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden; His rescue of Noah and his family in the ark; His calling of Abram out of a life of idolatry. Faith is established in Genesis as an attitude of trust, manifested in obedience, which results in salvation.

Providence: As much as any book in the Bible, Genesis shows God’s guiding hand behind the affairs of nations and individuals. Reading Genesis helps us trust that God is active in our lives, even when we can’t understand what is happening around us.

Consistency: Though times and people change throughout the Bible, God is consistent. The God we meet in Genesis—and the basis of relating to Him by faith—does not change. Because God is the same yesterday, today, and forever, everything we learn about Him in Genesis we can apply to our lives today.

GENESIS FACTS

Author: Scripture frequently refers to Moses as the author of Genesis and the four books following it. Jesus affirms this in Mark 7:10 and 12:26. The Apostles confess it in Acts 3:22. The author of Hebrews attributes the Law (the first five books of the Bible) to Moses (Hebrews 3:5; 7:14; 12:21).

Written to: The nation of Israel.

Date of writing: Moses led the Israelites out of Egypt around 1446 BC and up to the borders of the Promised Land forty years later. Moses likely wrote Genesis during that forty-year period.

Setting: There are three distinct locations in Genesis: Chapters 1–11 are set in Mesopotamia (modern Iraq); chapters 12–36 are set in the land of Canaan (modern Israel); and chapters 37–50 are set in Egypt, where the Hebrews lived as slaves for four hundred years.

OUTLINE

- ▶ **GENESIS 1–2**—A history of God’s creation of all things for himself.
- ▶ **GENESIS 3:1–11:9**—A history of God’s creation of a people for himself.
- ▶ **GENESIS 11:10–50:26**—A history of God’s work among his people.

THE ACCOUNT OF CREATION

1:1
Pss 89:11; 102:25
Isa 42:5; 48:13
John 1:1-2

1 In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.* ²The earth was formless and empty, and darkness covered the deep waters. And the Spirit of God was hovering over the surface of the waters.

1:2
Ps 104:30
Isa 45:18

³Then God said, "Let there be light," and there was light. ⁴And God saw that the light was good. Then He separated the light from the darkness. ⁵God called the light "day" and the darkness "night."

1:3
Pss 33:9; 104:2
Isa 45:7
2 Cor 4:6

And evening passed and morning came, marking the first day.

1:1 Or *In the beginning when God created the heavens and the earth, . . .* Or *When God began to create the heavens and the earth, . . .*

1:1 God existed before the creation of all things. In fact, He has always existed. In our ever-changing world, He alone is eternal. Because we are creatures of time and space, it is difficult for us to grasp the concept of eternity. We have created many ways to measure time, but none of them is adequate to express time without end. However, God's eternal existence gives us confidence in His dependability.



► BIBLE

1:1-31 Doctrine of creation. Scripture affirms that "God created the heavens and the earth." The universe did not begin through evolution or any other "natural" means. Only a being who is external to the natural universe could have created it—and that being is God (Isaiah 45:11-12). The supernatural nature of God is evidenced in *how* He created the universe. When we *create* a work of art, we begin with a material and craft it into a new form. But God created the heavens and the earth out of nothing. Because God is the Creator, we can depend on Him (Psalm 24:1). (**See Bible**> *Unity*> *Doctrines*, TopicGuide page A10.)

1:1-31 There has been much debate about how God created. It is important to focus on the basics and not digress into disputes about literal days or the length of each day. We know that God created all that is from nothing; how He did it is

something we will understand better when we stand before Him and see life from His perspective instead of our limited vantage point. The fact that we do not have all the answers about the process of creation should not limit our faith in the Creator.

1:2 God is a spirit and does not have a physical body like men and women. The Gospel writer John quoted Jesus as stating this very fact: "For God is Spirit, so those who worship Him must worship in spirit and in truth" (John 4:24). The Spirit of God, hovering over the formless mass of earth, indicates the protective, creative power of God.



► BIBLE

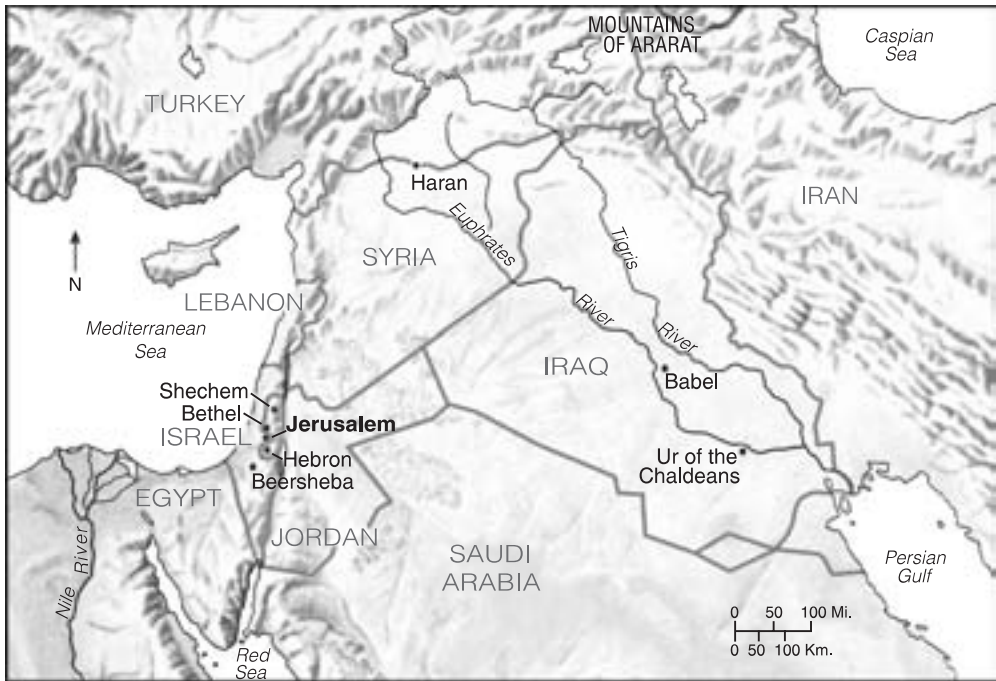
1:3 Doctrine of the Word. The fact that God said "Let there be light" in order to create light amid the primordial darkness demonstrates the creative power of God's Word. Throughout the Bible, God's Word is presented as having many of the same attributes that belong to God Himself. His words are eternal (Isaiah 40:8; see also John 10:35), always true (Psalm 119:160), and completely trustworthy (Psalm 119:105). As God's people, we can rely wholly on God's Word, its revelation of who God is, and its promises for us. God has given us His word. (**See Bible**> *Unity*> *Doctrines*, TopicGuide page A10.)

DAYS OF CREATION

The days of Creation represent two sets of three days each. In the first set of days, God created the different spheres within Creation. In the second set of days, he filled these spheres with inhabitants. The days of creating the spheres and the days of filling the spheres follow the same order.

Day One (Genesis 1:2-5)	God created the spheres of day and night.	God created the sun to fill the day, and He created the stars and moon to fill the night.	Day Four (Genesis 1:14-19)
Day Two (Genesis 1:6-8)	God created the spheres of sky and sea.	God created the birds to fill the sky, and He created the fish to fill the sea.	Day Five (Genesis 1:20-23)
Day Three (Genesis 1:9-13)	God created the dry ground and prepared it to support life.	God created land animals and human beings to fill the dry land.	Day Six (Genesis 1:24-31)

KEY PLACES IN GENESIS



Modern names and boundaries are shown in gray.

God created the universe and the earth. Then He made man and woman, giving them a home in a beautiful garden. Unfortunately, Adam and Eve disobeyed God and were banished from the garden (3:23).

1 Mountains of Ararat Adam and Eve's sin brought sin into the human race. Years later, sin had run rampant, and God decided to destroy the earth with a great flood. But Noah, his family, and two of each animal were safe in a boat. When the floods receded, the boat rested on the mountains of Ararat (8:4).

2 Babel People never learn. Again sin abounded, and the pride of the people led them to build a huge tower as a monument to their own greatness—obviously they had no thought of God. As punishment, God scattered the people by giving them different languages (11:8, 9).

3 Ur of the Chaldeans Abram, a descendant of Shem and father of the Hebrew nation, was born in this great city (11:27, 28).

4 Haran Terah, Abram, Lot, and Sarai left Ur and, following the fertile crescent of the Euphrates River, headed toward the land of Canaan. Along the way, they settled in the village of Haran for a while (11:31).

5 Shechem God urged Abram to leave Haran and go to a place where he would become the father of a great nation (12:1, 2). So Abram, Lot, and Sarai traveled to the land of Canaan and settled near a city called Shechem (12:6).

6 Hebron Abraham moved on to Hebron where he put down his deepest roots (13:18). Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob all lived and were buried here.

7 Beersheba The well at Beersheba was a source of conflict between Abraham and King Abimelech and later became a sign of the oath that they swore there (21:31). Years later, as Isaac was moving from place to place, God appeared to him here and passed on to him the covenant he had made with his father, Abraham (26:23-25).

8 Bethel After deceiving his brother, Jacob left Beersheba and fled to Haran. Along the way, God revealed Himself to Jacob in a dream and passed on the covenant He had made with Abraham and Isaac (28:10-22). Jacob lived in Haran, worked for Laban, and married Leah and Rachel (29:15-30). After a tense meeting with his brother, Esau, Jacob returned to Bethel (35:1).

9 Egypt Jacob had 12 sons, including Joseph, Jacob's favorite. Joseph's 10 older brothers grew jealous, until one day the brothers sold him to Ishmaelite traders going to Egypt. Eventually, Joseph rose from Egyptian slave to Pharaoh's "right-hand man," saving Egypt from famine. His entire family moved from Canaan to Egypt and settled there (46:3-7).

- 1:6**
 Job 26:10
 Ps 136:5-6
 Isa 40:22
 Jer 10:12
- 1:7**
 Job 38:8-11
 Ps 148:4
 Prov 8:28
- 1:8**
 Gen 1:5
- 1:9**
 Job 26:7
 Ps 95:5
 Prov 8:29
 Jer 5:22
 2 Pet 3:5
- 1:10**
 Pss 33:7; 95:5
- 1:11**
 Gen 2:9
 Ps 104:14
 Matt 6:30
- 1:14**
 Pss 74:16; 104:19
- 1:15**
 Gen 1:5
- 1:16**
 Pss 8:3; 19:1-6;
 136:8-9
 1 Cor 15:41
- 1:18**
 Jer 33:20, 25
- 1:20**
 Gen 2:19
 Ps 146:6
- 1:21**
 Ps 104:25-28
- 1:24**
 Gen 2:19
- 1:26**
 Gen 5:1; 9:6
 Ps 8:6-8
 Acts 17:28-29
- ⁶Then God said, “Let there be a space between the waters, to separate the waters of the heavens from the waters of the earth.” ⁷And that is what happened. God made this space to separate the waters of the earth from the waters of the heavens. ⁸God called the space “sky.”
- And evening passed and morning came, marking the second day.
- ⁹Then God said, “Let the waters beneath the sky flow together into one place, so dry ground may appear.” And that is what happened. ¹⁰God called the dry ground “land” and the waters “seas.” And God saw that it was good. ¹¹Then God said, “Let the land sprout with vegetation—every sort of seed-bearing plant, and trees that grow seed-bearing fruit. These seeds will then produce the kinds of plants and trees from which they came.” And that is what happened. ¹²The land produced vegetation—all sorts of seed-bearing plants, and trees with seed-bearing fruit. Their seeds produced plants and trees of the same kind. And God saw that it was good.
- ¹³And evening passed and morning came, marking the third day.
- ¹⁴Then God said, “Let lights appear in the sky to separate the day from the night. Let them mark off the seasons, days, and years. ¹⁵Let these lights in the sky shine down on the earth.” And that is what happened. ¹⁶God made two great lights—the larger one to govern the day, and the smaller one to govern the night. He also made the stars. ¹⁷God set these lights in the sky to light the earth, ¹⁸to govern the day and night, and to separate the light from the darkness. And God saw that it was good.
- ¹⁹And evening passed and morning came, marking the fourth day.
- ²⁰Then God said, “Let the waters swarm with fish and other life. Let the skies be filled with birds of every kind.” ²¹So God created great sea creatures and every living thing that scurries and swarms in the water, and every sort of bird—each producing offspring of the same kind. And God saw that it was good. ²²Then God blessed them, saying, “Be fruitful and multiply. Let the fish fill the seas, and let the birds multiply on the earth.”
- ²³And evening passed and morning came, marking the fifth day.
- ²⁴Then God said, “Let the earth produce every sort of animal, each producing offspring of the same kind—livestock, small animals that scurry along the ground, and wild animals.” And that is what happened. ²⁵God made all sorts of wild animals, livestock, and small animals, each able to produce offspring of the same kind. And God saw that it was good.
- ²⁶Then God said, “Let Us make human beings* in Our image, to be like Us. They will reign over the fish in the sea, the birds in the sky, the livestock, all the wild animals on the earth, and the small animals that scurry along the ground.”

1:26 Or *man*; Hebrew reads *adam*.

1:25 Our world bears the effects of generations of human sinfulness. But when God created the world and everything in it, He pronounced it good. The word *good* didn't have a special meaning; it meant just what it said. The heavenly bodies, the animals, the people, the soil, and all that grew in it were good things, things to be protected and honored. When we see God's original evaluation of His creation, we gain a better understanding of our responsibility to care for it.

1:26 God refers to Himself in the plural, saying, “Let Us.” Throughout history, God has revealed Himself as God the Father, God the Son (Jesus Christ), and God the Holy Spirit. God has always existed as these three persons. The New Testament writer Paul the apostle confirmed this truth: “For through [Christ] God created everything in the heavenly realms and on earth. . . .

Everything was created through Him and for Him” (Colossians 1:16). In describing Jesus, John the disciple wrote: “He existed in the beginning with God. God created everything through Him, and nothing was created except through Him” (John 1:2-3).

1:26 God created humanity in His image. This does not mean that we look like God, for God is a Spirit and does not have a physical form as we do. However, we are like Him in numerous ways. We have wills. We have souls. We are creative. We are relational beings. In creating us this way, God intended that we should mirror His character.

²⁷ So God created human beings* in His own image.

In the image of God He created them;
male and female He created them.

²⁸Then God blessed them and said, “Be fruitful and multiply. Fill the earth and govern it. Reign over the fish in the sea, the birds in the sky, and all the animals that scurry along the ground.”

²⁹Then God said, “Look! I have given you every seed-bearing plant throughout the earth and all the fruit trees for your food. ³⁰And I have given every green plant as food for all the wild animals, the birds in the sky, and the small animals that scurry along the ground—everything that has life.” And that is what happened.

³¹Then God looked over all He had made, and He saw that it was very good!
And evening passed and morning came, marking the sixth day.

2 So the creation of the heavens and the earth and everything in them was completed. ²On the seventh day God had finished His work of creation, so He rested*

1:27 Or *the man*; Hebrew reads *ha-adam*. 2:2 Or *ceased*; also in 2:3.

1:27

*Matt 19:4

*Mark 10:6

1:29

Gen 9:3

Pss 104:13; 136:25

1:30

Pss 104:14; 145:15

1:31

Ps 104:24

2:1

Deut 4:19; 17:3

Ps 104:2

Isa 45:12

2:2

Exod 20:11; 31:17

*Heb 4:4



► BIBLE

1:28 Doctrine of the Cultural Mandate. God’s charge to Adam and Eve to be masters over the created order is often called the Cultural Mandate or Dominion Mandate. Initially, the first couple’s responsibilities were limited to exercising dominion over the land and animal life. However, this stewardship over the earth eventually led Adam and Eve and their descendants from their humble agrarian beginnings to develop all the earth’s resources for the advancement of worldwide civilizations. Therefore, it is from this command that the church derives its responsibility to shape every area of culture according to God’s will, including politics, the fine arts, science, law, medical ethics, and more. This is what we, as God’s people, should seek to do every day. (**See Bible**> *Unity*> *Doctrines*, TopicGuide page A10.)



► WORSHIP

2:2-3 God rested from all His work. God did not rest because He was tired. He rested because His work was complete. The fourth of the Ten Commandments instructs us to follow God’s example: “Remember to observe the Sabbath day” (Exodus 20:8). However, there is a truer, deeper rest than merely ceasing from physical labor. The author of Hebrews writes, “For all who have entered into God’s rest have rested from their labors, just as God did after creating the world. So let us do our best to enter that rest” (Hebrews 4:10-11). This rest, this final salvation, comes through faith in God’s completed work of redemption. Therein lies our true Sabbath. (**See Worship**> *OT*> *Festivals*> *Sabbath*, TopicGuide page A26.)

MY RESPONSE TO GOD

Seeking God through His Word

GENESIS 1–2

We cannot advance our knowledge of God beyond a rough character sketch through our own human abilities. But God, in His love and mercy, has taken steps to make Himself known to us in many ways. His primary vehicle for revealing Himself to those who hunger and thirst to know Him is His holy Word, the Bible.

In Genesis 1–2, God reveals Himself as our great Creator, unveiling His mighty works, unlimited power, and eternal knowledge. We learn immediately that our Creator-God knows no limitations.

The remainder of the Old Testament shows how God builds a nation of people dedicated to Him, and how He leads and blesses those people. God gives Israel laws and promises that establish His character as the perfect Judge.

In the New Testament, God reveals Himself most fully as our gracious Savior. The life, death, and resurrection of Jesus prove God’s mercy and faithfulness. Through Jesus, we find that our Creator and Judge is also our loving Father.

2:3 from all His work. ³And God blessed the seventh day and declared it holy, because it was the day when He rested from all His work of creation.
 Isa 58:13
2:4 This is the account of the creation of the heavens and the earth.
 Gen 5:1; 6:9; 10:1
 Job 38:4-11

THE MAN AND WOMAN IN EDEN

2:7 When the LORD God made the earth and the heavens, ⁵neither wild plants nor grains were growing on the earth. For the LORD God had not yet sent rain to water the earth, and there were no people to cultivate the soil. ⁶Instead, springs* came up from the ground and watered all the land. ⁷Then the LORD God formed the man from the dust of the ground. He breathed the breath of life into the man’s nostrils, and the man became a living person.
 Job 33:4
 Ps 103:14
 Ezek 37:5
 John 20:22
 *1 Cor 15:45
2:8 Then the LORD God planted a garden in Eden in the east, and there He placed the man He had made. ⁹The LORD God made all sorts of trees grow up from the ground—trees that were beautiful and that produced delicious fruit. In the middle of the garden He placed the tree of life and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.
 Gen 3:23; 13:10
 Isa 51:3
 Ezek 28:13
 Joel 2:3
2:9

¹⁰A river flowed from the land of Eden, watering the garden and then dividing into four branches. ¹¹The first branch, called the Pishon, flowed around the entire land of Havilah, where gold is found. ¹²The gold of that land is exceptionally pure; aromatic resin and onyx stone are also found there. ¹³The second branch, called the Gihon, flowed around the entire land of Cush. ¹⁴The third branch, called the Tigris, flowed east of the land of Asshur. The fourth branch is called the Euphrates.

¹⁵The LORD God placed the man in the Garden of Eden to tend and watch over it. ¹⁶But the LORD God warned him, “You may freely eat the fruit of every tree in the garden—¹⁷except the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. If you eat its fruit, you are sure to die.”

¹⁸Then the LORD God said, “It is not good for the man to be alone. I will make a helper who is just right for him.” ¹⁹So the LORD God formed from the ground all the wild animals and all the birds of the sky. He brought them to the man* to see what he would call

2:6 Or *mist*. 2:19 Or *Adam*, and so throughout the chapter.

2:7 God made the first human being from the dust of the ground. He then breathed into Adam the breath of life. From the most basic elements of the planet on which we live, God formed a body and combined it with a soul to create an eternal being. God then made a woman from the man, the next generation of creation. When we die, God’s process of creation is reversed. Our souls return to the One who breathed us into being in the first place. Our bodies also return to the state from which they began. The psalmist says, “For He knows how weak we are; He remembers we are only dust. But the love of the LORD remains forever with those who fear Him” (Psalm 103:14, 17).

2:9 God, who is holy, created a world He deemed good, so it is perplexing that evil came to exist in it, especially since the knowledge of good and evil was the one taboo in the original paradise. We have no definitive record of the origin of evil, but we know that as soon as God created the world, evil was in place to put it at risk. Tradition holds that Satan, the embodiment of evil, is actually a fallen angel. To support this idea, some scholars interpret Isaiah 14:12-15, a passage about the king of Babylon, as describing Satan’s fall. But for all that we don’t know about the origin of evil, we do know that God is greater and redemption from evil is possible through faith in God’s Son, Jesus Christ.

2:10-14 Two of the rivers mentioned here, the Tigris and the Euphrates, are still flowing today. In some places, they flow so closely together that canals have been dug between them. The Garden of Eden was probably at the place where these two rivers, along with the Pishon and Gihon, found their source. The Pishon and Gihon have disappeared since these ancient days,

and we have no record of their location. From the description given here, the Garden was probably in southern Mesopotamia, later known as Babylonia. Today this would be in southeast Iraq.



ADOPTION

2:17 Spiritually dead. God’s prohibition against eating of the “tree of the knowledge of good and evil” was not motivated by fear that human knowledge might become equal to His own. It was aimed at frustrating any attempt on the part of the man and woman to pursue their own way in life. God’s warning was clear: Sin would bring severe spiritual consequences. Although Adam and Eve did not die on the spot when they violated this command, they did suffer immediate spiritual death that later led to physical death. From their story, believers can know that although our eternal relationship with God is forever secure, sin affects our fellowship with the Father and can lead to far greater consequences unless we repent. (**See Adoption**> *Without Christ*> *Separated from God*, TopicGuide page A36.)

2:18-24 God Himself declared that it was not good for the man to be alone, but none of the animals could provide the kind of companionship Adam needed. So God created another human being—not another man but a woman. He did so by taking a rib from Adam and using it to fashion Eve. By creating her in this way, God showed that man and woman are to come together in the physical and spiritual unity of marriage. While the Bible does include examples of polygamy, these always represent exceptions to God’s original instructions for one man and one woman to marry for life.

them, and the man chose a name for each one. ²⁰He gave names to all the livestock, all the birds of the sky, and all the wild animals. But still there was no helper just right for him.

²¹So the LORD God caused the man to fall into a deep sleep. While the man slept, the LORD God took out one of the man's ribs* and closed up the opening. ²²Then the LORD God made a woman from the rib, and He brought her to the man.

²³"At last!" the man exclaimed.

"This one is bone from my bone,
and flesh from my flesh!
She will be called 'woman,'
because she was taken from 'man.'"

²⁴This explains why a man leaves his father and mother and is joined to his wife, and the two are united into one.

²⁵Now the man and his wife were both naked, but they felt no shame.

THE MAN AND WOMAN SIN

3 The serpent was the shrewdest of all the wild animals the LORD God had made. One day he asked the woman, "Did God really say you must not eat the fruit from any of the trees in the garden?"

²"Of course we may eat fruit from the trees in the garden," the woman replied. ³"It's only the fruit from the tree in the middle of the garden that we are not allowed to eat. God said, 'You must not eat it or even touch it; if you do, you will die.'"

⁴"You won't die!" the serpent replied to the woman. ⁵"God knows that your eyes will be opened as soon as you eat it, and you will be like God, knowing both good and evil."

⁶The woman was convinced. She saw that the tree was beautiful and its fruit looked delicious, and she wanted the wisdom it would give her. So she took some of the fruit and ate it. Then she gave some to her husband, who was with her, and he ate it, too. ⁷At that

2:21 Or *took a part of the man's side.*

2:18
Gen 3:12
Prov 18:22

2:19
Gen 1:20-25

2:22
1 Cor 11:8-9
1 Tim 2:13

2:23
Gen 29:14
Eph 5:28-30

2:24
*Matt 19:5
*1 Cor 6:16
Eph 5:31

2:25
Gen 3:7, 10-11

3:1
2 Cor 11:3
Rev 12:9; 20:2

3:2
Gen 2:16

3:4
John 8:44
2 Cor 11:3

3:5
Gen 2:17; 3:22
Isa 14:14
Ezek 28:2

3:6
2 Cor 11:3
1 Tim 2:14
Jas 1:14-15
1 Jn 2:16



► BIBLE

3:1 Principle of temptation. As a crafty serpent, Satan convinced Eve to doubt God's goodness and believe that she would be happier by disobeying Him. In the same way, this seductive tempter suggests that we will experience greater satisfaction, fulfillment, and happiness if we live contrary to God's will. He entices us with worldly pleasures to make us distrust and ignore God's Word, doubt His character, and question His motives. As we do, we lower our shield and expose ourselves to Satan's deception. But when we hold fast to our faith in God and join forces with fellow believers, we are kept safe. The spiritual shield that Christ has provided for us protects us against Satan's assaults. (**See Bible> Unity> Doctrines**, TopicGuide page A10.)

3:1 Satan came to Eve in the form of a serpent to persuade her to ignore God's instructions. As punishment for tempting the woman, the serpent was cursed to crawl on its belly, which is the present form of snakes. Before this judgment, the snake may have had legs. Throughout the Bible, the image of the serpent is used to denote deception and wickedness. For instance, the serpent image is used to describe the speech of evil people (Psalm 140:3) and hypocritical Pharisees (Matthew 3:7). One of the most notable uses is Revelation 12:9, which describes the "ancient serpent called the devil, or Satan, the one deceiving the whole world."

3:1-2 Would humanity have stayed true to God if Satan had not been allowed access to Eden? The truth is that Adam and Eve, who had been created in God's image, had the ability to choose. Whether Satan's influence or the first couple's ability to choose evil was the cause of humanity's fall into sin, God allowed this choice to be made. However, He also provided a way for redemption.

3:3-6 The serpent's argument was cunning. He said that, by eating the fruit, Eve somehow would increase in her knowledge of good and evil, but she would not die, as God had said. But those arguments should not have been the basis of Eve's decision. What was at stake was not just getting more knowledge, but Eve's relationship with her Maker. The same is at stake for each of us. No matter what the serpent argues, spiritual death and physical death have always been the consequences of disobedience.

3:7 Before Adam and Eve acquired the knowledge of good and evil, they felt no shame. They experienced the world in pure innocence. With their new knowledge came a new embarrassment about their nakedness. They were so ashamed, in fact, that they created clothing from leaves and tried to hide from God, who had created them naked and innocent. Sin has the same effect today. The guilt we feel because of it drives us to hide from God, from each other, and even from ourselves. Sin feeds the irrational belief that we can somehow control God's perception of us, and thus His love and acceptance.

moment their eyes were opened, and they suddenly felt shame at their nakedness. So they sewed fig leaves together to cover themselves.

3:8
Lev 26:12
Deut 23:14
Job 31:33

⁸When the cool evening breezes were blowing, the man* and his wife heard the LORD God walking about in the garden. So they hid from the LORD God among the trees. ⁹Then the LORD God called to the man, "Where are you?"

3:9
Gen 4:9; 18:9

¹⁰He replied, "I heard You walking in the garden, so I hid. I was afraid because I was naked."

3:10
Deut 5:5

¹¹"Who told you that you were naked?" the LORD God asked. "Have you eaten from the tree whose fruit I commanded you not to eat?"

3:12
Prov 28:13

¹²The man replied, "It was the woman You gave me who gave me the fruit, and I ate it."

3:13
2 Cor 11:3
1 Tim 2:14

¹³Then the LORD God asked the woman, "What have you done?"

3:14
Deut 28:15
Isa 65:25

"The serpent deceived me," she replied. "That's why I ate it."

¹⁴Then the LORD God said to the serpent,

"Because you have done this, you are cursed
more than all animals, domestic and wild.

You will crawl on your belly,
groveling in the dust as long as you live.

3:15
John 8:44
Rom 16:20
Heb 2:14

¹⁵ And I will cause hostility between you and the woman,

and between your offspring and her Offspring.

He will strike* your head,
and you will strike His heel."

3:8 Or *Adam*, and so throughout the chapter. 3:15 Or *bruise*; also in 3:15b.

3:8-9 The fellowship between God and His creation in the Garden was unique. During the time of Moses, God appeared in glory so powerful that He was dangerous to those who encountered him (Exodus 19:21-22). But the picture of God's presence here is of a friend walking through the woods and calling our name. It is akin to Jesus' presence among His disciples. The crushing effect of the Fall was that this sweet fellowship was broken. While it wasn't broken irreparably, the restoration of fellowship with God required ultimate sacrifice (Hebrews 9:14) and ultimate faith (John 14:23-24).

3:15 Part of God's curse on Satan was the inauguration of a state of permanent enmity between his followers and God's followers. Unbelievers hate God and, by extension, those who belong to Him and seek to follow His ways. But this word of curse contained a hint of ultimate blessing. God declared that the conflict between Satan's followers and God's would come to a head one day when one of Eve's offspring would crush the head of the serpent at the cost of a wound to His heel. Christians throughout the ages have seen this verse as a prophecy of the work of Christ. His suffering and death were wrenching for Him, but death could not hold Him; He rose again on the third day. For Satan, however, the cross brought about complete and total defeat.

FOR THE NEXT GOD IS HOLY FEATURE SEE PAGE 136.

BECAUSE GOD IS HOLY

*I will devote myself to him in purity,
worship and service.*

And God blessed the seventh day and declared it holy.

¹⁶Then He said to the woman,

“I will sharpen the pain of your pregnancy,
and in pain you will give birth.
And you will desire to control your husband,
but he will rule over you.*”

3:16
1 Cor 11:3
Eph 5:22
1 Tim 2:15

¹⁷And to the man He said,

“Since you listened to your wife and ate from the tree
whose fruit I commanded you not to eat,
the ground is cursed because of you.
All your life you will struggle to scratch a living from it.

3:17
Job 5:7
Eccl 1:3
Rom 8:20-22

¹⁸It will grow thorns and thistles for you,
though you will eat of its grains.

3:18
Job 31:40
Heb 6:8

¹⁹By the sweat of your brow
will you have food to eat
until you return to the ground
from which you were made.
For you were made from dust,
and to dust you will return.”

3:19
Gen 2:7
Pss 90:3; 104:29
Eccl 12:7
1 Cor 15:47

PARADISE LOST: GOD’S JUDGMENT

²⁰Then the man—Adam—named his wife Eve, because she would be the mother of all who live.* ²¹And the LORD God made clothing from animal skins for Adam and his wife.

3:20
2 Cor 11:3
1 Tim 2:13

²²Then the LORD God said, “Look, the human beings* have become like Us, knowing both good and evil. What if they reach out, take fruit from the tree of life, and eat it? Then they will live forever!” ²³So the LORD God banished them from the Garden of Eden, and He sent Adam out to cultivate the ground from which he had been made. ²⁴After sending them out, the LORD God stationed mighty cherubim to the east of the Garden of Eden. And He placed a flaming sword that flashed back and forth to guard the way to the tree of life.

3:21
2 Cor 5:2-3

3:22
Gen 1:26

3:24
Ezek 10:1
Rev 2:7; 22:2, 14

3:16 Or *And though you will have desire for your husband, / he will rule over you.* 3:20 *Eve* sounds like a Hebrew term that means “to give life.” 3:22 Or *the man*; Hebrew reads *ha-adam*.



► SPIRITUAL WARFARE

3:16-19 The Fall subjected creation to bondage. The first couple’s disobedience incurred a divine curse by which God doomed the woman to intense pain and suffering in childbirth and placed a curse on the ground that made man’s work difficult. Clearly God disciplines the disobedient. This is because God’s standard is nothing short of sinlessness. However, only one person, our Lord Jesus Christ, has achieved that standard; we sin daily in manifold ways. Our goal and inner desire should be to please God through obedience. When we succumb to temptation, if we are truly repentant, God forgives our sin. However, as in the case of Adam and Eve, He may let us live with the consequences of our disobedience as a reminder to obey Him in the future. (See *Spiritual Warfare*> *Origin of Sin*> *Creation in bondage*> *God curses creation*, TopicGuide page A44.)

3:21 In a gesture that revealed the depth of His grace and compassion for His people, God made clothing for Adam and Eve from animal skins. Their attempt to cover their nakedness with leaves was pathetically inadequate, but God’s clothing was durable and effective. In this simple gesture, we see another foreshadowing of what Christ accomplished for His people much later. By obeying God’s law in every point, Christ compiled a record of perfect righteousness that God transfers to those He calls to Himself. This “clothing” of righteousness covers all the shame of those who are soiled by sin.

3:22-23 The Genesis account identifies two significant trees in the Garden: the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, and the tree of life. From these verses, we can assume that with access to the tree of life, Adam and Eve could have lived forever in their sinful state. Thus, barring Adam and Eve from access to this tree was an act of mercy on God’s part. The tree of life reappears at the end of the scriptural record as the book of Revelation describes the new heaven and new earth that God has waiting for us. In that new world there is another paradise, with two trees of life-bearing fruit waiting for everyone who believes (Revelation 22:2). It is a full-circle journey to the life God has offered all along.

CAIN AND ABEL

4:2 Now Adam¹ had sexual relations with his wife, Eve, and she became pregnant. When she gave birth to Cain, she said, "With the LORD's help, I have produced² a man!"
4:3 Later she gave birth to his brother and named him Abel.
 When they grew up, Abel became a shepherd, while Cain cultivated the ground. ³When it was time for the harvest, Cain presented some of his crops as a gift to the LORD. ⁴Abel also brought a gift—the best of the firstborn lambs from his flock. The LORD accepted Abel and his gift, ⁵but He did not accept Cain and his gift. This made Cain very angry, and he looked dejected.
4:7 "Why are you so angry?" the LORD asked Cain. "Why do you look so dejected? ⁷You will be accepted if you do what is right. But if you refuse to do what is right, then watch out! Sin is crouching at the door, eager to control you. But you must subdue it and be its master."
4:8 One day Cain suggested to his brother, "Let's go out into the fields."⁸ And while they were in the field, Cain attacked his brother, Abel, and killed him.

4:1a Or *the man*; also in 4:25. **4:1b** Or *I have acquired*. *Cain* sounds like a Hebrew term that can mean "produce" or "acquire." **4:8** As in Samaritan Pentateuch, Greek and Syriac versions, and Latin Vulgate; Masoretic Text lacks "Let's go out into the fields."

4:2 Adam and Eve's sons had occupations. Cain was a farmer and Abel was a shepherd. When God explained the consequences of sin to Adam in Genesis 3:17-19, He made it clear that the earth no longer would provide free bounty. Instead, life would be a struggle—people would have to "scratch a living" for themselves. Still, it could be done. Since human beings were created in God's image, they, too, could create. When Cain was driven out after killing Abel, he was unable even to raise crops. But within a few generations, his family produced herdsmen, musicians, and metalsmiths.

4:3-5 These verses give no clear reason as to why God didn't accept Cain's offering. But Hebrews 11:4 sheds more light, telling us that Abel's faith made his offering more acceptable. The brothers not only came with different offerings but with different attitudes. Abel brought his very best; Cain did not. Cain's reaction revealed his inner spirit: jealousy, violence, and self-centeredness. Even when God banished him, his first concern was his safety rather than any kind of remorse. It wasn't necessarily that sheep were a better sacrifice than produce. It was that a pure heart was more acceptable to a righteous God.

4:6-7 God's answer to Cain was clear: "You will be accepted if you do what is right." As we look back through history, we sometimes think that God asked for a different kind of faith in the Old Testament, but God's response to Cain reveals that His requirements for us have never changed. Cain's attitude alienated him from God. On the other hand, Romans 4:3 says that God declared Abraham righteous because of his faith. From those early times to the present, God has always wanted a relationship with His people based on trust and love.

4:8-10 It took only one generation for the sin unleashed in the Garden to lead to the first act of violence. And Cain didn't just give his brother a bloody nose; he took his life. By the time Noah came on the scene several generations later, the world was filled with violence (Genesis 6:11). This is a hallmark of human history; it has never been easy to find nonviolent options for settling disagreements. Prophets like Isaiah called violence a trademark of evil (Isaiah 59:6) and Solomon wrote proverbs warning against violence (Proverbs 13:2). Yet we continue to struggle against the violence unleashed at the beginning of the world.

FOR THE NEXT GOD IS MERCIFUL FEATURE SEE PAGE 288.

BECAUSE GOD IS
 MERCIFUL

He forgives me of my sins when I sincerely confess them.

And the LORD God made clothing . . . for Adam and his wife.

⁹Afterward the LORD asked Cain, "Where is your brother? Where is Abel?" "I don't know," Cain responded. "Am I my brother's guardian?"

4:9
Gen 3:9

¹⁰But the LORD said, "What have you done? Listen! Your brother's blood cries out to Me from the ground! ¹¹Now you are cursed and banished from the ground, which has swallowed your brother's blood. ¹²No longer will the ground yield good crops for you, no matter how hard you work! From now on you will be a homeless wanderer on the earth."

4:10
Num 35:33
Deut 21:1
Heb 12:24

¹³Cain replied to the LORD, "My punishment* is too great for me to bear! ¹⁴You have banished me from the land and from Your presence; You have made me a homeless wanderer. Anyone who finds me will kill me!"

4:11
Deut 27:15-26

4:12
Deut 28:15-24

¹⁵The LORD replied, "No, for I will give a sevenfold punishment to anyone who kills you." Then the LORD put a mark on Cain to warn anyone who might try to kill him. ¹⁶So Cain left the LORD's presence and settled in the land of Nod,* east of Eden.

4:14
Gen 9:6
Job 15:22

THE DESCENDANTS OF CAIN

¹⁷Cain had sexual relations with his wife, and she became pregnant and gave birth to Enoch. Then Cain founded a city, which he named Enoch, after his son. ¹⁸Enoch had a son named Irad. Irad became the father of* Mehujael. Mehujael became the father of Methushael. Methushael became the father of Lamech.

4:17
Ps 49:11

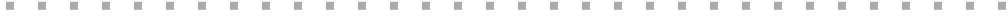
¹⁹Lamech married two women. The first was named Adah, and the second was Zillah.

²⁰Adah gave birth to Jabal, who was the first of those who raise livestock and live in tents.

²¹His brother's name was Jubal, the first of all who play the harp and flute. ²²Lamech's other wife, Zillah, gave birth to a son named Tubal-cain. He became an expert in forging tools of bronze and iron. Tubal-cain had a sister named Naamah. ²³One day Lamech said to his wives,

4:23
Lev 19:18
Deut 32:35

4:13 Or *My sin*. 4:16 *Nod* means "wandering." 4:18 Or *the ancestor of*, and so throughout the verse.



4:9 Cain's response to God is well known. The King James Bible famously renders it: "Am I my brother's keeper?" Rather than confess or repent in response to God's question, Cain lied and became defensive. Adam had a similar response when God confronted his disobedience. While he was honest about eating the taboo fruit, Adam immediately cast the blame on Eve. Eve then followed suit by blaming the serpent (Genesis 3:12-13). As humans, we avoid the twin truths that there is no hiding from God and that there is no one else but ourselves to blame for our actions.

4:17 Cain's wife was likely a sister or a niece. Today, such a marriage would be a forbidden act. It is not healthy for people to procreate with close family members, which is why we have laws against it. But in Cain's time, the world was new and the gene pool was clean. No chromosomal and genetic abnormalities existed to be passed down. Soon, however, these kinds of relationships would be subjected to guidelines (Leviticus 18:11-18).

4:12-13 God banished Cain from his farmland and declared that it no longer would yield crops for him. This punishment hit Cain hard, for he was a man of the land who had offered God produce he had raised himself. His descendants became a nomadic people with nowhere to settle, a family of fugitives. By his own admission, Cain also lost access to God's presence. But God had promised Cain earlier (Genesis 4:7) that if he responded with the right attitude, he would be accepted. It was Cain's choice, then, to be a self-made man with nowhere to call home.

4:17 When Cain first left the Garden, he was in the land of Nod. *Nod* means "wandering." Soon, however, Cain established a city and named it for his son, Enoch. Little is known about this city, but the fact that Cain named it shows that the inhabitants of the earth were organizing themselves very quickly. The birth of Enoch also represented the establishment of a bloodline from Cain, but that bloodline was lost in the Flood in which only Noah's family survived. Noah was descended from Seth, Adam and Eve's third son.

4:15 Cain was afraid other people would hurt him. We don't know who these other people were—probably descendants of Adam and Eve's other children. We also don't know the exact nature of Cain's "mark" or how anyone else was to recognize and understand it. But since Cain's punishment was worse than he could imagine, he must have felt some reassurance in knowing that an even more terrible retribution awaited any enemies he encountered. While Cain failed to submit to God's leadership, he accepted God's power to dole out his punishment.

4:20-22 Imagine the discoveries of the tradesmen listed in this verse. How did Jabal react when he conceived new ways to manage larger herds? What must Jubal have thought when he was able to produce his first clear tone? What did Tubal-cain feel when he discovered methods for shaping metal to make his day-to-day work easier? After only five generations, people were living in tents, playing music, and working with metals. They were doing more than surviving—they were enjoying God's creation, employing it within their lives, and creating things. Perhaps without even understanding it, they were expressing God's image by creating and building a life.

“Adah and Zillah, hear my voice;
listen to me, you wives of Lamech.
I have killed a man who attacked me,
a young man who wounded me.

4:25
Gen 4:8; 5:3
1 Chr 1:1
Luke 3:38

24 If someone who kills Cain is punished seven times,
then the one who kills me will be punished seventy-seven times!”

THE BIRTH OF SETH

4:26
Gen 12:8
1 Kgs 18:24
Joel 2:32
Zeph 3:9
Acts 2:21

25 Adam had sexual relations with his wife again, and she gave birth to another son. She named him Seth,* for she said, “God has granted me another son in place of Abel, whom Cain killed.” 26 When Seth grew up, he had a son and named him Enosh. At that time people first began to worship the LORD by name.

THE DESCENDANTS OF ADAM

5:1
Gen 1:26; 6:9
1 Chr 1:1

5 This is the written account of the descendants of Adam. When God created human beings,* He made them to be like Himself. 2 He created them male and female, and He blessed them and called them “human.”

5:2
Gen 1:27
*Matt 19:4
*Mark 10:6

3 When Adam was 130 years old, he became the father of a son who was just like him—in his very image. He named his son Seth. 4 After the birth of Seth, Adam lived another 800 years, and he had other sons and daughters. 5 Adam lived 930 years, and then he died.

5:3
Gen 1:26; 4:25
1 Cor 15:49

5:5
Gen 2:17
Heb 9:27

6 When Seth was 105 years old, he became the father of* Enosh. 7 After the birth of* Enosh, Seth lived another 807 years, and he had other sons and daughters. 8 Seth lived 912 years, and then he died.

5:6
Luke 3:38

9 When Enosh was 90 years old, he became the father of Kenan. 10 After the birth of Kenan, Enosh lived another 815 years, and he had other sons and daughters. 11 Enosh lived 905 years, and then he died.

5:9
1 Chr 1:2
Luke 3:37

12 When Kenan was 70 years old, he became the father of Mahalalel. 13 After the birth of Mahalalel, Kenan lived another 840 years, and he had other sons and daughters.

5:12
1 Chr 1:2
Luke 3:37

14 Kenan lived 910 years, and then he died.

5:15
1 Chr 1:2
Luke 3:37

15 When Mahalalel was 65 years old, he became the father of Jared. 16 After the birth of Jared, Mahalalel lived another 830 years, and he had other sons and daughters.

17 Mahalalel lived 895 years, and then he died.

4:25 *Seth* probably means “granted”; the name may also mean “appointed.” 5:1 Or *man*; Hebrew reads *adam*; similarly in 5:2. 5:6 Or *the ancestor of*; also in 5:9, 12, 15, 18, 21, 25. 5:7 Or *the birth of this ancestor of*; also in 5:10, 13, 16, 19, 22, 26.

4:23-24 If Lamech and his family demonstrate progress in fulfillment of the Cultural Mandate, they also display a gross regression in terms of godly living. Lamech married two women in violation of God’s design. He also boasted of having killed a man for only wounding him. And he arrogantly swore that anyone who took vengeance on him would pay a far worse price than the penalty set by God for killing Cain. These ungodly descendants of Cain display a hardening of their hearts, a deepening of their rebellion against God. By contrast, the godly line descending from Adam and Eve through Seth worships and follows God.



► CHURCH

4:26 The church worships in every age and place. This is the first instance Scripture records of God’s people coming together to worship Him. The name *Enosh*, like *Adam*, means “man.” However, some scholars believe that *Enosh* carries the further meaning of “frail man,” which would better highlight the humble God-worship of the line of Seth (in contrast with the self-worship of the line of Cain, represented by

Lamech). The image of Enosh as a “frail” man of humble reliance on God must not be lost. Self-reliance always leads to worship of self, while meekness before God has always been essential to biblical worship. (**See Church**-> *Who*> *From every place and age*> *Believers in the Old Testament*, TopicGuide page A48.)

5:3-32 While they seem like dry reading today, genealogies were incredibly important in the ancient world. There were no courthouse records or even a common written language. The only way to keep track of many things was by oral tradition. Genealogies were a form of that tradition. In this way, ancient peoples kept track not only of the family or clan to which they belonged but of the land to which they had access. Land was the ultimate possession. As time passed and God set apart His people, the descendants of Israel, family histories became even more essential. They delineated both the land assigned to the tribe and, in some cases, the tasks given to them.

- 18When Jared was 162 years old, he became the father of Enoch. 19After the birth of Enoch, Jared lived another 800 years, and he had other sons and daughters. 20Jared lived 962 years, and then he died.
- 21When Enoch was 65 years old, he became the father of Methuselah. 22After the birth of Methuselah, Enoch lived in close fellowship with God for another 300 years, and he had other sons and daughters. 23Enoch lived 365 years, 24walking in close fellowship with God. Then one day he disappeared, because God took him.
- 25When Methuselah was 187 years old, he became the father of Lamech. 26After the birth of Lamech, Methuselah lived another 782 years, and he had other sons and daughters. 27Methuselah lived 969 years, and then he died.
- 28When Lamech was 182 years old, he became the father of a son. 29Lamech named his son Noah, for he said, “May he bring us relief* from our work and the painful labor of farming this ground that the LORD has cursed.” 30After the birth of Noah, Lamech lived another 595 years, and he had other sons and daughters. 31Lamech lived 777 years, and then he died.
- 32By the time Noah was 500 years old, he was the father of Shem, Ham, and Japheth.

5:18
1 Chr 1:3
Luke 3:37
Jude 1:14

5:21
1 Chr 1:3
Luke 3:37

5:22
Gen 6:9; 48:15

5:24
2 Kgs 2:1, 11
Ps 73:24
Heb 11:5

5:25
1 Chr 1:3
Luke 3:36

5:29
Gen 3:17
1 Chr 1:3
Luke 3:36
Rom 8:20

5:32
Gen 7:6; 9:18

A WORLD GONE WRONG

6 Then the people began to multiply on the earth, and daughters were born to them. 2The sons of God saw the beautiful women* and took any they wanted as their wives. 3Then the LORD said, “My Spirit will not put up with* humans for such a long time, for they are only mortal flesh. In the future, their normal lifespan will be no more than 120 years.”

6:1
Gen 1:28

6:3
Ps 78:39
1 Pet 3:20

5:29 *Noah* sounds like a Hebrew term that can mean “relief” or “comfort.” 6:2 Hebrew *daughters of men*; also in 6:4.
6:3 Greek version reads *will not remain in*.

5:24 Enoch is set apart in history much like the prophet Elijah. According to the Bible, neither man died. Instead, both were taken directly to heaven while still alive. According to Hebrews 11:5, “It was by faith that Enoch was taken up to heaven without dying.” Enoch also shares a distinction with Noah. Only of Enoch and Noah does the Bible say, he walked “in close fellowship with God.” This implies an intimacy of fellowship that stands out in all of Scripture’s historical records. In both cases, this close walk with God was made possible by the same element that led to Enoch’s translation to heaven—faith.

5:29-30 Did ancient people actually live such fantastically long lives as described in this chapter? Some scholars believe that the ages listed here do correspond to our modern understanding. Indeed, the lifespans described in ancient historical and cultural records other than Scripture are also longer than we experience today. However, some of the historical records list years between main characters in a family line as opposed to actual birth and death dates. Whether the ages here were counted as we do today or whether the calendar was evolving and with it the concept of years and age, it is clear that human lifespans diminished after the Flood. By the time of Moses, a typical lifespan was similar to modern expectations. In Psalm 90:10, Moses says, “Seventy years are given to us!”

6:1-2 Some believe that the “sons of God” in this verse were angels or fallen angels who became involved with mortal women. However, the fantastic nature of this theory argues against it, as does the context of these verses. In chapters 4 and 5, Moses outlined two groups of descendants from Adam and Eve: a godly line and an ungodly line. One possible theory is that these verses describe an intermingling of the two lines, with male descendants of Seth taking wives for themselves from female descendants of Cain. Their poor spousal choices represented a decline in the godliness of Seth’s line. Their sin also may have involved taking more than one wife per man, taking “any that they wanted,” a violation of God’s design for the marriage relationship.



► PURPOSE

6:3 Common grace restrains sin. God said His Spirit would “not put up with humans for such a long time.” Still, the Spirit continued (and continues) to put up with people for many years. Many theologians see the patience of God’s Spirit described here as referring to God’s *common grace*, which is granted to and experienced by all people. One action of common grace is the restraining of sin in the world so that people, including non-Christians, can do good for others. This good is not related to salvation, but has to do principally with the performance of civic responsibilities. Without the Holy Spirit restraining the wickedness of men so that they can do good, the world would quickly degenerate into anarchy. The order that common grace provides also gives Christians time to spread the gospel before the end of the present age. (**See Purpose**> *God’s Deeds*> *Common grace*, TopicGuide page A54.)

6:4 ⁴In those days, and for some time after, giant Nephilites lived on the earth, for whenever the sons of God had intercourse with women, they gave birth to children who became the heroes and famous warriors of ancient times.

6:5 ⁵The LORD observed the extent of human wickedness on the earth, and He saw that everything they thought or imagined was consistently and totally evil. ⁶So the LORD was sorry He had ever made them and put them on the earth. It broke His heart. ⁷And the LORD said, “I will wipe this human race I have created from the face of the earth. Yes, and I will destroy every living thing—all the people, the large animals, the small animals that scurry along the ground, and even the birds of the sky. I am sorry I ever made them.” ⁸But Noah found favor with the LORD.

6:6 ⁶So the LORD observed the extent of human wickedness on the earth, and He saw that everything they thought or imagined was consistently and totally evil. ⁶So the LORD was sorry He had ever made them and put them on the earth. It broke His heart. ⁷And the LORD said, “I will wipe this human race I have created from the face of the earth. Yes, and I will destroy every living thing—all the people, the large animals, the small animals that scurry along the ground, and even the birds of the sky. I am sorry I ever made them.” ⁸But Noah found favor with the LORD.

6:9 THE STORY OF NOAH

6:9 ⁹This is the account of Noah and his family. Noah was a righteous man, the only blameless person living on earth at the time, and he walked in close fellowship with God. ¹⁰Noah was the father of three sons: Shem, Ham, and Japheth.

6:11 ¹¹Now God saw that the earth had become corrupt and was filled with violence. ¹²God observed all this corruption in the world, for everyone on earth was corrupt. ¹³So God said to Noah, “I have decided to destroy all living creatures, for they have filled the earth with violence. Yes, I will wipe them all out along with the earth!”

6:13 ¹⁴“Build a large boat* from cypress wood* and waterproof it with tar, inside and out. Then construct decks and stalls throughout its interior. ¹⁵Make the boat 450 feet long, 75 feet wide, and 45 feet high.* ¹⁶Leave an 18-inch opening* below the roof all the way

6:14a Traditionally rendered *an ark*. **6:14b** Or *gopher wood*. **6:15** Hebrew *300 cubits* [138 meters] *long, 50 cubits* [23 meters] *wide, and 30 cubits* [13.8 meters] *high*. **6:16** Hebrew *an opening of 1 cubit* [46 centimeters].

6:4 The words translated as “giant Nephilites” here appears in other translations as *Nephilim*, a race of very large people. While some of the ancient words used to describe giants can also mean “mighty” or “warrior,” it seems clear that there were early races that were of unusual size. When the Hebrew spies did reconnaissance in the Promised Land, they saw the Nephilim there and came back too scared to launch an invasion. The spies said they felt like grasshoppers compared to these men (Numbers 13:33). Another race of large people was called the Rephaim. King Og of Bashan was a Rephaite. His bed was thirteen feet long and six feet wide (Deuteronomy 3:11). Goliath, the Philistine, was also a giant, perhaps descended from a race of large people called the Anakim (1 Samuel 17:4-7).

6:5-13 Jesus later described this era on earth. He said that right up until the time Noah entered the ark, “people were enjoying banquets and parties and weddings” (Matthew 24:38). Jesus’ words may make the people sound more oblivious than sinful. But when we read the description here, we find that violence and depravity were commonplace. People lived to satisfy themselves rather than honor their Creator. The Bible goes so far as to say that God was sorry He had made them. He was so grieved by human sin that He sent a flood to cover the earth. Jesus’ statement shows the unexpected suddenness of that judgment.

6:9 Moses describes Noah as “a righteous man” and “the only blameless person living on earth at the time.” He represents a new flowering of the godly line of Seth, which had become largely indistinguishable from the ungodly descendants of Cain. However, these descriptions of Noah do not mean that he was sinless. In fact, after the Flood, he sinned by getting drunk with wine (Genesis 9:20). But Noah sought to obey God and to walk with him by faith as no one else on

earth did. Still, Noah was chosen by God to be saved from the Flood not because of the way he lived but because he “found favor with the LORD” (Genesis 6:8). Other translations render this passage this way: “Noah found grace in the eyes of the LORD.” Noah walked with Him by faith and was saved from judgment because God willed it to be so. It is the same for all believers everywhere.



BIBLE

6:14 Types and shadows of Christ. God commanded Noah to build a boat (an “ark”), which is a *type*, or picture, of the salvation provided by Christ alone. Jesus is the ark of our salvation. He alone is the One who can spare us from God’s just wrath. While God’s covenant promise to Noah provided salvation only for his family and for a select group of animals, Peter uses the Flood to remind us to seek salvation in Christ in light of God’s final judgment (2 Peter 3:6-10). (**See Bible** > *Unity* > *OT types* > *Noah’s Ark*, TopicGuide page A11.)

6:15-16 God gave detailed instructions for Noah’s boat. According to this description, it seems that the boat would have been box-like, with ventilation all the way around the roof. God’s instructions were specific, even down to His reminder in verse 21 to bring enough food. There are other times in Scripture when God gave instructions this specific. In Exodus, He presented very detailed directions for setting up the Tent of Meeting. In fact, in Exodus 30:22-26, God even provided Moses a recipe for making anointing oil. Likewise, the book of Leviticus is full of guidelines for the priests and Levites who managed the worship center of the people.

around the boat. Put the door on the side, and build three decks inside the boat—lower, middle, and upper.

¹⁷“Look! I am about to cover the earth with a flood that will destroy every living thing that breathes. Everything on earth will die. ¹⁸But I will confirm My covenant with you. So enter the boat—you and your wife and your sons and their wives. ¹⁹Bring a pair of every kind of animal—a male and a female—into the boat with you to keep them alive during the flood. ²⁰Pairs of every kind of bird, and every kind of animal, and every kind of small animal that scurries along the ground, will come to you to be kept alive. ²¹And be sure to take on board enough food for your family and for all the animals.”

²²So Noah did everything exactly as God had commanded him.

THE FLOOD COVERS THE EARTH

7 When everything was ready, the LORD said to Noah, “Go into the boat with all your family, for among all the people of the earth, I can see that you alone are righteous. ²Take with you seven pairs—male and female—of each animal I have approved for eating and for sacrifice,* and take one pair of each of the others. ³Also take seven pairs of every kind of bird. There must be a male and a female in each pair to ensure that all life will survive on the earth after the flood. ⁴Seven days from now I will make the rains pour down on the earth. And it will rain for forty days and forty nights, until I have wiped from the earth all the living things I have created.”

⁵So Noah did everything as the LORD commanded him.

⁶Noah was 600 years old when the flood covered the earth. ⁷He went on board the boat to escape the flood—he and his wife and his sons and their wives. ⁸With them were all the various kinds of animals—those approved for eating and for sacrifice and those that were not—along with all the birds and the small animals that scurry along the ground. ⁹They entered the boat in pairs, male and female, just as God had commanded Noah. ¹⁰After seven days, the waters of the flood came and covered the earth.

¹¹When Noah was 600 years old, on the seventeenth day of the second month, all the underground waters erupted from the earth, and the rain fell in mighty torrents from the sky. ¹²The rain continued to fall for forty days and forty nights.

¹³That very day Noah had gone into the boat with his wife and his sons—Shem, Ham, and Japheth—and their wives. ¹⁴With them in the boat were pairs of every kind of animal—domestic and wild, large and small—along with birds of every kind. ¹⁵Two by two they came into the boat, representing every living thing that breathes. ¹⁶A male and female of each kind entered, just as God had commanded Noah. Then the LORD closed the door behind them.

7:2 Hebrew of each clean animal; similarly in 7:8.

6:17
Ps 29:10
2 Pet 2:5
6:18
Gen 9:9-16; 17:7;
19:12
6:20
Gen 7:3
6:21
Gen 1:29
6:22
Gen 7:5
Exod 40:16
7:1
Gen 6:18
Matt 24:38
Luke 17:26-27
Heb 11:7
1 Pet 3:20
7:2
Lev 11:1-47
Deut 14:3-20
Ezek 44:23
7:4
Gen 6:7, 13
7:6
Gen 5:32
7:7
Gen 6:18
7:9
Gen 6:22
7:11
Ps 78:23
Ezek 26:19
Mal 3:10
7:13
1 Pet 3:20
2 Pet 2:5
7:15
Gen 6:19; 7:9



► HOLINESS

7:2 Old Covenant laws of ceremonial cleanness. The directive to “take with you seven pairs . . . of each animal” that were clean but only “one pair of each of the others” is explained by the fact that Noah needed more ceremonially clean animals to sacrifice to the Lord (see Genesis 8:20) and to eat. This command points to the spiritual truth that only those who are clean in God’s eyes are acceptable to Him. God makes us clean when He forgives our sins and welcomes us into His family (see Titus 3:5). (**See Holiness> Law and Grace> Law**, TopicGuide page A41.)

7:2 The assumption in this command is that Noah knew which animals were good to eat and acceptable for sacrifice. Clearly, God already had communicated these guidelines in some way.

He would formalize them much later, in the days of Moses. Leviticus, in particular, laid out standards for which animals were clean for eating.



► PURPOSE

7:16 Acts of judgment: great flood. One of the more sobering facts about the last minutes before the earth was covered by floodwaters is that God “closed the door behind them.” Imagine scores of people clawing at the door of the ark in a last-gasp effort to escape the raging waters. Yet it was not Noah who sealed the doors of the ark; it was God. Condemnation for sin comes from the hand of God. Someday we will stand before God to give an account for our deeds in the flesh (Hebrews 9:27). Are you prepared for that day? (**See Purpose> God’s Deeds> Judgment**, TopicGuide page A53.)

7:19 Ps 104:6
7:20 2 Pet 3:6
7:23 Matt 24:38-39
 Luke 17:26-27
 1 Pet 3:20
 2 Pet 2:5
7:24 Gen 8:3

¹⁷For forty days the floodwaters grew deeper, covering the ground and lifting the boat high above the earth. ¹⁸As the waters rose higher and higher above the ground, the boat floated safely on the surface. ¹⁹Finally, the water covered even the highest mountains on the earth, ²⁰rising more than twenty-two feet* above the highest peaks. ²¹All the living things on earth died—birds, domestic animals, wild animals, small animals that scurry along the ground, and all the people. ²²Everything that breathed and lived on dry land died. ²³God wiped out every living thing on the earth—people, livestock, small animals that scurry along the ground, and the birds of the sky. All were destroyed. The only people who survived were Noah and those with him in the boat. ²⁴And the floodwaters covered the earth for 150 days.

THE FLOOD RECEDES

8:1 Gen 19:29; 30:22
 Exod 2:24; 14:21
 Job 12:15
 Isa 44:27
8:2 Gen 7:4, 12
8:4 Gen 7:20
8:7 Lev 11:15
 Deut 14:14
 1 Kgs 17:4
 Luke 12:24
8:8 Isa 60:8
 Hos 11:11
 Matt 10:16
8:13 Gen 5:32

8 But God remembered Noah and all the wild animals and livestock with him in the boat. He sent a wind to blow across the earth, and the floodwaters began to recede. ²The underground waters stopped flowing, and the torrential rains from the sky were stopped. ³So the floodwaters gradually receded from the earth. After 150 days, ⁴exactly five months from the time the flood began,* the boat came to rest on the mountains of Ararat. ⁵Two and a half months later,* as the waters continued to go down, other mountain peaks became visible. ⁶After another forty days, Noah opened the window he had made in the boat ⁷and released a raven. The bird flew back and forth until the floodwaters on the earth had dried up. ⁸He also released a dove to see if the water had receded and it could find dry ground. ⁹But the dove could find no place to land because the water still covered the ground. So it returned to the boat, and Noah held out his hand and drew the dove back inside. ¹⁰After waiting another seven days, Noah released the dove again. ¹¹This time the dove returned to him in the evening with a fresh olive leaf in its beak. Then Noah knew that the floodwaters were almost gone. ¹²He waited another seven days and then released the dove again. This time it did not come back. ¹³Noah was now 601 years old. On the first day of the new year, ten and a half months after the flood began,* the floodwaters had almost dried up from the earth. Noah lifted

7:20 Hebrew 15 cubits [6.9 meters]. 8:4 Hebrew on the seventeenth day of the seventh month; see 7:11. 8:5 Hebrew On the first day of the tenth month; see 7:11 and note on 8:4. 8:13 Hebrew On the first day of the first month; see 7:11.

7:17-20 Many passages in the Bible refer to Noah and to the Flood. Historical documents from many cultures also confirm the reality of a great Flood. The question most debated by scholars, however, is whether the Flood covered the entire earth. The human population at that time lived in Mesopotamia. Thus, a flood of Mesopotamia would have destroyed all human life. Other scholars contend that in order for the waters to rise above the highest mountains of Ararat, they would have had to cover more than just Mesopotamia. The Flood was most likely universal.

7:21-23 From a modern perspective, it seems unnecessary for animals to have been destroyed in the Flood. After all, the people were sinful, not the animals. On this point, we, like Job, have to defer to God’s wisdom as being above our own (Job 38:1-7). God could have chosen any way that He liked to destroy rebellious humanity. But His choice emphasizes the new beginning that God offers all who experience His miraculous rescue.

8:4 The mountains of Ararat are a range that includes an extinct volcano. The range is in modern-day Turkey and northern Iran. Many people have searched there for evi-

dence of Noah’s boat. In fact, one peak is known locally as the Mount of Noah. Thus far, though, no conclusive evidence of the ark or artifacts from it has been found. Although there have been hailed sightings and even an excavation of a wooden artifact, the exact landing point of Noah’s ark remains a mystery.

8:13-14 Twelve and a half months on a houseboat full of animals—how did Noah’s family do it? It has been determined that the dimensions of the ark would have made it seaworthy by modern boat-making standards. The floor space would have totaled more than 100,000 square feet, enough to fit nearly 600 railroad boxcars. Keeping in mind that the animals represented species and not breeds (dogs, not collies, spaniels, and hounds), and assuming that seafaring creatures could have survived outside, some have estimated that the ark housed less than 8,000 individual animals. If the animals were young, they may have averaged the size of a large goat, which means about 350 boxcars could have held them. That would have left plenty of space for Noah’s family and some storage.

back the covering of the boat and saw that the surface of the ground was drying. ¹⁴Two more months went by,* and at last the earth was dry!

¹⁵Then God said to Noah, ¹⁶“Leave the boat, all of you—you and your wife, and your sons and their wives. ¹⁷Release all the animals—the birds, the livestock, and the small animals that scurry along the ground—so they can be fruitful and multiply throughout the earth.”

¹⁸So Noah, his wife, and his sons and their wives left the boat. ¹⁹And all of the large and small animals and birds came out of the boat, pair by pair.

²⁰Then Noah built an altar to the LORD, and there he sacrificed as burnt offerings the animals and birds that had been approved for that purpose.* ²¹And the LORD was pleased with the aroma of the sacrifice and said to Himself, “I will never again curse the ground because of the human race, even though everything they think or imagine is bent toward evil from childhood. I will never again destroy all living things. ²²As long as the earth remains, there will be planting and harvest, cold and heat, summer and winter, day and night.”

GOD CONFIRMS HIS COVENANT

9 Then God blessed Noah and his sons and told them, “Be fruitful and multiply. Fill the earth. ²All the animals of the earth, all the birds of the sky, all the small animals that scurry along the ground, and all the fish in the sea will look on you with fear and terror. I have placed them in your power. ³I have given them to you for food, just as I have given you grain and vegetables. ⁴But you must never eat any meat that still has the lifeblood in it.

⁵“And I will require the blood of anyone who takes another person’s life. If a wild animal kills a person, it must die. And anyone who murders a fellow human must die. ⁶If anyone takes a human life, that person’s life will also be taken by human hands. For God made human beings* in His own image. ⁷Now be fruitful and multiply, and repopulate the earth.”

8:14 Hebrew *The twenty-seventh day of the second month arrived*; see note on 8:13. 8:20 Hebrew *every clean animal and every clean bird*. 9:6 *Or man*; Hebrew reads *ha-adam*.

8:16
Gen 7:13

8:17
Gen 1:22

8:20
Gen 4:4; 12:7; 13:18;
22:2

8:21
Gen 3:17
Exod 29:18, 25
Lev 1:9, 13
Isa 54:9

8:22
Ps 74:17

9:1
Gen 1:22

9:2
Gen 1:26-29
Ps 8:6-8

9:3
Ps 104:14

9:4
Lev 3:17; 7:26; 17:10
Deut 12:16
Acts 15:20, 29

9:5
Exod 21:28-32

9:6
Exod 20:13; 21:12
Num 35:33

8:20 In Noah’s time, building an altar and offering a sacrifice was a way to commemorate a great event, particularly an act of God’s providence. Noah’s sacrifice apparently involved the burning of the animals. Later, when God codified the sacrificial system for His people, He designated the burnt offering as an atoning sacrifice (Leviticus 1:4). *Aton* literally means “to cover over.” Thus, each time the Israelites sacrificed an animal, they were reminded that the blood of another was necessary to cover their sins—a powerful depiction of what Christ would accomplish in God’s time.



► PURPOSE

8:21-22 God keeps His promises. On his way to church one Sunday morning, a preacher was met by one of the deacons. “What a bitterly cold morning,” the deacon remarked. “I am sorry the weather is so wintry.” Smiling, the minister replied, “I was just thanking God for keeping His Word.” “What do you mean?” the deacon asked with a puzzled look. “Well,” the preacher said, “more than three thousand years ago, God promised that cold and heat should not cease, so I am strengthened by this weather that emphasizes the sureness of His promises.” Let the seasons remind you that we serve a God who providentially keeps His promises. (**See Purpose**> *God’s Means*> *God’s sovereignty*> *God sustains His creation*, TopicGuide page A52.)

9:1-7 God gave Noah dominion over the earth and commanded him and his family to multiply and fill the world with people again. These were the same responsibilities God conferred upon Adam. Interestingly, He now granted the living creatures to humanity for food, whereas earlier He had dictated that the diet of Adam and Eve and their children should consist of fruit and vegetables only (Genesis 1:29). The only requirement was that they should not eat animals with the lifeblood in them. Leviticus gives two reasons for this strange requirement. First, refraining from eating blood shows respect for the sanctity of life. Second, it is by blood that atonement for sin must be made.



► ADOPTION

9:5-6 The value of human life. God clearly states that murder is forbidden. To break this law deserves capital punishment. Why? Because human beings are created in the very image of God. Thus, to take the life of another human being is to attack the Creator God. Imagine that someone destroyed something you had made and cherished. Would you not feel as though you had been personally attacked? This simple analogy, however, does not capture the seriousness of murder. God values life, and humans are the pinnacle of His creation. There is no clearer way to assault the Creator than to destroy a living person—His finest creation. (**See Adoption**> *Without Christ: Connected to God*> *Created in the image of God*, TopicGuide page A36.)

⁸Then God told Noah and his sons, ⁹“I hereby confirm My covenant with you and your descendants, ¹⁰and with all the animals that were on the boat with you—the birds, the livestock, and all the wild animals—every living creature on earth. ¹¹Yes, I am confirming My covenant with you. Never again will floodwaters kill all living creatures; never again will a flood destroy the earth.”

9:11
Isa 24:5

9:12
Gen 17:11

9:13
Ezek 1:28

9:15
Deut 7:9

¹²Then God said, “I am giving you a sign of My covenant with you and with all living creatures, for all generations to come. ¹³I have placed My rainbow in the clouds. It is the sign of My covenant with you and with all the earth. ¹⁴When I send clouds over the earth, the rainbow will appear in the clouds, ¹⁵and I will remember My covenant with you and with all living creatures. Never again will the floodwaters destroy all life. ¹⁶When I see the rainbow in the clouds, I will remember the eternal covenant between God and every living creature on earth.” ¹⁷Then God said to Noah, “Yes, this rainbow is the sign of the covenant I am confirming with all the creatures on earth.”

NOAH'S SONS

¹⁸The sons of Noah who came out of the boat with their father were Shem, Ham, and Japheth. (Ham is the father of Canaan.) ¹⁹From these three sons of Noah came all the people who now populate the earth.

9:21
Gen 19:35

9:22
Hab 2:15

²⁰After the flood, Noah began to cultivate the ground, and he planted a vineyard. ²¹One day he drank some wine he had made, and he became drunk and lay naked inside his tent. ²²Ham, the father of Canaan, saw that his father was naked and went outside and

9:8-11 Throughout history, God has called people into a relationship with Himself, a relationship based on covenants under which He promised great blessings and required trust and fidelity. God promised life to Adam and his descendants if he would refrain from eating from one tree. Then He made a covenant with Noah in which He promised deliverance from the Flood. This covenant was expanded in these verses with the promise that the earth would never be destroyed again by a flood; all of Noah’s descendants were safe. Years later, God made a covenant with Abraham, promising to give his descendants a land, to make them a great nation, and to bless all peoples through them. In Jesus Christ, God ushered in a new covenant, promising that anyone who trusts in Jesus’ sacrificial death may be saved (2 Corinthians 3:9, 12).

9:12-16 What did the rainbow mean? The Flood may have represented the first occurrence of rain on the earth. If so, the rainbow God placed in the sky was likely the first one ever seen by human beings. Perhaps the rainbow was a symbol of beauty made from what had been destructive. More than a natural phenomenon, however, it stood as a sign between God and all living creatures. Since the Hebrew word for rainbow can also be used to refer to a *bow*—as in a bow used to shoot arrows—some have said that the rainbow was an image of God hanging up His bow in the sky, declaring no more destruction of humanity. Finally, following the archery analogy, it could represent God pointing a war-bow at Himself, forever reminding us that He would sooner perish than break His promises to us.

FOR THE NEXT GOD NEVER CHANGES FEATURE SEE PAGE 1738.

BECAUSE GOD
NEVER CHANGES

My future is secure and eternal.

When I see the rainbow in the clouds, I will remember the eternal covenant between God and every living creature on earth.

told his brothers. ²³Then Shem and Japheth took a robe, held it over their shoulders, and backed into the tent to cover their father. As they did this, they looked the other way so they would not see him naked.

²⁴When Noah woke up from his stupor, he learned what Ham, his youngest son, had done. ²⁵Then he cursed Canaan, the son of Ham:

“May Canaan be cursed!
May he be the lowest of servants to his relatives.”

9:25
Deut 27:16

²⁶Then Noah said,

“May the LORD, the God of Shem, be blessed,
and may Canaan be his servant!

9:26
Gen 14:20

²⁷May God expand the territory of Japheth!
May Japheth share the prosperity of Shem,*
and may Canaan be his servant.”

9:27
Gen 10:2-5
Isa 66:19

²⁸Noah lived another 350 years after the great flood. ²⁹He lived 950 years, and then he died.

9:29
Gen 2:17

10 This is the account of the families of Shem, Ham, and Japheth, the three sons of Noah. Many children were born to them after the great flood.

10:1
Gen 9:18
1 Chr 1:4

DESCENDANTS OF JAPHETH

²The descendants of Japheth were Gomer, Magog, Madai, Javan, Tubal, Meshech, and Tiras.

10:2
1 Chr 1:5-7
Isa 66:19
Ezek 27:13; 38:2-3, 6

³The descendants of Gomer were Ashkenaz, Riphath, and Togamah.

10:3
Jer 51:27
Ezek 27:14

⁴The descendants of Javan were Elishah, Tarshish, Kittim, and Rodanim.* ⁵Their descendants became the seafaring peoples that spread out to various lands, each identified by its own language, clan, and national identity.

10:4
1 Chr 1:6-7

DESCENDANTS OF HAM

⁶The descendants of Ham were Cush, Mizraim, Put, and Canaan.

10:6
1 Chr 1:8-10

⁷The descendants of Cush were Seba, Havilah, Sabtah, Raamah, and Sabteca. The descendants of Raamah were Sheba and Dedan.

10:7
Isa 43:3
Ezek 27:15, 20, 22

9:27 Hebrew *May he live in the tents of Shem.* 10:4 As in some Hebrew manuscripts and Greek version (see also 1 Chr 1:7); most Hebrew manuscripts read *Dodanim.*

9:22 Many questions have been asked and conclusions drawn about Ham’s misdeed. The simplest explanation is that Ham was disrespectful of his father, so Noah cursed all of Ham’s descendants through his son Canaan. Some are troubled by the reference to Ham as Noah’s youngest son, because Ham has always been listed as the middle son. This may be a clue that it was Canaan, not Ham, who actually committed the misdeed.

9:22-25 The Canaanites settled in the land east of Egypt, an area that eventually became known by the name of their forefather. By the time Abraham settled there, people other than those who were of the lineage of Canaan (the man) may have become known as Canaanites by virtue of living in the land. These ungodly peoples opposed Israel’s conquest of the land, and God used Israel to fulfill the curse Noah uttered in these verses.

10:1 Because the Flood destroyed most of the earth’s population, all of humanity can be traced back to the sons of Noah. This chapter outlines the nations that formed from these three family lines and identifies the regions where these nations

lived. While differences became evident as each nation expanded, separated, and grew distinct, it is important to remember that all humans originally came from the same family, from three brothers who survived a catastrophe in a boat.

10:2-5 Japheth was the oldest of Noah’s sons, though Shem is often listed first. Japheth had seven sons. His descendants became the northern people of southeastern Europe, including the Greeks, who were also called Hellenes or Gentiles. Many believe that Noah’s reference to Japheth sharing the prosperity of Shem came to pass during the Greek occupation of Palestine shortly before the time of Jesus. The Greek descendants of Japheth strongly influenced the culture in which the first-century church blossomed, and one of the greatest conflicts of the early church was whether Gentiles (descendants of Japheth) had to become Jews (descendants of Shem) in order to be followers of Christ (Acts 11; 15-21).

10:6-19 Ham’s descendants included the Egyptians (*Mizraim* is Hebrew for “Egypt”), as well as some Africans and Arabs. The Bible gives us the most information about the descendants of

⁸Cush was also the ancestor of Nimrod, who was the first heroic warrior on earth. ⁹Since he was the greatest hunter in the world,* his name became proverbial. People would say, "This man is like Nimrod, the greatest hunter in the world." ¹⁰He built his kingdom in the land of Babylonia,* with the cities of Babylon, Erech, Akkad, and Calneh. ¹¹From there he expanded his territory to Assyria,* building the cities of Nineveh, Rehoboth-ir, Calah, ¹²and Resen (the great city located between Nineveh and Calah).

10:10
Gen 11:9
10:11
Mic 5:6
10:13
Jer 46:9
10:14
1 Chr 1:12
10:15
Gen 15:20; 23:3
1 Chr 1:13
Jer 47:4
10:16
Gen 15:18-21
10:19
Gen 14:2

¹³Mizraim was the ancestor of the Ludites, Anamites, Lehabites, Naphtuhites, ¹⁴Pathrusites, Casluhites, and the Caphtorites, from whom the Philistines came.* ¹⁵Canaan's oldest son was Sidon, the ancestor of the Sidonians. Canaan was also the ancestor of the Hittites, ¹⁶Jebusites, Amorites, Gargashites, ¹⁷Hivites, Arkites, Sinites, ¹⁸Arvadites, Zemarites, and Hamathites. The Canaanite clans eventually spread out, ¹⁹and the territory of Canaan extended from Sidon in the north to Gerar and Gaza in the south, and east as far as Sodom, Gomorrah, Admah, and Zeboiim, near Lasha.

²⁰These were the descendants of Ham, identified by clan, language, territory, and national identity.

DESCENDANTS OF SHEM

²¹Sons were also born to Shem, the older brother of Japheth.* Shem was the ancestor of all the descendants of Eber.

10:22
2 Kgs 15:29
Isa 66:19
10:23
Job 1:1
10:24
Luke 3:35

²²The descendants of Shem were Elam, Asshur, Arphaxad, Lud, and Aram. ²³The descendants of Aram were Uz, Hul, Gether, and Mash. ²⁴Arphaxad was the father of Shelah,* and Shelah was the father of Eber. ²⁵Eber had two sons. The first was named Peleg (which means "division"), for during his lifetime the people of the world were divided into different language groups. His brother's name was Joktan. ²⁶Joktan was the ancestor of Almodad, Sheleph, Hazarmaveth, Jerah, ²⁷Hadoram, Uzal, Diklah, ²⁸Obal, Abimael, Sheba, ²⁹Ophir, Havilah, and Jobab. All these were descendants of Joktan. ³⁰The territory they occupied extended from Mesha all the way to Sephar in the eastern mountains.

³¹These were the descendants of Shem, identified by clan, language, territory, and national identity.

CONCLUSION

10:32
Gen 9:19; 10:1

³²These are the clans that descended from Noah's sons, arranged by nation according to their lines of descent. All the nations of the earth descended from these clans after the great flood.

10:9 Hebrew *a great hunter before the LORD*; also in 10:9b. 10:10 Hebrew *Shinar*. 10:11 Or *From that land Assyria went out*. 10:14 Hebrew *Casluhites, from whom the Philistines came, and Caphtorites*. Compare Jer 47:4; Amos 9:7. 10:21 Or *Shem, whose older brother was Japheth*. 10:24 Greek version reads *Arphaxad was the father of Cainan, Cainan was the father of Shelah*. Compare Luke 3:36.

Canaan, the Canaanites, who were cursed by God. The curse included the subjugation of Canaan's descendants to the descendants of Shem (Semitic peoples) and Japheth (Indo-Europeans). While the Canaanites did inhabit the Promised Land and influence the Israelites as they resettled that land, by the time of the New Testament they had ceased to exist as a unified people group.

Arameans (Aram) or Syrians in Syria and Mesopotamia, and the Assyrians (Asshur). The Assyrians actually had origins in the family of Ham as well as that of Shem. It is from the name *Shem* that we get the term *Semitic*. Judaism, Christianity, and Islam all have roots in the lineage of Shem, and it was through the line of Shem that Abraham, King David, and Jesus were born.

10:21-31 Shem's descendants included the Lydians (Lud) in Asia Minor, the Elamites (Elam) east of the Tigris River, the

THE TOWER OF BABEL

11 At one time all the people of the world spoke the same language and used the same words. ²As the people migrated to the east, they found a plain in the land of Babylonia* and settled there.

³They began saying to each other, “Let’s make bricks and harden them with fire.” (In this region bricks were used instead of stone, and tar was used for mortar.) ⁴Then they said, “Come, let’s build a great city for ourselves with a tower that reaches into the sky. This will make us famous and keep us from being scattered all over the world.”

⁵But the LORD came down to look at the city and the tower the people were building. ⁶“Look!” He said. “The people are united, and they all speak the same language. After this, nothing they set out to do will be impossible for them! ⁷Come, let’s go down and confuse the people with different languages. Then they won’t be able to understand each other.”

⁸In that way, the LORD scattered them all over the world, and they stopped building the city. ⁹That is why the city was called Babel,* because that is where the LORD confused the people with different languages. In this way He scattered them all over the world.

11:2
Gen 10:10; 14:1
Isa 11:11

11:3
Gen 14:10

11:4
2 Sam 8:13

11:5
Gen 18:21
Exod 19:11

11:6
Gen 9:19; 11:1

11:7
Gen 1:26

11:8
Gen 9:19

11:9
Gen 10:10

THE LINE OF DESCENT FROM SHEM TO ABRAM

¹⁰This is the account of Shem’s family.

Two years after the great flood, when Shem was 100 years old, he became the father of* Arphaxad. ¹¹After the birth of* Arphaxad, Shem lived another 500 years and had other sons and daughters.

¹²When Arphaxad was 35 years old, he became the father of Shelah. ¹³After the birth of Shelah, Arphaxad lived another 403 years and had other sons and daughters.*

¹⁴When Shelah was 30 years old, he became the father of Eber. ¹⁵After the birth of Eber, Shelah lived another 403 years and had other sons and daughters.

¹⁶When Eber was 34 years old, he became the father of Peleg. ¹⁷After the birth of Peleg, Eber lived another 430 years and had other sons and daughters.

11:10
Gen 10:22-25
Luke 3:36

11:12
Luke 3:36

11:13
1 Chr 1:17

11:14
Luke 3:35

11:16
Luke 3:35

11:2 Hebrew *Shinar*. **11:9** Or *Babylon*. *Babel* sounds like a Hebrew term that means “confusion.” **11:10** Or *the ancestor of*; also in 11:12, 14, 16, 18, 20, 22, 24. **11:11** Or *the birth of this ancestor of*; also in 11:13, 15, 17, 19, 21, 23, 25. **11:12-13** Greek version reads *12* When Arphaxad was 135 years old, he became the father of Cainan. *13* After the birth of Cainan, Arphaxad lived another 430 years and had other sons and daughters, and then he died. When Cainan was 130 years old, he became the father of Shelah. After the birth of Shelah, Cainan lived another 330 years and had other sons and daughters, and then he died. Compare Luke 3:35-36.

11:1-4 As the descendants of Noah’s three sons repopulated the earth, people naturally moved outward in search of resources, slowly filling the earth as God intended. As they went, they took their common language with them. Eventually, they came into the fertile plains of the land of Babylonia to the east of the land that eventually became Canaan. This seemed to be a place where many people could live together, halting the migrations that were separating them from one another and creating cultural differences. They hoped a city and a tower would unite them and celebrate what they saw as their greatness.

11:6 In this verse, God almost sounds fearful of what people might accomplish. But since that goes against everything the Bible teaches about God, we need to understand His words in their context. At this point in history, God had watched the human race fail time and time again. Adam and Eve had disobeyed. Then the culture had become so depraved and violent that God had destroyed everyone except Noah’s family. As the human population grew again, it would have been only a matter of time until the downward spiral of morality resumed.

While God had no reason to fear for Himself, He had reason to protect His creatures. The builders of Babel were prideful to the point of separation from God. Scattering humanity was a step toward saving people from themselves.



► PURPOSE

11:7 Confusion of tongues. The people’s desire to “build a great city” using their common language was in direct violation of God’s desire for the earth to be populated by many peoples. Left unchecked, this desire would transform Babylonia into a seat of idolatry. The people obviously had not learned one of the key lessons of the Flood—that God hates and judges all pride and idolatry. So God stepped in to confuse their language and stop the building of this great city—a sign of their pride. Correction and discipline is God’s way to teach us and show us His love (see Hebrews 12:5-6). To return to our selfish ways reveals the hardness of our heart. Moreover, a pattern of disobedience grieves the heart of God, who loves us and wants us to experience the abundant life He has in store for us. (**See Purpose**> *God’s Deeds*> *Special acts*> *Miracles*> *OT*, TopicGuide page A52.)

11:20 Luke 3:35 ¹⁸When Peleg was 30 years old, he became the father of Reu. ¹⁹After the birth of Reu, Peleg lived another 209 years and had other sons and daughters.

11:22 Luke 3:34 ²⁰When Reu was 32 years old, he became the father of Serug. ²¹After the birth of Serug, Reu lived another 207 years and had other sons and daughters.

11:24 Josh 24:2 Luke 3:34 ²²When Serug was 30 years old, he became the father of Nahor. ²³After the birth of Nahor, Serug lived another 200 years and had other sons and daughters.

11:26 Gen 22:20 1 Chr 1:26-27 Luke 3:34 ²⁴When Nahor was 29 years old, he became the father of Terah. ²⁵After the birth of Terah, Nahor lived another 119 years and had other sons and daughters.

²⁶When Terah was 70 years old, he had become the father of Abram, Nahor, and Haran.

THE FAMILY OF TERAH

11:29 Gen 17:15; 20:11-12; 22:20 ²⁷This is the account of Terah’s family. Terah was the father of Abram, Nahor, and Haran; and Haran was the father of Lot. ²⁸But Haran died in Ur of the Chaldeans, the land of his birth, while his father, Terah, was still living. ²⁹Meanwhile, Abram and Nahor both married. The name of Abram’s wife was Sarai, and the name of Nahor’s wife was Milcah. (Milcah and her sister Iscah were daughters of Nahor’s brother Haran.) ³⁰But Sarai was unable to become pregnant and had no children.

11:30 Gen 16:1; 18:11; 25:21 1 Sam 1:5 Luke 1:7 ³¹One day Terah took his son Abram, his daughter-in-law Sarai (his son Abram’s wife), and his grandson Lot (his son Haran’s child) and moved away from Ur of the Chaldeans. He was headed for the land of Canaan, but they stopped at Haran and settled there. ³²Terah lived for 205 years* and died while still in Haran.

11:31 Gen 27:43 Josh 24:2 Acts 7:4

THE CALL OF ABRAM

12:1 Gen 15:7 *Acts 7:3 Heb 11:8 **12** The LORD had said to Abram, “Leave your native country, your relatives, and your father’s family, and go to the land that I will show you. ²I will make you into a great nation. I will bless you and make you famous, and you will be a blessing to

11:32 Some ancient versions read 145 years; compare 11:26 and 12:4.

11:27-28 Abram’s hometown was known as Ur of the Chaldeans. It was possibly located in southern Mesopotamia, in the area where Nebuchadnezzar’s great city of Babylon was later located. Ur was an educational center. Students there learned to read, write, and do sophisticated mathematics, including square roots. Wool was manufactured in Ur, though much of the income of the city revolved around religion. The main deity worshiped in Ur was a moon god named Nannar. Ur contained both a ziggurat (a pyramid-like tower) and a temple dedicated to the worship of Nannar and his moon goddess. It was out of this polytheistic culture that God called Abram.

Lot. They traveled northwestward, following the Euphrates River. However, when they came to Haran, near the headwaters of the Euphrates, Terah halted. It was only later, after the death of Terah in Haran, that Abram moved on to Canaan. However, in his great sermon just before his martyrdom, Stephen declared that Abram heard God’s call to go to Canaan while still in Ur (Acts 7:2-4). But no matter when the call came, Abram showed great trust in leaving his ancestral home and relatives to travel to an unknown, unidentified land.

11:27-32 Abram’s family lived in tents that were probably much like the Bedouins of today. Some were large enough to be divided into rooms, with curtains as walls. Mats or rugs often covered the floor, and the sides could be raised for ventilation or lowered for protection from the elements. Although buildings and sheds could be built at that time, portable homes were more suitable for Abram and his relatives, for they were nomadic herdsman who moved from place to place to keep their animals fed and watered. At times, the number of tents a person owned was a sign of wealth. When Abram and Lot settled together, for instance, Lot was described as a man with many tents (Genesis 13:5).

► GOD
12:1 God’s names: the LORD. God is identified here by the name *Yahweh*. Here translated “LORD,” Yahweh is also translated “I AM” (Exodus 3:14-15). The name reveals that God is self-existent and is not dependent on anyone. When Jesus used God’s personal name, I AM, to describe Himself (John 8:58), the Jewish leaders picked up stones to kill Him, angry that He was claiming to be the self-existent God. Because of the significance of God’s personal name, it is used with many of the titles we find precious, such as “I AM the Healer” and “I AM the Lord who Provides.” As you read the Yahweh names of God in the Bible, note the promises they contain for you and praise God for His wonderful character. (**See God> God’s Names> God**, TopicGuide page A18.)

11:31 Genesis tells us that Abram’s father, Terah, initiated the move from Ur of the Chaldeans to Canaan. Terah set out with Abram and Abram’s wife, Sarai, and with his grandson,

others. ³I will bless those who bless you and curse those who treat you with contempt. All the families on earth will be blessed through you.”

⁴So Abram departed as the LORD had instructed, and Lot went with him. Abram was seventy-five years old when he left Haran. ⁵He took his wife, Sarai, his nephew Lot, and all his wealth—his livestock and all the people he had taken into his household at Haran—and headed for the land of Canaan. When they arrived in Canaan, ⁶Abram traveled through the land as far as Shechem. There he set up camp beside the oak of Moreh. At that time, the area was inhabited by Canaanites.

⁷Then the LORD appeared to Abram and said, “I will give this land to your descendants.” And Abram built an altar there and dedicated it to the LORD, who had appeared to him. ⁸After that, Abram traveled south and set up camp in the hill country, with Bethel to the west and Ai to the east. There he built another altar and dedicated it to the LORD,

12:7 Hebrew *seed*.

12:3
Gen 22:18; 26:4
Exod 23:22
Acts 3:25
*Gal 3:8

12:4
Gen 11:26, 31

12:6
Gen 33:18; 35:4
Deut 11:30

12:7
Gen 13:15
*Gal 3:16

12:8
Gen 4:26; 8:20; 22:9

12:1-3 God made a covenant with Abram (who was later called Abraham). A covenant is part promise, part contract. God promised blessings to Abraham and asked something of him. What did God promise? He promised to give Abram many descendants and much influence. What did God ask? He asked that Abram go to a certain land and live a certain way. This covenant between Abram and God is the foundation for much of the rest of the Bible. It was upon this agreement that the nation of Israel was established and the Messiah, Jesus, was foretold. It was by Jesus, a descendant of Abraham, that Abraham would be a blessing to “all the families on earth.” Through Abram, God displayed the relationship that He desires to have with His creation through faith.

12:4-6 Abraham was willing to leave his extended family and set out for an unknown destination. Taking his wife, his nephew, all his livestock, and his many servants, he went south. He was able to do so because he had faith in God’s promise to lead him and watch over him. The Scriptures laud this attitude of trust in Abraham, characterizing him as the father of the faithful (Romans 4:16).

12:6 The first Canaanites were descendants of Noah’s grandson Canaan, son of Ham. Canaan’s descendants comprised eleven groups that lived in Syria and Palestine. In time, however, the term *Canaanites* came to be attached to all the people inhabiting the land between Egypt and Asia Minor. God promised part of this land to Abram. Later, when the Israelites began to inhabit this land, God commanded them to completely

destroy the Canaanites and their false religious practices and idols. Because they failed to do so, the Israelites were continually led away from God by the Canaanites, consistently neglecting the purity of worship that God asked of them.

12:7 This was the first of several altars that Abram built. This altar commemorated an important visit from God, during which God revealed that Abram had reached his destination, a land that God was planning to give to him. Abram’s next altar, at Bethel, was solely for worship (12:8). He built another altar in Hebron (13:18). Abram built his last altar on Mount Moriah out of obedience, when God asked him to sacrifice his only son (22:9-14). Altars were a universal component of ancient worship. They were always raised and were most often used for animal sacrifices or to commemorate an act of God. Moses built an altar after his victory over the army of Amalek in Exodus 17:10-16. There were also altars in the Tabernacle and later the Temple, the Israelite centers of worship.

12:7-9 This was the first time God appeared to Abram, but not the last. God appeared to him again when he was 99 years old, changing Abram’s name to Abraham and promising him a son (Genesis 17:1-19). God appeared once more to Abraham at noon in an oak grove, announcing the coming of Abraham’s son in just a year’s time (Genesis 18:1-12). Two others, possibly angels, accompanied God on this visit. God, or His messengers, appeared to many people throughout Old Testament history.

BECAUSE GOD IS FAITHFUL

*I will trust Him to always
keep His promises.*

I will bless you . . . and you will be a blessing to others.

12:9 and he worshiped the LORD. ⁹Then Abram continued traveling south by stages toward the
 Gen 13:1; 20:1 Negev.

ABRAM AND SARAI IN EGYPT

12:10 ¹⁰At that time a severe famine struck the land of Canaan, forcing Abram to go down to
 Gen 26:1; 42:5 Egypt, where he lived as a foreigner. ¹¹As he was approaching the border of Egypt, Abram
12:11 said to his wife, Sarai, “Look, you are a very beautiful woman. ¹²When the Egyptians see
 Gen 29:17 you, they will say, ‘This is his wife. Let’s kill him; then we can have her!’ ¹³So please tell
12:12 them you are my sister. Then they will spare my life and treat me well because of their in-
 Gen 20:11 terest in you.”

¹⁴And sure enough, when Abram arrived in Egypt, everyone spoke of Sarai’s beauty.
¹⁵When the palace officials saw her, they sang her praises to Pharaoh, their king, and Sarai was taken into his palace. ¹⁶Then Pharaoh gave Abram many gifts because of her—sheep, goats, cattle, male and female donkeys, male and female servants, and camels.

12:16 ¹⁷But the LORD sent terrible plagues upon Pharaoh and his household because of Sarai,
 Gen 20:14; 24:35 Abram’s wife. ¹⁸So Pharaoh summoned Abram and accused him sharply. “What have you done to me?” he demanded. “Why didn’t you tell me she was your wife? ¹⁹Why did you say, ‘She is my sister,’ and allow me to take her as my wife? Now then, here is your wife. Take her and get out of here!” ²⁰Pharaoh ordered some of his men to escort them, and he sent Abram out of the country, along with his wife and all his possessions.

12:17 ¹Chr 16:21; Ps 105:14 Abram’s wife. ¹⁸So Pharaoh summoned Abram and accused him sharply. “What have you done to me?” he demanded. “Why didn’t you tell me she was your wife? ¹⁹Why did you say, ‘She is my sister,’ and allow me to take her as my wife? Now then, here is your wife. Take her and get out of here!” ²⁰Pharaoh ordered some of his men to escort them, and he sent Abram out of the country, along with his wife and all his possessions.

12:19
 Gen 20:5; 26:9

ABRAM AND LOT SEPARATE

13:1 **13** So Abram left Egypt and traveled north into the Negev, along with his wife and
 Gen 12:9 Lot and all that they owned. ²(Abram was very rich in livestock, silver, and gold.) ³From the Negev, they continued traveling by stages toward Bethel, and they pitched their tents between Bethel and Ai, where they had camped before. ⁴This was the same place where Abram had built the altar, and there he worshiped the LORD again.
13:5 Lot, who was traveling with Abram, had also become very wealthy with flocks of sheep and goats, herds of cattle, and many tents. ⁶But the land could not support both Abram
 Gen 12:5
13:6
 Gen 12:5; 36:7

12:10-16 Did Sarai have any choice in the matter? Her husband told her to pretend she was his sister. Then the king took her into his harem. It seems clear that Sarai didn’t have as much freedom as women do today. Women in the ancient world were often considered the property of their husbands; their worth was defined by their relationships with the men in their lives, as well as by their ability to work and bear children. While women today seek equal pay and equal rights, in the ancient world they were often treated more like servants than full members of a household.

His sovereignty by sending a plague upon the Egyptians, prompting Pharaoh to expel Abram, Sarai, and their household. Moses clearly included this episode in Genesis so that his readers, the people of Israel, would see that just as God had brought them out of Egypt amid plagues, He had done the same centuries earlier for their great forefather. Then, of course, God took Abram back to Canaan—and the people of Israel could rest assured that God would do the same for them, just as He had promised.



► SPIRITUAL WARFARE

12:10-20 **Consequences of disobedience.** Abram’s foolish plan for Sarai to present herself to the Egyptians as his sister was based on a false fear of persecution. Moreover, Abram’s action tempted both his wife and Pharaoh to sin. Fear and disbelief not only lead to a multitude of problems in our life but can also drag down others. When the Lord is our trust, we can say with the psalmist: “The LORD is for me, so I will have no fear. What can mere people do to me?” (Psalm 118:6). (**See Spiritual Warfare**> *Resisting Sin and Evil*> *Consequences*> *Of Disobedience*> *Tempt others to sin*, TopicGuide page A46.)

13:1-2 Both Abram and Lot were wealthy men. They lived at a time when the concept of currency was still in its infancy; the few universal standards included gold, silver, and cattle. Hence, Abram’s wealth could be understood wherever he traveled. In the Old Testament, wealth was also seen as a sign of God’s favor. Rich men such as King David, King Solomon, and Job were held in honor. In the New Testament, however, Jesus portrayed wealth as a potential obstacle to faith instead of a byproduct of it. Jesus warned the rich that their money could keep them from the Kingdom of Heaven (Matthew 19:23).

12:17 God stepped in to clean up the mess Abram had made for himself and others. Interestingly, God chose to exercise

and Lot with all their flocks and herds living so close together. ⁷So disputes broke out between the herdsmen of Abram and Lot. (At that time Canaanites and Perizzites were also living in the land.)

⁸Finally Abram said to Lot, “Let’s not allow this conflict to come between us or our herdsmen. After all, we are close relatives! ⁹The whole countryside is open to you. Take your choice of any section of the land you want, and we will separate. If you want the land to the left, then I’ll take the land on the right. If you prefer the land on the right, then I’ll go to the left.”

¹⁰Lot took a long look at the fertile plains of the Jordan Valley in the direction of Zoar. The whole area was well watered everywhere, like the garden of the LORD or the beautiful land of Egypt. (This was before the LORD destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah.) ¹¹Lot chose for himself the whole Jordan Valley to the east of them. He went there with his flocks and servants and parted company with his uncle Abram. ¹²So Abram settled in the land of Canaan, and Lot moved his tents to a place near Sodom and settled among the cities of the plain. ¹³But the people of this area were extremely wicked and constantly sinned against the LORD.

¹⁴After Lot had gone, the LORD said to Abram, “Look as far as you can see in every direction—north and south, east and west. ¹⁵I am giving all this land, as far as you can see, to you and your descendants* as a permanent possession. ¹⁶And I will give you so many descendants that, like the dust of the earth, they cannot be counted! ¹⁷Go and walk through the land in every direction, for I am giving it to you.”

¹⁸So Abram moved his camp to Hebron and settled near the oak grove belonging to Mamre. There he built another altar to the LORD.

ABRAM RESCUES LOT

14 About this time war broke out in the region. King Amraphel of Babylonia,* King Arioch of Ellasar, King Kedorlaomer of Elam, and King Tidal of Goim ²fought against King Bera of Sodom, King Birsha of Gomorrah, King Shinab of Admah, King Shem-ber of Zeboiim, and the king of Bela (also called Zoar).

13:15 Hebrew *seed*; also in 13:16. 14:1 Hebrew *Shinar*; also in 14:9.

13:7
Gen 12:6; 26:20

13:8
Prov 15:18; 20:3

13:9
Gen 20:15

13:10
Gen 2:8-10

13:13
Gen 18:20
Num 32:23
Isa 1:10; 3:9
2 Pet 2:8

13:14
Gen 28:14
Deut 3:27; 34:1-4

13:15
*Gal 3:16
Gen 12:2, 7; 15:18;
17:7-8

13:16
Num 23:10

13:17
Num 13:17-25

13:18
Gen 14:13; 18:1

14:1
Gen 10:10; 11:2

14:2
Gen 10:19; 13:10
Deut 29:23

HOLINESS

13:9 God provides by extending grace to us. Abram’s offer to let Lot take any section of the land demonstrated Abram’s giving character. Paul reminds us that God, too, has a giving character: “Since He did not spare even His own Son but gave Him up for us all, won’t He also give us everything else?” (Romans 8:32). What are you facing today? If God has given us Christ, then certainly He will “give us everything else” pertaining to life and godliness. Like Lot, who accepted Abram’s offer, you must take hold of God’s promises. (**See Holiness**> *Changed by God*> *God provides*, TopicGuide page A41.)

13:13 This description is reminiscent of the people on earth just before the Flood. Genesis 6:5 says that “the LORD observed the extent of human wickedness on the earth, and He saw that everything they thought or imagined was consistently and totally evil.” We don’t know how many years it took after the Flood for people to repopulate the earth and return to corruption, but we know that throughout human history, people have gone through times of turning away from and then turning back to God. The Israelites followed a consistent cycle of living in disobedience until they began to self-destruct, then turning back to God, then falling into disobedience again. The Old

Testament displays this cycle from the time of Noah to the time of the Israelite exile.

13:14-15 It was for this promise that Abram first left his homeland and all his relatives (12:1-7). The land became the greatest possession and hope of Abram’s descendants. Abram settled in it, as did his son Isaac and Isaac’s son, Israel. However, Israel left the land because of famine, and about 400 years passed before God brought the nation of Israel back to reclaim it. God’s promise to Abram laid the foundation for many hopes and many conflicts over the land of Israel even to this day.

13:16 When God first promised descendants to Abram, it may have seemed like an impossible dream because Abram and his wife were both beyond normal childbearing years. Their childlessness was probably a source of shame for Abram, for an inheritance—a child to carry on his legacy—was of the utmost importance to every man of the ancient Near East. But even though it seemed impossible, Abram believed God, and God fulfilled His promise. When the family of Abram’s grandson Israel (Jacob) entered Egypt during the famine, they numbered only 70. When they returned from Egypt to reclaim their land, they numbered more than 2 million. God’s promise to Abram had been fulfilled.

14:3
Num 34:3, 12
Deut 3:17
Josh 3:16

³This second group of kings joined forces in Siddim Valley (that is, the valley of the Dead Sea*). ⁴For twelve years they had been subject to King Kedorlaomer, but in the thirteenth year they rebelled against him.

14:5
Gen 15:20
Deut 2:10, 20; 3:11
Josh 13:19

⁵One year later Kedorlaomer and his allies arrived and defeated the Rephaites at Ashteroth-karnaim, the Zuzites at Ham, the Emites at Shaveh-kiriathaim, ⁶and the Horites at Mount Seir, as far as El-paran at the edge of the wilderness. ⁷Then they turned back and came to En-mishpat (now called Kadesh) and conquered all the territory of the Amalekites, and also the Amorites living in Hazazon-tamar.

14:7
Gen 16:14; 20:1
Num 13:26
Deut 1:4
2 Chr 20:2

⁸Then the rebel kings of Sodom, Gomorrah, Admah, Zeboiim, and Bela (also called Zoar) prepared for battle in the valley of the Dead Sea.* ⁹They fought against King Kedorlaomer of Elam, King Tidal of Goiim, King Amraphel of Babylo-
nia, and King Arioch of Ellasar—four kings against five. ¹⁰As it happened, the valley of the Dead Sea was filled with tar pits. And as the army of the kings of Sodom and Gomorrah fled, some fell into the tar pits, while the rest escaped into the mountains. ¹¹The victorious invaders then plundered Sodom and Gomorrah and headed for home, taking with them all the spoils of war and the food supplies.

14:12
Gen 11:27

¹²They also captured Lot—Abram’s nephew who lived in Sodom—and carried off everything he owned.

14:13
Gen 10:16; 13:18;
39:14

¹³But one of Lot’s men escaped and reported everything to Abram the Hebrew, who was living near the oak grove belonging to Mamre the Amorite. Mamre and his relatives, Eshcol and Aner, were Abram’s allies.

14:14
Gen 12:5
Deut 34:1

¹⁴When Abram heard that his nephew Lot had been captured, he mobilized the 318 trained men who had been born into his household. Then he pursued Kedorlaomer’s army until he caught up with them at Dan. ¹⁵There he divided his men and attacked during the night. Kedorlaomer’s army fled, but Abram chased them as far as Hobah, north of Damascus. ¹⁶Abram recovered all the goods that had been taken, and he brought back his nephew Lot with his possessions and all the women and other captives.

14:15
Gen 15:2

14:17
2 Sam 18:18

MELCHIZEDEK BLESSES ABRAM

14:18
Pss 76:2; 110:4
Heb 5:6, 10; 7:1

¹⁷After Abram returned from his victory over Kedorlaomer and all his allies, the king of Sodom went out to meet him in the valley of Shaveh (that is, the King’s Valley).

14:19
Gen 27:25; 48:9
Mark 10:16

¹⁸And Melchizedek, the king of Salem and a priest of God Most High,* brought Abram some bread and wine. ¹⁹Melchizedek blessed Abram with this blessing:

14:3 Hebrew *Salt Sea*. 14:8 Hebrew *Siddim Valley* (see 14:3); also in 14:10. 14:18 Hebrew *El-Elyon*; also in 14:19, 20, 22.

14:13 This is the first time the Bible uses the term *Hebrew*. The term may derive from the name *Eber*, one of Noah’s grandsons (Genesis 10:21). It may also be a corruption of the Egyptian word *shazu* or wanderer. Later, God changed the name of Abram’s grandson Jacob to *Israel*, and Israel’s descendants came to be called *Israelites*, or the nation of Israel (Genesis 46:8). Still later, after the nation had split into the kingdoms of Israel and Judah and both were sent into exile, the people began to be known as *Jews*, short for Judeans (Ezra 4:12). Today, these three terms—*Hebrews*, *Israelites*, and *Jews*—are used almost interchangeably to refer to the descendants of Abraham and Israel.

14:13-16 Abram heard of Lot’s capture while he was camped near Hebron in southern Canaan. Abram gathered 318 of his own men to pursue the invaders, and Aner, Eshcol, and Mamre, all brothers, helped him as allies in the conflict. Abram showed prowess as a military leader by attacking at night and from different directions. His good standing in the community

and his ability to build relationships with his neighbors also contributed to the victory. But the most important factor was the assistance of God, who enabled Abraham and his small band of amateur soldiers to overcome a powerful king and his mighty army.

14:18 Melchizedek was the king of Salem, the city that many believe became Jerusalem, and “a priest of God Most High.” Abram recognized Melchizedek as his spiritual superior by accepting his blessing. Little is known about Melchizedek; in fact, he is mentioned in only three places in the Bible. In Psalm 110:4, David compares the coming Christ to the ancient priest-king. The writer of the book of Hebrews describes Christ as superior to the first high priest, Aaron, just as Melchizedek was superior to Abraham. Some believe that Melchizedek was a rare pre-Incarnation appearance of Jesus Christ.

“Blessed be Abram by God Most High,
Creator of heaven and earth.

²⁰ And blessed be God Most High,
who has defeated your enemies for you.”

14:20
Gen 9:26; 24:27
*Heb 7:1-2

Then Abram gave Melchizedek a tenth of all the goods he had recovered.

²¹The king of Sodom said to Abram, “Give back my people who were captured. But you may keep for yourself all the goods you have recovered.”

²²Abram replied to the king of Sodom, “I solemnly swear to the LORD, God Most High, Creator of heaven and earth, ²³that I will not take so much as a single thread or sandal thong from what belongs to you. Otherwise you might say, ‘I am the one who made Abram rich.’ ²⁴I will accept only what my young warriors have already eaten, and I request that you give a fair share of the goods to my allies—Aner, Eshcol, and Mamre.”

14:22
Gen 1:1

14:23
2 Kgs 5:16

14:24
Gen 14:13

14:19-20 Melchizedek had come to faith in God in the midst of a culture that worshiped many gods. That faith may have come from a direct encounter with God such as Abram experienced in Genesis 12:1-4 or Moses experienced in Exodus 3:2-4. On the other hand, Melchizedek may have been taught about God through oral tradition passed down from Noah. However he arrived at his belief system, Melchizedek clearly believed that there was one true, living God who had nothing to do with the system of idolatry that was rampant in Canaan. Melchizedek blessed this one true God and invoked a blessing from Him for Abram.

14:20 This is the first record of a payment of a tithe (tenth). However, the concept of tithing already was widespread. A tenth was often considered the appropriate amount to pay as tribute to a ruler or to give for a religious obligation. Ancient Babylon, Persia, Arabia, Egypt, Rome, and China all practiced this custom. Once the nation of Israel was established, God gave guidelines to Moses for the combination of tithes and offerings to support their state and religious affairs (Deuteronomy 14:22-29). The obligation of God’s people to obey God’s financial laws was such that the prophet Malachi could declare that failure to tithe was the equivalent of robbing God (Malachi 3:8-10).



► **GOD**

14:20 God’s names: God Most High. This is the first appearance in the Bible of the name *God Most High (El-Elyon)*. It signifies God’s kingship over the cosmos. The Bible shows that throughout history, God Most High reduces kings and raises them up again. He demonstrates absolute power over all earthly authorities. Clearly, God Most High can do as He pleases in your life. Acknowledge God Most High and praise Him for His supreme power. (**See God**> *God’s Names*> *God*, TopicGuide page A18.)

14:21-24 The king of Sodom offered to let Abram keep *all* of the plunder that Kederlaomer and his army had taken from Sodom. But Abram refused to take *any* of it, except for the provisions his men had already eaten (though he did ask that his Canaanite allies be given a share). Abram said he had sworn an oath to take none of the plunder because he did not wish for the king of the wicked city of Sodom to be able to say he had contributed to Abram’s prosperity. Abram’s desire to dissociate himself from the wickedness of the Canaanites stands in strong contrast to Lot’s willingness to live near and even in Sodom.

FOR THE NEXT GOD IS SOVEREIGN FEATURE SEE PAGE 321.

BECAUSE GOD IS SOVEREIGN

I will joyfully submit to His will.

Blessed be Abram by God Most High, Creator of heaven and earth.



WITH A SINGLE UTTERANCE, God spoke the universe into being—a universe that astronomers estimate contains more than 100 billion galaxies. But all of the power contained within this universe—the combined energy of every star, storm, wind, ocean wave, and atom—does not equal even a fraction of God’s almighty power. He is not restrained or inhibited by any of His created beings. People and nations are powerless when confronted by His might.

For some people, the idea that God is all-powerful is little comfort, because they are skeptical about His willingness to get intimately involved in their affairs. They assume we must live by luck or by good breaks produced by our own hard work and cleverness.

However, when we look at the universe, we see order and design. Everything has its place, its purpose. God’s Word confirms that He has a design for this world and for every person in it: “I have a plan for the whole earth, a hand of judgment upon all the nations” (Isaiah 14:26).

Such unlimited power would be terrifying if God were a tyrant who meted out His power indiscriminately. Fortunately, the Bible says God acts out of love and righteousness. Simply put, God cares for us. No matter what you might be facing, God can help you. Nothing is too hard for Him. There is no need too great for Him to meet. There is no problem too complicated for Him to solve. There is no foe too strong for Him to conquer. There is no prayer too difficult for Him to answer.

Some of us may question why God does not answer our prayers when and in the way that we ask. But God is not a genie or Santa Claus; He does not give us everything we want just the way we want it. We must remember that, in addition to His power, God has perfect knowledge. He alone knows everything, so He knows what we need far better than we do.

No matter what happens anywhere in the world at any moment, God is in control. This is a comforting truth. Would you like to live in a world where everyone could do whatever he or she wanted? Can you imagine the chaos? While it might seem at times that this world is chaotic and out of control, God knows what is in the future. He is not the author of evil and suffering, and neither is He responsible for the consequences of humankind’s sins.

God is seeking faithful servants to be channels of His incredible power. The Bible is full of instances in which God did extraordinary miracles through His servants. Although we feel weak at times, through the power of the name of Jesus Christ and through faith in our almighty and powerful God, we can stand firm and say no to temptation. We can quit any habit or addiction. We can speak up to tell the truth at any time.

If we really believe that God is all-powerful, we will no longer walk in fear and unbelief. Like Abram, we will place our faith in God—not necessarily *great faith* in God, but faith in a *great God*, who is omnipotent. In turn, He will lead us into a life full of adventure and purpose. There is no better way to live!