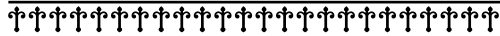
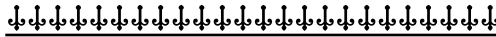


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Genesis

I N T R O D U C T I O N

Title

The first phrase in the Hebrew text of 1:1 is *bereshith* (“in [the] beginning”), which is also the Hebrew title of the book (books in ancient times customarily were named after their first word or two). The English title, *Genesis*, is Greek in origin and comes from the word *geneseos*, which appears in the pre-Christian Greek translation (Septuagint) of 2:4; 5:1. Depending on its context, the word can mean “birth,” “genealogy,” or “history of origin.” In both its Hebrew and Greek forms, then, the traditional title of *Genesis* appropriately describes its contents, since it is primarily a book of beginnings.

Background

 Chs. 1–38 reflect a great deal of what we know from other sources about ancient Mesopotamian life and culture. Creation, genealogies, destructive floods, geography and map-making, construction techniques, migrations of peoples, sale and purchase of land, legal customs and procedures, sheep-herding and cattle-raising — all these subjects and many others were matters of vital concern to the peoples of Mesopotamia during this time. They were also of interest to the individuals, families and tribes of whom we read in the first 38 chapters of *Genesis*. The author appears to locate Eden, humankind’s first home, in or near Mesopotamia; the tower of Babel was built there; Abram was born there; Isaac took a wife from there; and Jacob lived there for 20 years. Although these patriarchs settled in Canaan, their original homeland was Mesopotamia.

The closest ancient literary parallels to Ge 1–38 also come from Mesopotamia. *Enuma elish*, the story of the god Marduk’s rise to supremacy in the Babylonian pantheon, is similar in some respects (though thoroughly mythical and polytheistic) to the Ge 1 creation account. Some of the features of certain king lists from Sumer bear striking resemblance to the genealogy in Ge 5. The 11th tablet of the *Gilgamesh* epic is quite similar in outline to the flood narrative in Ge 6–8. Several of the major events of Ge 1–8 are narrated in the same order as similar events in the *Atrahasis* epic.

A Quick Look

Author:

Moses

Audience:

God’s chosen people, the Israelites

Date:


Between 1446 and 1406 B.C.

Theme:

Genesis is a book of beginnings that introduces central themes of the Bible, such as creation and redemption.

In fact, the latter features the same basic motif of creation-alienation-flood as the Biblical account. Clay tablets found in 1974 at the ancient (c. 2500–2300 B.C.) site of Ebla (modern Tell Mardikh) in northern Syria may also contain some intriguing parallels (see chart, p. xxii).


Two other important sets of documents demonstrate the reflection of Mesopotamia in the first 38 chapters of Genesis. From the Mari letters (see chart, p. xxiii), dating from the patriarchal period, we learn that the names of the patriarchs (including especially Abram, Jacob and Job) were typical of that time. The letters also clearly illustrate the freedom of travel that was possible between various parts of the Amorite world in which the patriarchs lived. The Nuzi tablets (see chart, p. xxiii), though a few centuries later than the patriarchal period, shed light on patriarchal customs, which tended to survive virtually intact for many centuries. The inheritance right of an adopted household member or slave (see 15:1–4), the obligation of a barren wife to furnish her husband with sons through a servant girl (see 16:2–4), strictures against expelling such a servant girl and her son (see 21:10–11), the authority of oral statements in ancient Near Eastern law, such as the deathbed bequest (see 27:1–4, 22–23, 33)—these and other legal customs, social contracts and provisions are graphically illustrated in Mesopotamian documents.

 As Ge 1–38 is Mesopotamian in character and background, so chs. 39–50 reflect Egyptian influence—though in not quite so direct a way. Examples of such influence are: Egyptian grape cultivation (40:9–11), the riverside scene (ch. 41), Egypt as Canaan’s breadbasket (ch. 42), Canaan as the source of numerous products for Egyptian consumption (ch. 43), Egyptian religious and social customs (the end of chs. 43; 46), Egyptian administrative procedures (ch. 47), Egyptian funerary practices (ch. 50) and several Egyptian words and names used throughout these chapters. The closest specific literary parallel from Egypt is the *Tale of Two Brothers*, which bears some resemblance to the story of Joseph and Potiphar’s wife (ch. 39). Egyptian autobiographical narratives (such as the *Story of Sinuhe* and the *Report of Wenamun*) and certain historical legends offer more general literary parallels.

Author and Date of Writing

Historically, Jews and Christians alike have held that Moses was the author/compiler of the first five books of the OT. These books, known also as the Pentateuch (meaning “five-volumed book”), were referred to in Jewish tradition as the five fifths of the law (of Moses). The Bible itself suggests Mosaic authorship of Genesis, since Ac 15:1 refers to circumcision as “the custom taught by Moses,” an allusion to Ge 17. However, a certain amount of later editorial updating does appear to be indicated (see, e.g., notes on 14:14; 36:31; 47:11).

The historical period during which Moses lived seems to be fixed with a fair degree of accuracy by 1 Kings. We are told that “the fourth year of Solomon’s reign over Israel” was the same as “the four hundred and eightieth year after the Israelites had come out of Egypt” (1Ki 6:1). Since the former was c. 966 B.C., the latter—and thus the date of the exodus—was c. 1446 (assuming that the 480 in 1Ki 6:1 is to be taken literally; see Introduction to Judges: Background). The 40-year period of Israel’s wanderings in the desert, which lasted from c. 1446 to c. 1406, would have been the most likely time for Moses to write the bulk of what is today known as the Pentateuch.

 During the last three centuries many interpreters have claimed to find in the Pentateuch four underlying sources. The presumed documents, allegedly dating from the tenth to the fifth centuries B.C., are called J (for Jahweh/Yahweh, the personal OT name for God), E (for Elohim, a generic name for God), D (for Deuteronomic) and P (for Priestly). Each of these documents is claimed to have its own characteristics and its own theology, which often contradicts that of the other documents. The Pentateuch is thus depicted as a patchwork of stories, poems and laws. However, this view is not supported by conclusive evidence, and intensive archaeological and literary research has tended to undercut many of the arguments used to challenge Mosaic authorship.

Theological Theme and Message

Genesis speaks of beginnings—of the heavens and the earth, of light and darkness, of seas and skies, of land and vegetation, of sun and moon and stars, of sea and air and land animals,

of human beings (made in God's own image, the climax of his creative activity), of marriage and family, of society and civilization, of sin and redemption. The list could go on and on. A key word in Genesis is "account," which also serves to divide the book into its ten major parts (see Literary Features and Literary Outline) and which includes such concepts as birth, genealogy and history.

The book of Genesis is foundational to the understanding of the rest of the Bible. Its message is rich and complex, and listing its main elements gives a succinct outline of the Biblical message as a whole. It is supremely a book that speaks about relationships, highlighting those between God and his creation, between God and humankind, and between human beings. It is thoroughly monotheistic, taking for granted that there is only one God worthy of the name and opposing the ideas that there are many gods (polytheism), that there is no god at all (atheism) and that everything is divine (pantheism). It clearly teaches that the one true God is sovereign over all that exists (i.e., his entire creation), and that he often exercises his unlimited freedom to overturn human customs, traditions and plans. It introduces us to the way in which God initiates and makes covenants with his chosen people, pledging his love and faithfulness to them and calling them to promise theirs to him. It establishes sacrifice as the substitution of life for life (ch. 22). It gives us the first hint of God's provision for redemption from the forces of evil (compare 3:15 with Ro 16:17–20) and contains the oldest and most profound statement concerning the significance of faith (15:6; see note there). More than half of Heb 11—a NT list of the faithful—refers to characters in Genesis.

Literary Features

The message of a book is often enhanced by its literary structure and characteristics. Genesis is divided into ten main sections, each beginning with the word "account" (see 2:4; 5:1; 6:9; 10:1; 11:10; 11:27; 25:12; 25:19; 36:1—repeated for emphasis at 36:9—and 37:2). The first five sections can be grouped together and, along with the introduction to the book as a whole (1:1—2:3), can be appropriately called "primeval history" (1:1—11:26). This introduction to the main story sketches the period from Adam to Abraham and tells about the ways of God with the human race as a whole. The last five sections constitute a much longer (but equally unified) account, and relate the story of God's dealings with the ancestors of his chosen people Israel (Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and Joseph and their families)—a section often called "patriarchal history" (11:27—50:26). This section is in turn composed of three narrative cycles (Abraham-Isaac, 11:27—25:11; Isaac-Jacob, 25:19—35:29; 37:1; Jacob-Joseph, 37:2—50:26), interspersed by the genealogies of Ishmael (25:12–18) and Esau (ch. 36).



The narrative frequently concentrates on the life of a later son in preference to the firstborn: Seth over Cain, Shem over Japheth (but see NIV text note on 10:21), Isaac over Ishmael, Jacob over Esau, Judah and Joseph over their brothers, and Ephraim over Manasseh. Such emphasis on divinely chosen men and their families is perhaps the most obvious literary and theological characteristic of the book of Genesis as a whole. It strikingly underscores the fact that the people of God are not the product of natural human developments, but are the result of God's sovereign and gracious intrusion in human history. He brings out of the fallen human race a new humanity consecrated to himself, called and destined to be the people of his kingdom and the channel of his blessing to the whole earth.

Numbers with symbolic significance figure prominently in Genesis. The number ten, in addition to being the number of sections into which Genesis is divided, is also the number of names appearing in the genealogies of chs. 5 and 11 (see note on 5:5). The number seven also occurs frequently. The Hebrew text of 1:1 consists of exactly seven words and that of 1:2 of exactly 14 (twice seven). There are seven days of creation, seven names in the genealogy of ch. 4 (see note on 4:17–18; see also 4:15,24; 5:31), various sevens in the flood story, 70 descendants of Noah's sons (ch. 10), a sevenfold promise to Abram (12:2–3), seven years of abundance and then seven of

Genesis is supremely a book that speaks about relationships, highlighting those between God and his creation, between God and humankind, and between human beings.

famine in Egypt (ch. 41), and 70 descendants of Jacob (ch. 46). Other significant numbers, such as 12 and 40, are used with similar frequency.

The book of Genesis is basically prose narrative, punctuated here and there by brief poems (the longest is the so-called Blessing of Jacob in 49:2–27). Much of the prose has a lyrical quality and uses the full range of figures of speech and other devices that characterize the world's finest epic literature. Vertical and horizontal parallelism between the two sets of three days in the creation account (see note on 1:1); the ebb and flow of sin and judgment in ch. 3 (the serpent and woman and man sin successively; then God questions them in reverse order; then he judges them in the original order); the powerful monotony of "and then he died" at the end of paragraphs in ch. 5; the climactic hinge effect of the phrase "But God remembered Noah" (8:1) at the midpoint of the flood story; the hourglass structure of the account of the tower of Babel in 11:1–9 (narrative in vv. 1–2, 8–9; discourse in vv. 3–4, 6–7; v. 5 acting as transition); the macabre pun in 40:19 (see 40:13); the alternation between brief accounts about firstborn sons and lengthy accounts about younger sons—these and numerous other literary devices add interest to the narrative and provide interpretive signals to which the reader should pay close attention.

It is no coincidence that many of the subjects and themes of the first three chapters of Genesis are reflected in the last three chapters of Revelation. We can only marvel at the superintending influence of the Lord himself, who assures us that "all Scripture is God-breathed" (2Ti 3:16) and that its authors "spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit" (2Pe 1:21).

Outlines

Literary Outline:

- I. Introduction (1:1 — 2:3)
- II. Body (2:4 — 50:26)
 - A. "The account of the heavens and the earth" (2:4 — 4:26)
 - B. "The written account of Adam's line" (5:1 — 6:8)
 - C. "The account of Noah" (6:9 — 9:29)
 - D. "The account of Shem, Ham and Japheth" (10:1 — 11:9)
 - E. "The account of Shem" (11:10 — 26)
 - F. "The account of Terah" (11:27 — 25:11)
 - G. "The account of Abraham's son Ishmael" (25:12 — 18)
 - H. "The account of Abraham's son Isaac" (25:19 — 35:29)
 - I. "The account of Esau" (36:1 — 37:1)
 - J. "The account of Jacob" (37:2 — 50:26)

Thematic Outline:

- I. Creation (1:1 — 2:3)
- II. Primeval History (2:4 — 11:26)
 - A. Adam and Eve in Eden (2:4–25)
 - B. The Fall and Its Consequences (ch. 3)
 - C. Sin's Progression (4:1–16)
 - D. The Genealogy of Cain (4:17–26)
 - E. The Genealogy of Seth (ch. 5)
 - F. God's Response to Human Depravity (6:1–8)
 - G. The Great Flood (6:9 — 9:29)
 1. Preparing for the flood (6:9 — 7:10)
 2. Judgment and redemption (7:11 — 8:19)
 - a. The rising of the waters (7:11–24)
 - b. The receding of the waters (8:1–19)
 3. The flood's aftermath (8:20 — 9:29)
 - a. A new promise (8:20–22)
 - b. Renewed benediction and new ordinances (9:1–7)

-
- c. A new relationship (9:8–17)
 - d. A new temptation (9:18–23)
 - e. A final word (9:24–29)
 - H. The Spread of the Nations (10:1 — 11:26)
 - 1. The diffusion of nations (ch. 10)
 - 2. The confusion of languages (11:1–9)
 - 3. The first Semitic genealogy (11:10–26)
 - III. Patriarchal History (11:27 — 50:26)
 - A. The Life of Abraham (11:27 — 25:11)
 - 1. Abraham's background (11:27–32)
 - 2. Abraham's call and response (chs. 12–14)
 - 3. Abraham's faith and God's covenant (chs. 15–22)
 - 4. Abraham's final acts (23:1 — 25:11)
 - B. The Descendants of Ishmael (25:12–18)
 - C. The Life of Jacob (25:19 — 35:29)
 - 1. Jacob at home (25:19 — 27:46)
 - 2. Jacob abroad (chs. 28–30)
 - 3. Jacob at home again (chs. 31–35)
 - D. The Descendants of Esau (36:1 — 37:1)
 - E. The Life of Joseph (37:2 — 50:26)
 - 1. Joseph's career (37:2 — 41:57)
 - 2. Jacob's migration (chs. 42–47)
 - 3. Jacob's final days (48:1 — 50:14)
 - 4. Joseph's final days (50:15–26)

The Beginning

1 In the beginning^a God created^b the heavens^c and the earth.^d ²Now the earth was^a formless^e and empty,^f darkness was over the surface of the deep,^g and the Spirit of God^h was hoveringⁱ over the waters.

³And God said,^j “Let there be light,” and there was light.^k ⁴God saw that the light was good,^l and he separated the light from the darkness.^m ⁵God calledⁿ the light “day,” and the darkness he called “night.”^o And there was evening, and there was morning^p—the first day.

⁶And God said,^q “Let there be an expanse^r between the waters^s to separate water from water.” ⁷So God made the expanse and separated the water under


1:1 ^aPs 102:25; Pr 8:23; Isa 40:21; 41:4,26; Jn 1:1-2
^bver 21, 27;
^cGe 2:3 ¹ver 6;
^dNe 9:6; Job 9:8;
^e37:18; Ps 96:5;
^f104:2; 115:15;
^g121:2; 136:5;
^hIsa 40:22; 42:5;
ⁱ51:13; Jer 10:12;
^j51:15 ⁴Ge 14:19;
^k2Ki 19:15;
^lNe 9:6; Job 38:4;
^mPs 90:2; 136:6;
ⁿ146:6; Isa 37:16;
^o40:28; 42:5;
^p44:24; 45:12, 18;
^qJer 27:5; 32:17;
^rAc 14:15; 17:24;
^sEph 3:9; Col 1:16;
^tHeb 3:4; 11:3;
^uRev 4:11; 10:6
1:2 ¹Isa 23:1;
²24:10; 27:10;
³32:14; 34:11
⁴Isa 45:18;
⁵Jer 4:23 ⁶Ge 8:2;

the expanse from the water above it.^u And it was so.^v ⁸God called^v the expanse “sky.”^w And there was evening, and there was morning^x—the second day.

⁹And God said, “Let the water under the sky be gathered to one place,^y and let dry ground^z appear.” And it was so.^a ¹⁰God called^b the dry ground “land,” and the gathered waters^c he called

^a ² Or possibly *became*

Job 7:12; 26:8; 38:9; Ps 36:6; 42:7; 104:6; 107:24; Pr 30:4 ^bGe 2:7; Job 33:4; Ps 104:30; Isa 32:15 ^cDt 32:11; Isa 31:5 **1:3** ¹ver 6; Ps 33:6,9; 148:5; Heb 11:3 ²Co 4:6; 1Jn 1:5-7 **1:4** ¹ver 10, 12, 18, 21, 25, 31; Ps 104:31; 119:68; Jer 31:35 ²ver 14; Ex 10:21-23; Job 26:10; 38:19; Ps 18:28; 104:20; 105:28; Isa 42:16; 45:7 **1:5** ¹ver 8, 10; Ge 2:19, 23 ²Ps 74:16 ³ver 8, 13, 19, 23, 31 **1:6** ¹5 ver 3 ²5 ver 1; Isa 44:24; 2Pe 3:5 ³ver 9; Ps 24:2; 136:6 **1:7** ¹Ge 7:11; Job 26:10; 38:8-11, 16; Ps 68:33; 148:4; Pr 8:28 ²ver 9, 11, 15, 24 **1:8** ¹5 ver 5 ²Job 9:8; 37:18; Ps 19:1; 104:2; Isa 40:22; 44:24; 45:12; Jer 10:12; Zec 12:1 ³5 ver 5 **1:9** ¹Job 38:8-11; Ps 33:7; 104:6-9; Pr 8:29; Jer 5:22; 2Pe 3:5 ²Ps 95:5; Jnh 1:9; Hag 2:6 ³5 ver 7 **1:10** ¹5 ver 5 ²Ps 33:7


 **1:1—2:3** In the ancient Near East, most of the peoples had myths relating how the world came to be. Prevalent in those myths were accounts of how one of the gods triumphed over a fierce and powerful beast that represented disorder, then fashioned the ordered world that people knew, and finally was proclaimed by the other gods to be the divine “king” over the world he had created—a position ever subject to the challenge of the forces of disorder.

Over against all those pagan myths, the author of Genesis taught a radically new doctrine of creation: The one and only true God did not have to overcome a mighty cosmic champion of chaos but simply by a series of his royal creation decrees called into being the ordered world, the visible kingdom that those decrees continue to uphold and govern. The author teaches this doctrine of creation in the form of a narrative that recounts the story of God’s creative acts. The author narrates those acts from the perspective of one who was an eyewitness to events in God’s royal council chamber, where he issues his creative decrees. For a similar narrative perspective see Job 1:6–12; 2:1–6. (For the different narrative perspective of what follows see note on 2:4—4:26.)

1:1 A summary statement introducing the six days of creative activity (see note on 2:1). The truth of this majestic verse was joyfully affirmed by poet (Ps 102:25) and prophet (Isa 40:21). *In the beginning God.* The Bible always assumes, and never argues, God’s existence. Although everything else had a beginning, God has always been (Ps 90:2). *In the beginning.* Jn 1:1–10, which stresses the work of Christ in creation, opens with the same phrase. *God created.* “God” renders the common Hebrew noun *Elohim*. It is plural but the verb is singular, a normal usage in the OT when reference is to the one true God. This use of the plural expresses intensification rather than number and has been called the plural of majesty, or of potentiality. In the OT the Hebrew verb for “create” is used only of divine, never of human, activity. *the heavens and the earth.* “All things” (Isa 44:24). That God created everything is also taught in Ecc 11:5; Jer 10:16; Jn 1:3; Col 1:16; Heb 1:2. The positive, life-oriented teaching of v. 1 is beautifully summarized in Isa 45:18.

1:2 *earth.* The focus of this account. *formless and empty.* The phrase, which appears elsewhere only in Jer 4:23, gives structure to the rest of the chapter (see note on v. 11). God’s “separating” and “gathering” on days 1–3 gave form, and his “making” and “filling” on days 4–6 removed the emptiness. *darkness... the waters.* Completes the picture of a world awaiting God’s light-giving, order-making and life-creating word. *and. Or “but.”* The awesome (and, for ancient people, fearful) picture of the original state of the visible creation is relieved


by the majestic announcement that the mighty Spirit of God hovers over creation. The announcement anticipates God’s creative words that follow. *Spirit of God.* He was active in creation, and his creative power continues today (see Job 33:4; Ps 104:30). *hovering over.* Like an eagle that hovers over its young when they are learning to fly (see Dt 32:11; cf. Isa 31:5).

 **1:3** *God said.* Merely by issuing his royal decree, God brought all things into being (Ps 33:6,9; 148:5; Heb 11:3). *Let there be light.* God’s first creative word called forth light in the midst of the primeval darkness. Light is necessary for making God’s creative works visible and life possible. In the OT it is also symbolic of life and blessing (see 2Sa 22:29; Job 3:20; 30:26; 33:30; Ps 49:19; 56:13; 97:11; 112:4; Isa 53:11; 58:8,10; 59:9; 60:1,3). Paul uses this word to illustrate God’s re-creating work in sin-darkened hearts (2Co 4:6).

1:4 Everything God created is good (see vv. 10,12,18,21,25); in fact, the conclusion declares it to be “very good” (v. 31). The creation, as fashioned and ordered by God, had no lingering traces of disorder and no dark and threatening forces arrayed against God or people. Even darkness and the deep were given benevolent functions in a world fashioned to bless and sustain life (see Ps 104:19–26; 127:2—see also NIV text note there).

1:5 *called.* See vv. 8,10. In the ancient Near East, for a king to name people or things was an act of claiming dominion over them (see 17:5,15; 41:45; 2Ki 23:34; 24:17; Da 1:7). In this creation account, God named the great cosmic realities of day, night, sky, land and seas. He left to human beings the naming of the creatures they were given dominion over (see vv. 26,28; see also 2:19 and note). *first day.* Some say that the creation days were 24-hour days, others that they were indefinite periods.

1:6 *expanse.* The atmosphere, or “sky” (v. 8), as seen from the earth. “Hard as a mirror” (Job 37:18) and “like a canopy” (Isa 40:22) are among the many pictorial phrases used to describe it.

 **1:7** *And it was so.* The only possible outcome, whether stated (vv. 9,11,15,24,30) or implied, to God’s “Let there be” (see Ps 33:6,9 and note on 33:6).

1:9 *one place.* A picturesque way of referring to the “seas” (v. 10) that surround the dry land on all sides and into which the waters of the lakes and rivers flow. The earth was “formed out of water” (2Pe 3:5) and “founded... upon the seas” (Ps 24:2), and the waters are not to cross the boundaries set for them (Ps 104:7–9; Jer 5:22).

1:10 *land.* Elsewhere usually rendered “earth” (as in vv. 15,17,20,22,26,28–30). In the Bible “earth” refers not to a

“seas.”^d And God saw that it was good.^e

¹¹Then God said, “Let the land produce vegetation: ^f seed-bearing plants and trees on the land that bear fruit with seed in it, according to their various kinds.”^g And it was so.^h ¹²The land produced vegetation: plants bearing seed according to their kindsⁱ and trees bearing fruit with seed in it according to their kinds. And God saw that it was good.^j ¹³And there was evening, and there was morning^k—the third day.

¹⁴And God said, “Let there be lights^l in the expanse of the sky to separate the day from the night,^m and let them serve as signsⁿ to mark seasons^o and days and years,^p ¹⁵and let them be lights in the expanse of the sky to give light on the earth.” And it was so.^q ¹⁶God made two great lights—the greater light^r to govern^s the day and the lesser light to govern^t the night.^u He also made the stars.^v ¹⁷God set them in the expanse of the sky to give light on the earth,¹⁸ to govern the day and the night,^w and to separate light from darkness. And God saw that it was good.^x ¹⁹And there was evening, and there was morning^y—the fourth day.

²⁰And God said, “Let the water teem with living creatures,^z and let birds fly

1:10 ^d Job 38:8; Ps 90:2; 95:5
^e S ver 4
1:11 ^f Ps 65:9-13; 104:14 ^g ver 12, 21, 24, 25; Ge 2:5; 6:20; 7:14; Lev 11:14, 19, 22; Dt 14:13, 18; 1Co 15:38
^h S ver 7
1:12 ⁱ S ver 11
^j S ver 4
1:13 ^k S ver 5
1:14 ^l Ps 74:16; 136:7 ^m S ver 4
ⁿ Jer 10:2
^o Ps 104:19
^p Ge 8:22;
Jer 31:35-36; 33:20, 25
1:15 ^q S ver 7
1:16 ^r Dt 17:3; Job 31:26; Jer 43:13; Eze 8:16
^s Ps 136:8
^t Ps 136:9
^u Job 38:33;
Ps 74:16; 104:19;
Jer 31:35;
Jas 1:17
^v Dt 4:19; Job 9:9; 38:7, 31-32; Ps 8:3; 33:6; Ecc 12:2; Isa 40:26; Jer 8:2; Am 5:8
1:18
^w Jer 33:20, 25
^x S ver 4
1:19 ^y S ver 5
1:20 ^z Ps 146:6
^a Ge 2:19
1:21 ^b S ver 1

above the earth across the expanse of the sky.”^a ²¹So God created^b the great creatures of the sea^c and every living and moving thing with which the water teems,^d according to their kinds, and every winged bird according to its kind.^e And God saw that it was good.^f ²²God blessed them and said, “Be fruitful and increase in number and fill the water in the seas, and let the birds increase on the earth.”^g ²³And there was evening, and there was morning^h—the fifth day.

²⁴And God said, “Let the land produce living creaturesⁱ according to their kinds:^j livestock, creatures that move along the ground, and wild animals, each according to its kind.” And it was so.^k ²⁵God made the wild animals^l according to their kinds, the livestock according to their kinds, and all the creatures that move along the ground according to their kinds.^m And God saw that it was good.ⁿ

²⁶Then God said, “Let us^o make man^p in our image,^q in our likeness,^r and let them rule^s over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air,^t over

^a Job 3:8; 7:12; Ps 74:13; 148:7; Isa 27:1; Eze 32:2 ^b Ps 104:25-26
^c S ver 11 ^d S ver 4 **1:22** ^e ver 28; Ge 8:17; 9:1, 7, 19; 47:27; Lev 26:9; Eze 36:11 **1:23** ^f S ver 5 **1:24** ^g Ge 2:19 ^h S ver 11 ⁱ S ver 7 **1:25**
^j Ge 7:21-22; Jer 27:5 ^k S ver 11 ^l S ver 4 **1:26** ^m Ge 3:5, 22, 11:7; Ps 100:3; Isa 6:8 ⁿ Isa 45:18 ^o ver 27; Ge 5:3; 9:6; Ps 8:5; 82:6; 89:6; 1Co 11:7; 2Co 4:4; Col 1:15; 3:10; Jas 3:9 ^p Ac 17:28-29 ^q Ge 9:2; Ps 8:6-8 ^r Ps 88

planet in our solar system but to the land realm that is humankind’s native habitat—in distinction from the “heavens” above and the “seas” below (see Ex 20:4).

1:11 *God said.* This phrase is used twice on the third day (vv. 9, 11) and three times (vv. 24, 26, 29) on the sixth day. These two days are climactic, as the following structure of ch. 1 reveals (see note on v. 2 regarding “formless and empty”).

Days of forming	Days of filling
1. “light” (v. 3)	4. “lights” (v. 14)
2. “water under the expanse ... water above it” (v. 7)	5. “every living and moving thing with which the water teems ... every winged bird” (v. 21)
3a. “dry ground” (v. 9)	6a ₁ . “livestock, creatures that move along the ground, and wild animals” (v. 24) 6a ₂ . “man” (v. 26)
3b. “vegetation” (v. 11)	6b. “every green plant for food” (v. 30)


Both the horizontal and vertical relationships between the days demonstrate the literary structure of the chapter and stress the orderliness and symmetry of God’s creative activity. *kinds.* See vv. 12, 21, 24–25. Both creation and reproduction are orderly.


1:14 *serve as signs.* In the ways mentioned here, not in any astronomical or other such sense (see Ps 104:19; 136:7–9).


1:16 *two great lights.* The words “sun” and “moon” seem to be

avoided deliberately here, since both were used as proper names for the pagan deities associated with these heavenly bodies. They are light-givers to be appreciated, not powers to be feared, because the one true God made them (see Isa 40:26). Since the emphasis is on the greater light and lesser light, the stars seem to be mentioned almost as an afterthought. But Ps 136:9 indicates that the stars help the moon “govern the night” govern. The great Creator-King assigns subordinate regulating roles to certain of his creatures (see vv. 26, 28).

1:17–18 The three main functions of the heavenly bodies.

 **1:21** *creatures of the sea.* The Hebrew root underlying this phrase was used in Canaanite mythology to refer to a dreaded sea monster, which OT poets and prophets often employed as a metaphor for a powerful hostile force or empire (see Job 7:12; Ps 74:13; Isa 27:1; 51:9; Jer 51:34; Eze 29:3; 32:2 and notes; cf. notes on Job 3:8; 9:13; Ps 32:6; 87:4; 89:10). In Genesis, however, “the great creatures of the sea” are portrayed not as enemies to be feared but as part of God’s good creation to be appreciated (cf. Ps 104:26 and note).

 **1:22** *Be fruitful and increase in number.* God’s benediction on living things that inhabit the water and that fly in the air. By his blessing they flourish and fill both realms with life (see note on v. 28). God’s rule over his created realm promotes and blesses life.

 **1:26** *us ... our ... our.* God speaks as the Creator-King, announcing his crowning work to the members of his heavenly court (see 3:22; 11:7; Isa 6:8; see also 1Ki 22:19–23; Job 15:8; Jer 23:18). *man, Hebrew ‘adam.* This noun (like the earlier Canaanite *‘adam*) is a generic term, which, depending on context, is used to refer to a single human being or to a collectivity of human beings (whether males or females or both; see v. 27) or to humankind as a collective whole. It has no plural form. *image ... likeness.* No distinction

the livestock, over all the earth,^a and over all the creatures that move along the ground.”

²⁷So God created^u man^v in his own image,^w in the image of God^x he created him; male and female^y he created them.^z

²⁸God blessed them and said to them,^a “Be fruitful and increase in number;^b fill the earth^c and subdue it. Rule over^d the fish of the sea and the birds of the air and over every living creature that moves on the ground.^e”

²⁹Then God said, “I give you every seed-bearing plant on the face of the whole earth and every tree that has fruit with seed in it. They will be yours for food.^f ³⁰And to all the beasts of the earth and all the birds of the air and all the creatures that move on the ground—everything that has the breath of life^g in it—I give every green plant for food.^h” And it was so.

³¹God saw all that he had made,ⁱ and it was very good.^j And there was

1:27 ^u5 ver 1
^vGe 2:7;
 Ps 103:14;
 119:73 ^w5 ver 26
^xGe 5:1 ^yGe 5:2;
 Mt 19:4*;
 Mk 10:6*;
 Gal 3:28 ^zDt 4:32
1:28 ^aGe 33:5;
 Jos 24:3;
 Ps 113:9; 127:3, 5
^b5 Ge 17:6
^c5 ver 22; Ge 6:1;
 Ac 17:26 ^dver 26;
 Ps 115:16
^ePs 8:6-8
1:29 ^fGe 9:3;
 Dt 12:15;
 Ps 104:14;
 1Ti 4:3
1:30 ^gGe 2:7;
 7:22 ^hJob 38:41;
 Ps 78:25;
 104:14, 27; 111:5;
 136:25; 145:15;
 147:9
1:31 ⁱPs 104:24;
 136:5; Pr 3:19;
 Jer 10:12
^j5 ver 4; 1Ti 4:4

^k5 ver 5
2:1 ^lDt 4:19;
 17:3; 2Ki 17:16;
 21:3; Ps 104:2;
 Isa 44:24; 45:12;

evening, and there was morning^k—the sixth day.

2 Thus the heavens and the earth were completed in all their vast array.^l

²By the seventh day^m God had finished the work he had been doing; so on the seventh day he rested^b from all his work.ⁿ ³And God blessed the seventh day and made it holy,^o because on it he rested^p from all the work of creating^q that he had done.

Adam and Eve

⁴This is the account^r of the heavens and the earth when they were created.^s


When the LORD God made the earth and the heavens—⁵and no shrub of the

^a 26 Hebrew; Syriac *all the wild animals*
^b 2 Or *ceased*; also in verse 3

48:13; 51:13 **2:2** ^mDt 5:14 ⁿver 2-3; Ex 20:11; 31:17; 34:21; Jn 5:17; Heb 4:4* **2:3** ^oEx 16:23; 20:10; 23:12; 31:15; 35:2; Lev 23:3; Ne 9:14; Isa 58:13; Jer 17:22 ^pPs 95:11; Heb 4:11-11 ^q5 Ge 1:1 **2:4** ^rGe 5:1; 6:9; 10:1; 11:10, 27; 25:12, 19; 36:1, 9; 37:2 ^sGe 1:1; Job 38:8-11

should be made between “image” and “likeness,” which are synonyms in both the OT (5:1; 9:6) and the NT (1Co 11:7; Col 3:10; Jas 3:9). Since human beings are made in God’s image, they are all worthy of honor and respect; they are neither to be murdered (9:6) nor cursed (Jas 3:9). “Image” includes such characteristics as “righteousness and holiness” (Eph 4:24) and “knowledge” (Col 3:10). Believers are to be “conformed to the likeness” of Christ (Ro 8:29) and will someday be “like him” (1Jn 3:2). *and let them rule.* Probably to be understood in the sense “so that they may rule.” Within the realm of his visible creation God places a creature capable of acting as his agent in relationship to other creatures (1) to represent God’s claim to kingship over his creation and (2) to bring its full potential to realization to the praise of the Creator’s glory. (In the ancient Near East, kings marked their conquest of lands by setting up images of themselves in the conquered territories as a sign of their authority and ruling presence. An especially noteworthy example is the life-size statue of the ninth-century B.C. Hadad-Yith’i, ruler of Gozan, found at Tell Fekheriyeh in northeastern Syria in 1979. An Aramaic inscription on the statue identifies it as the “image” and “likeness” of the ruler, using the Aramaic cognates of the Hebrew words.) For a celebration of humanity’s exalted role (under God) in the creation see Ps 8:5–8 and notes. For the ultimate embodiment of humanity’s dominion over the creation see Heb 2:5–9 and notes. *rule.* Humans are the climax of God’s creative activity, and God has crowned them “with glory and honor” and made them rulers over the rest of his creation (Ps 8:5–8). Since they were created in the image of the divine King, delegated sovereignty (kingship) was bestowed on them.

1:27 This highly significant verse is the first occurrence of poetry in the OT (which is about 40 percent poetry). *created.* The word is used here three times to describe the central divine act of the sixth day (see note on v. 1). *male and female.* Alike they bear the image of God, and together they share in the divine benediction that follows.

 **1:28** *God blessed them ... fill ... subdue ... Rule.* Human-kind goes forth from the hands of the Creator under his divine benediction—flourishing, filling the earth with their kind, and exercising dominion over the other earthly creatures (see v. 26; 2:15; Ps 8:6–8 and notes). Human culture,

accordingly, is not anti-God (though fallen human beings often have turned their efforts into proud rebellion against God). Rather, it is the activity of those who bear the image of their Creator and share, as God’s servants, in his kingly rule. As God’s representatives in the creaturely realm, they are stewards of God’s creatures. They are not to exploit, waste or despoil them, but to care for them and to use them in the service of God and humankind.

1:29–30 People and animals seem to be portrayed as originally vegetarian (see 9:3 and note).


1:31 *very good.* See note on v. 4. *the sixth day.* Perhaps to stress the finality and importance of this day, in the Hebrew text the definite article is first used here in regard to the creation days. Another possibility is that the purpose for the lack of the article with days 1–5 is to signal an order that is more literary/logical than strictly chronological (see note on v. 11).

2:1 A summary statement concluding the six days of creative activity (see note on 1:1).

2:2 *finished ... rested.* God rested on the seventh day, not because he was weary, but because nothing formless or empty remained (see NIV text note). His creative work was completed—and it was totally effective, absolutely perfect, “very good” (1:31). It did not have to be repeated, repaired or revised, and the Creator rested to commemorate it.

2:3 *God blessed the seventh day and made it holy ... rested.* Although the word “Sabbath” is not used here, the Hebrew verb translated “rested” (v. 2) is the origin of the noun “Sabbath.” Ex 20:11 quotes the first half of v. 3, but substitutes “Sabbath” for “seventh,” clearly equating the two. The first record of obligatory Sabbath observance is of Israel on her way from Egypt to Sinai (see Ex 16:5, 23 and notes), but according to Ne 9:13–14 the Sabbath was not an official covenant obligation until the giving of the law at Mount Sinai. *holy.* See notes on Ex 3:5; Lev 11:44; Ro 1:7; 1Co 1:2.

2:4—4:26 The beginning of human history, in distinction from the account of creation in 1:1—2:3 (see note there).

 **2:4** *account.* The Hebrew word for “account” occurs ten times in Genesis— at the beginning of each main section (see Introduction: Literary Features). *the heavens and the earth.* See note on 1:1. The phrase “the account of the heavens and the earth” introduces the story of what happened

field had yet appeared on the earth^a and no plant of the field had yet sprung up,^t for the LORD God had not sent rain on the earth^u and there was no man to work the ground,⁶ but streams^b came up from the earth and watered the whole surface of the ground — ⁷the LORD God formed^v the man^{cw} from the dust^x of the ground^y and breathed into his nostrils the breath^z of life,^a and the man became a living being.^b

⁸Now the LORD God had planted a garden in the east, in Eden;^c and there he put the man he had formed. ⁹And the LORD God made all kinds of trees grow out of the ground — trees^d that were pleasing to the eye and good for food. In the middle of the garden were the tree of life^e and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.^f

¹⁰A river^g watering the garden flowed from Eden;^h from there it was separated into four headwaters. ¹¹The name of the first is the Pishon; it winds through the entire land of Havilah,ⁱ where there is gold. ¹²(The gold of that land is good; aromatic resin^j and onyx are also there.) ¹³The name of the second river is the Gihon; it winds through the entire land of Cush.^e ¹⁴The name of the third river is the Tigris;^k

2:5¹ Ge 1:11
^u Job 38:28;
Ps 65:9-10;
Jer 10:13
2:7¹ Isa 29:16;
43:1, 21; 44:2
⁵ S Ge 1:27
⁶ Ge 3:19; 18:27;
Job 4:19; 10:9;
17:16; 34:15;
Ps 90:3; Ecc 3:20;
12:7¹ Ge 3:23;
4:2; Ps 103:14;
Jer 18:6;
1Co 15:47
² S Ge 1:2;
Job 27:3; Isa 2:22
⁵ S Ge 1:30;
Isa 42:5; Ac 17:25
¹ Job 12:10; 32:8;
33:4; 34:14;
Ps 104:29;
Isa 57:16;
Eze 37:5;
1Co 15:45*
2:8¹ ver 10, 15;
Ge 3:23, 24; 4:16;
13:10; Isa 51:3;
Eze 28:13;
31:9, 16; 36:35;
Joel 2:3
2:9¹ Eze 31:8
¹ Ge 3:22, 24;
Pr 3:18; 11:30;
S Rev 2:7
¹ Eze 47:12
2:10¹ Nu 24:6;
Ps 46:4; Eze 47:5
¹ S ver 8
2:11¹ Ge 10:7;
25:18

it runs along the east side of Asshur. And the fourth river is the Euphrates.^l

¹⁵The LORD God took the man and put him in the Garden of Eden^m to work it and take care of it. ¹⁶And the LORD God commanded the man, “You are free to eat from any tree in the garden;ⁿ ¹⁷but you must not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil,^o for when you eat of it you will surely die.”^p

¹⁸The LORD God said, “It is not good for the man to be alone. I will make a helper suitable for him.”^q

¹⁹Now the LORD God had formed out of the ground all the beasts of the field^r and all the birds of the air.^s He brought them to the man to see what he would name them; and whatever the man called^t each living creature,^u that was its name. ²⁰So the man

^a 5 Or land; also in verse 6 ^b 6 Or mist
^c 7 The Hebrew for man (*adam*) sounds like and may be related to the Hebrew for ground (*adamah*); it is also the name *Adam* (see Gen. 2:20). ^d 12 Or good; pearls
^e 13 Possibly southeast Mesopotamia

2:12¹ Nu 11:7 **2:14**^k Ge 41:1; Da 10:4¹ Ge 15:18; 31:21; Ex 23:31; Nu 22:5; Dt 1:7; 11:24; Jos 1:4; 2Sa 8:3; 1Ki 4:21; 2Ki 23:29; 24:7; 1Ch 5:9; 18:3; 2Ch 35:20; Jer 13:4; 46:2; 51:63; S Rev 9:14
2:15^m S ver 8 **2:16**ⁿ Ge 3:1-2 **2:17**^o Ge 3:11, 17^p Ge 3:1, 3; 5:5; 9:29; Dt 30:15, 19; Jer 42:16; Eze 3:18; S Ro 5:12; S 6:23 **2:18**^q Pr 31:11; 1Co 11:9; 1Ti 2:13 **2:19**^r Ps 8:7^s S Ge 1:20^t S Ge 1:5^u Ge 1:24

to God's creation. The blight of sin and rebellion brought a threefold curse that darkens the story of Adam and Eve in God's good and beautiful garden: (1) on Satan (3:14); (2) on the ground, because of Adam's sin (3:17); and (3) on Cain (4:11). *LORD God*. “LORD” (Hebrew *YHWH*, “Yahweh”) is the personal and covenant name of God (see note on Ex 3:15), emphasizing his role as Israel's Redeemer and covenant Lord (see note on Ex 6:6), while “God” (Hebrew *Elohim*) is a general term. Both names occur thousands of times in the OT, and often, as here, they appear together — clearly indicating that they refer to the one and only God.

2:7 *formed*. The Hebrew for this verb commonly referred to the work of a potter (see Isa 45:9; Jer 18:6), who fashions vessels from clay (see Job 33:6). “Make” (1:26), “create” (1:27) and “form” are used to describe God's creation of both people and animals (v. 19; 1:21, 25). *breath of life*. Humans and animals alike have the breath of life in them (see 1:30; Job 33:4). *the man became a living being*. The Hebrew phrase here translated “living being” is translated “living creatures” in 1:20, 24. The words of 2:7 therefore imply that people, at least physically, have affinity with the animals. The great difference is that people are made “in the image of God” (1:27) and have an absolutely unique relation both to God as his servants and to the other creatures as God's stewards over them (Ps 8:5–8).

2:8 *in the east*. From the standpoint of the author of Genesis. The garden was thought of as being near where the Tigris and Euphrates rivers (see v. 14) meet, in what is today southern Iraq. *Eden*. A name synonymous with “paradise” and related to either (1) a Hebrew word meaning “bliss” or “delight” or (2) a Mesopotamian word meaning “a plain.” Perhaps the author subtly suggests both.

2:9 *tree of life*. Signifying and giving life, without death, to those who eat its fruit (see 3:22; Rev 2:7; 22:2, 14). *tree of the knowledge of good and evil*. Signifying and giving knowledge of good and evil, leading ultimately to death, to those who eat its fruit (v. 17; 3:3). “Knowledge

of good and evil” refers to moral knowledge or ethical discernment (see Dt 1:39; Isa 7:15–16). Adam and Eve possessed both life and moral discernment as they came from the hand of God. Their access to the fruit of the tree of life showed that God's will and intention for them was life. Ancient pagans believed that the gods intended for human beings always to be mortal. In eating the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, Adam and Eve sought a creaturely source of discernment in order to be morally independent of God.

2:11 *Pishon*. Location unknown. The Hebrew word may be a common noun meaning “gusher.” *Havilah*. Location unknown; perhaps mentioned again in 10:29. It is probably to be distinguished from the Havilah of 10:7 (see note there), which was in Arabia.

2:13 *Gihon*. Location unknown. The Hebrew word may be a common noun meaning “spurter.” Both the Pishon and the Gihon may have been streams in Lower Mesopotamia near the Persian Gulf. The names were those current when Genesis was written.

2:14 *Asshur*. An ancient capital city of Assyria (“Assyria” and “Asshur” are related words). *Euphrates*. Often called in Hebrew simply “the River” because of its size and importance (see note on 15:18).

2:15 *work ... take care*. See notes on 1:26, 28. The man is now charged to govern the earth responsibly under God's sovereignty.

2:16 *any tree*. Including the tree of life (v. 9).

2:17 *surely die*. Despite the serpent's denial (3:4), disobeying God ultimately results in death.

2:18–25 The only full account of the creation of woman in ancient Near Eastern literature.

2:18 *not good ... to be alone*. Without female companionship and a partner in reproduction, the man could not fully realize his humanity.

2:19 *name them*. His first act of dominion over the creatures around him (see note on 1:5).

gave names to all the livestock, the birds of the air and all the beasts of the field.

But for Adam^a no suitable helper^v was found. ²¹So the LORD God caused the man to fall into a deep sleep;^w and while he was sleeping, he took one of the man's ribs^b and closed up the place with flesh. ²²Then the LORD God made a woman from the rib^{c,x} he had taken out of the man, and he brought her to the man.

²³The man said,

“This is now bone of my bones
and flesh of my flesh;^y
she shall be called^z ‘woman,’^d
for she was taken out of man.”^a

²⁴For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united^b to his wife, and they will become one flesh.^c

²⁵The man and his wife were both naked,^d and they felt no shame.

The Fall of Man

3 Now the serpent^e was more crafty than any of the wild animals the LORD God had made. He said to the woman, “Did God really say, ‘You must not eat from any tree in the garden?’^f”

²The woman said to the serpent, “We may eat fruit from the trees in the garden,^g ³but God did say, ‘You must not eat fruit from the tree that is in the middle of the garden, and you must not touch it, or you will die.’”^h

⁴“You will not surely die,” the serpent

2:20 ^vGe 3:20; 4:1
2:21 ^wGe 15:12; 15a 26:12; Job 33:15
2:22
^x1Co 11:8, 9, 12; 1Ti 2:13
2:23 ^yGe 29:14; Eph 5:28-30
^z5 Ge 1:5
^a1Co 11:8
2:24 ^bMal 2:15
^cMt 19:5*; Mk 10:7-8*; 1Co 6:16*; Eph 5:31*
2:25
^dGe 3:7, 10-11; Isa 47:3; La 1:8
3:1 ^eJob 1:7; 2:2; 2Co 11:3; Rev 12:9; 20:2
^f5 Ge 2:17
3:2 ^gGe 2:16
3:3 ^h5 Ge 2:17

3:4 ⁱ5 Jn 8:44; 2Co 11:3
3:5 ^j5 Ge 1:26; 14:18, 19; Ps 7:8; Isa 14:14; Eze 28:2
3:6 ^kJas 1:14-15; 1Jn 2:16
^lNu 30:7-8; Jer 44:15, 19, 24
^m2Co 11:3; 1Ti 2:14
3:7 ⁿGe 2:25
^over 21
3:8 ^pLev 26:12; Dt 23:14
^qJob 13:16; 23:7; 31:33; 34:22, 23; Ps 5:5; 139:7-12; Isa 29:15; Jer 16:17; 23:24; 49:10;

said to the woman.ⁱ ⁵“For God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God,^j knowing good and evil.”

⁶When the woman saw that the fruit of the tree was good for food and pleasing to the eye, and also desirable^k for gaining wisdom, she took some and ate it. She also gave some to her husband,^l who was with her, and he ate it.^m ⁷Then the eyes of both of them were opened, and they realized they were naked;ⁿ so they sewed fig leaves together and made coverings for themselves.^o

⁸Then the man and his wife heard the sound of the LORD God as he was walking^p in the garden in the cool of the day, and they hid^q from the LORD God among the trees of the garden. ⁹But the LORD God called to the man, “Where are you?”^r


¹⁰He answered, “I heard you in the garden, and I was afraid^s because I was naked;^t so I hid.”


¹¹And he said, “Who told you that you were naked?^u Have you eaten from the tree that I commanded you not to eat from?”^v


¹²The man said, “The woman you put here with me^w — she gave me some fruit from the tree, and I ate it.”



^a 20 Or the man ^b 21 Or took part of the man's side
^c 22 Or part ^d 23 The Hebrew for woman sounds like the Hebrew for man

Rev 6:15-16 **3:9** ^eGe 4:9; 16:8; 18:9; 1Ki 19:9, 13 **3:10** ^eEx 19:16; 20:18; Dt 5:5; 15a 12:18 ^fGe 2:25 **3:11** ^fGe 2:25 ^gGe 2:17
3:12 ^gGe 2:22



 **2:24** *leave his father and mother.* Instead of remaining under the protective custody of his parents a man leaves them and, with his wife, establishes a new family unit. *united ... one flesh.* The divine intention for husband and wife was monogamy. Together they were to form an inseparable union as that between parent and child. As parents and their children are the same “flesh and blood” (see 29:14 and note), so husband and wife should be bound together as “one flesh” as long as they live — of which sexual union is an expression (cf. 1Co 6:16 and note).


 **2:25** *naked ... no shame.* Freedom from shame, signifying moral innocence, would soon be lost as a result of sin (see 3:7).


 **3:1 – 24** The disobedience of Adam and Eve, and God's response that affects the whole course of human history (cf. Ro 5:12 – 21 and notes).


  **3:1** *serpent.* The great deceiver clothed himself as a serpent, one of God's good creatures. He insinuated a falsehood and portrayed rebellion as clever, but essentially innocent, self-interest. Therefore “the devil, or Satan,” is later referred to as “that ancient serpent” (Rev 12:9; 20:2). *crafty.* The Hebrew words for “crafty” and “naked” are almost identical. Though naked, the man and his wife felt no shame (2:25). The craftiness of the serpent led them to sin, and they then became ashamed of their nakedness (see v. 7). *Did God really say ...?* The question and the response changed the course of human history. By causing the woman to doubt God's word, Satan brought evil into the world. Here the deceiver undertook to alienate people from God. Elsewhere he acts as an accuser (see NIV text note



on Job 1:6), to alienate God from people (see Job 1 – 2; Zec 3:1 and note).

  **3:3** *and you must not touch it.* The woman adds to God's word (2:17), distorting his directive and demonstrating that the serpent's subtle challenge was working its poison.

 **3:4** *You will not surely die.* The blatant denial of a specific divine pronouncement (see 2:17 and note).


 **3:5** *God knows.* Satan accuses God of having unworthy motives. In Job 1:9 – 11 (see note on 1:9); 2:4 – 5 he accuses righteous Job of the same. *your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God.* The statement is only half true. Their eyes were opened, to be sure (see v. 7), but the result was quite different from what the serpent had promised. *knowing good and evil.* See note on 2:9.

 **3:6** *good for food ... pleasing to the eye ... desirable for gaining wisdom.* Three aspects of temptation. Cf. Lk 4:3,5,9; 1Jn 2:16.

  **3:7** *they realized they were naked.* No longer innocent like children, they had a new awareness of themselves and of each other in their nakedness, which now produced in them a sense of shame. *they ... made coverings.* Their own feeble and futile attempt to hide their shame, which only God could cover (see note on v. 21).

3:8 *garden.* Once a place of joy and of fellowship with God, it became a place of fear and of hiding from God.

3:9 *Where are you?* A rhetorical question (see 4:9).

 **3:12** *The woman you put here ... gave me.* The man blames God and the woman — anyone but himself — for his sin.

¹³Then the LORD God said to the woman, “What is this you have done?”

The woman said, “The serpent deceived me,^x and I ate.”

¹⁴So the LORD God said to the serpent, “Because you have done this,

“Cursed^y are you above all the livestock

and all the wild animals!

You will crawl on your belly

and you will eat dust^z

all the days of your life.

¹⁵And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring^{aa} and hers;^b

he will crush^b your head,^c

and you will strike his heel.”

¹⁶To the woman he said,

“I will greatly increase your pains in childbearing;

with pain you will give birth to

children.^d

Your desire will be for your husband, and he will rule over you.^e”

¹⁷To Adam he said, “Because you listened to your wife and ate from the tree about which I commanded you, ‘You must not eat of it,’^f

“Cursed^g is the ground^h because of you; through painful toilⁱ you will eat of it all the days of your life.^j

3:13 ^xRo 7:11; 2Co 11:3; 1Ti 2:14

3:14

^yDt 28:15-20

^zPs 72:9;

^{aa}Isa 49:23; 65:25;

^{bb}Mic 7:17

3:15 ^{cc}Jn 8:44;

^{dd}Ac 13:10; 1Jn 3:8

^{ee}Ge 16:11;

^{ff}Jdg 13:5;

^{gg}Isa 7:14; 8:3;

^{hh}9:6; Mt 1:23;

ⁱⁱLk 1:31; Gal 4:4;

^{jj}Rev 12:17

^{kk}Ro 16:20;

^{ll}Heb 2:14

3:16 ^{mm}Ps 48:5-6;

ⁿⁿIsa 13:8; 21:3;

^{oo}26:17; Jer 4:31;

^{pp}6:24; Mic 4:9;

^{qq}1Ti 2:15

^{rr}1Co 11:3;

^{ss}Eph 5:22

3:17 ^{tt}5 Ge 2:17

^{uu}9 Ge 5:29;

^{vv}Nu 35:33;

^{ww}Ps 106:39;

^{xx}Isa 24:5; Jer 3:1;

^{yy}Ro 8:20-22

^{zz}h Ge 6:13;

^{aaa}8:21; Isa 54:9

^{bbb}1 Ge 29:32; 31:42;

^{ccc}Ex 3:7; Ps 66:11;

^{ddd}127:2; Ecc 1:13

^{eee}1 Ge 47:9;

^{fff}Job 5:7; 7:1;

^{ggg}14:1; Ecc 2:23;

^{hhh}Jer 20:18

3:18 ⁱⁱⁱJob 31:40;

^{jjj}Isa 5:6; Heb 6:8

^{kkk}1 Ps 104:14

3:19 ^{lll}Ps 104:23

^{mmm}1 Ge 14:18;

ⁿⁿⁿDt 8:3, 9; 23:4;

^{ooo}Ru 1:6; 2:14;

¹⁸It will produce thorns and thistles^k for you, and you will eat the plants of the field.^l

¹⁹By the sweat of your brow^m you will eat your foodⁿ until you return to the ground, since from it you were taken; for dust you are and to dust you will return.”^o

²⁰Adam^c named his wife Eve,^{d p} because she would become the mother of all the living.

²¹The LORD God made garments of skin for Adam and his wife and clothed them.^q

²²And the LORD God said, “The man has now become like one of us,^r knowing good and evil. He must not be allowed to reach out his hand and take also from the tree of life^s and eat, and live forever.”²³So the LORD God banished him from the Garden of Eden^t to work the ground^u from which he had been taken. ²⁴After he drove the man out, he placed on the east side^e of the Garden of Eden^v cherubim^w and a flaming sword^x flashing back and forth to guard the way to the tree of life.^y

^a 15 Or seed ^b 15 Or strike ^c 20 Or The man

^d 20 Eve probably means living. ^e 24 Or placed in front

2Th 3:10 ^sS Ge 2:7; S Job 7:21; S Ps 146:4; 1Co 15:47; Heb 9:27

3:20 ^sPs Ge 2:20; 2Co 11:3; 1Ti 2:13 **3:21** ^sS ver 7 **3:22** ^sS Ge 1:26

^sS Ge 2:9; S Rev 2:7 **3:23** ^sS Ge 2:8 ^sS Ge 2:7 **3:24** ^sS Ge 2:8

^w Ex 25:18-22; 1Sa 4:4; 2Sa 6:2; 22:11; 1Ki 6:27; 8:6; 2Ki 19:15; 2Ch 5:8;

Ps 18:10; 80:1; 99:1; Isa 37:16; Eze 10:1; 28:16 ^x Job 40:19; Ps 104:4;

Isa 27:1 ^yS Ge 2:9



3:13 *The serpent deceived me.* The woman blames the serpent rather than herself.



3:14 *Cursed.* The serpent, the woman and the man were all judged, but only the serpent and the ground were cursed—the latter because of Adam (v. 17). *dust.* The symbol of death itself (v. 19) would be the serpent’s food.



3:15 *he will crush your head, and you will strike his heel.*

The antagonism between people and snakes is used to symbolize the outcome of the titanic struggle between God and the evil one, a struggle played out in the hearts and history of humankind. The offspring of the woman would eventually crush the serpent’s head, a promise fulfilled in Christ’s victory over Satan—a victory in which all believers will share (see Ro 16:20 and note).



3:16 *pains in childbearing.* Her judgment fell on what was most uniquely hers as a woman and as a “suitable helper” (2:20) for her husband. Similarly, the man’s “painful toil” (v. 17) was a judgment on him as worker of the soil. Some believe that the Hebrew root underlying “pains,” “pain” and “painful toil” should perhaps be understood here in the sense of burdensome labor (see Pr 5:10, “toil”; 14:23, “hard work”). *give birth to children.* As a sign of grace in the midst of judgment, the original benediction (see 1:28 and note) is not withdrawn. *desire . . . rule.* Her sexual attraction to the man, and his headship over her, will become intimate aspects of her life in which she experiences trouble and anguish rather than unalloyed joy and blessing.

3:17–19 *you will eat.* Though he would have to work hard and long (judgment), the man would be able to produce food that would sustain life (grace).

3:18 Cultivating the ground and sowing the seed of desired

crops create a situation in which certain native plants become weeds—of which “thorns and thistles” are the most troublesome.



3:19 *return to the ground . . . to dust you will return.*

Adam’s labor would not be able to stave off death. The origin of his body (see 2:7) and the source of his food (see v. 17) became a symbol of his eventual death.



3:20 *named his wife.* Not an act of claiming dominion

over her (see notes on 1:5; 2:19) but of memorializing her significance for him and the human race. *Eve.* See NIV text note.

3:21 *clothed them.* God graciously provided Adam and Eve with more effective clothing (cf. v. 7) to cover their shame (cf. v. 10).



3:22 *us.* See note on 1:26. *knowing good and evil.* In a

terribly perverted way, Satan’s prediction (v. 5) came true. *live forever.* Sin, which always results in death (Ps 37:1–2; Pr 11:19; Eze 33:8–9; Ro 6:23; Jas 1:14–15), cuts the sinner off from God’s gift of eternal life.

3:23 *banished him from the Garden . . . to work the ground.* Before Adam sinned, he had worked in a beautiful and fruitful garden (2:15). Now he would have to till undeveloped land and struggle with the curse of thorns and thistles (v. 18).



3:24 *cherubim.* Probably similar to the statues of

winged figures that stood guard at the entrances to palaces and temples in ancient Mesopotamia (see note on Ex 25:18). *to guard.* The sword of God’s judgment stood between fallen humanity and God’s garden. The reason is given in v. 22. Only through God’s redemption in Christ do people have access again to the tree of life (see Rev 2:7; 22:2, 14,19).

Cain and Abel

4 Adam^a lay with his wife^z Eve,^a and she became pregnant and gave birth to Cain.^b She said, “With the help of the LORD I have brought forth^c a man.”² Later she gave birth to his brother Abel.^c

Now Abel kept flocks, and Cain worked the soil.^d ³In the course of time Cain brought some of the fruits of the soil as an offering^e to the LORD.^f ⁴But Abel brought fat portions^g from some of the firstborn of his flock.^h The LORD looked with favor on Abel and his offering,ⁱ ⁵but on Cain and his offering he did not look with favor. So Cain was very angry, and his face was downcast.

⁶Then the LORD said to Cain, “Why are you angry?^j Why is your face downcast? ⁷If you do what is right, will you not be accepted? But if you do not do what is right, sin is crouching at your door;^k it desires to have you, but you must master it.^l”

⁸Now Cain said to his brother Abel, “Let’s go out to the field.”^d And while they were in the field, Cain attacked his brother Abel and killed him.^m

⁹Then the LORD said to Cain, “Where is your brother Abel?”ⁿ

4:1 ²ver 17, 25
³S Ge 2:20
⁴Heb 11:4;
1Jn 3:12;
Jude 1:11
4:2 ²Mt 23:35;
Lk 11:51;
Heb 11:4; 12:24
⁴S Ge 2:7
4:3 ⁴Lev 2:1-2;
Isa 43:23;
Jer 41:5
¹Nu 18:12
4:4 ⁹Lev 3:16;
2Ch 29:35
⁸Ex 13:2, 12;
Dt 15:19
¹Heb 11:4
4:6 ¹Jnh 4:4
4:7 ⁷Ge 44:16;
Nu 32:23;
Isa 59:12
¹Job 11:15;
22:27; Ps 27:3;
46:2; 5 Ro 6:16
4:8 ⁸Mt 23:35;
Lk 11:51;
1Jn 3:12;
Jude 1:11
4:9 ⁹S Ge 3:9

⁵S Jn 8:44
4:10 ⁹Ge 9:5;
37:20, 26;
Ex 21:12;
Nu 35:33;
Dt 17:9;
2Sa 4:11;
Job 16:18; 24:2;

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

¹⁰The LORD said, “What have you done? Listen! Your brother’s blood cries out to me from the ground.^p ¹¹Now you are under a curse^q and driven from the ground, which opened its mouth to receive your brother’s blood from your hand. ¹²When you work the ground, it will no longer yield its crops for you.^r You will be a restless wanderer^s on the earth.^t”


¹³Cain said to the LORD, “My punishment is more than I can bear. ¹⁴Today you are driving me from the land, and I will be hidden from your presence;^u I will be a restless wanderer on the earth,^v and whoever finds me will kill me.”^w


¹⁵But the LORD said to him, “Not so^e; if anyone kills Cain^x, he will suffer ven-


^a 1 Or *The man* ^b 1 Cain sounds like the Hebrew for *brought forth* or *acquired*. ^c 1 Or *have acquired*
^d 8 Samaritan Pentateuch, Septuagint, Vulgate and Syriac; Masoretic Text does not have “Let’s go out to the field.” ^e 15 Septuagint, Vulgate and Syriac; Hebrew *Very well*


31:38; Ps 9:12; 106:38; Heb 12:24; Rev 6:9-10 **4:11** ⁴Dt 11:28; 2Ki 2:24
4:12 ⁴Dt 28:15-24 ⁵Ps 37:25; 59:15; 109:10 ⁶ver 14 **4:14** ⁴2Ki 17:18;
Ps 51:11; 139:7-12; Jer 7:15; 52:3 ⁷ver 12; Dt 28:64-67 ⁸Ge 9:6;
Ex 21:12, 14; Lev 24:17; Nu 35:19, 21, 27, 33; 1Ki 2:32; 2Ki 11:16
4:15 ⁵Eze 9:4, 6

4:1 – 26 How human sin progressed from murder of a brother in the second generation to arrogant assertion of independence from God and claim of total self-sufficiency in the seventh generation.


 **4:1** *With the help of the LORD.* Eve acknowledged that God is the ultimate source of life (see Ac 17:25).


 **4:2** *Abel.* The name means “breath” or “temporary” or “meaningless” (the translation of the same basic Hebrew word that is in Ecc 1:2 [see note there]; 12:8) and hints at the shortness of Abel’s life.


 **4:3 – 4** *Cain brought some of the fruits ... But Abel brought fat portions from some of the firstborn of his flock.* The contrast is not between an offering of plant life and an offering of animal life, but between a careless, thoughtless offering and a choice, generous offering (cf. Lev 3:16 and note). Motivation and heart attitude are all-important, and God looked with favor on Abel and his offering because of Abel’s faith (Heb 11:4). *firstborn.* Indicative of the recognition that all the productivity of the flock is from the Lord and all of it belongs to him.


 **4:5** *angry.* God did not look with favor on Cain and his offering, and Cain (whose motivation and attitude were bad from the outset) reacted predictably.

4:7 *sin is crouching at your door.* The Hebrew word for “crouching” is the same as an ancient Babylonian word referring to an evil demon crouching at the door of a building to threaten the people inside. Sin may thus be pictured here as just such a demon, waiting to pounce on Cain. He may already have been plotting his brother’s murder. *it desires to have you.* In Hebrew, the same expression as that for “Your desire will be for [your husband]” in 3:16 (see also SS 7:10).


 **4:8** *attacked his brother ... and killed him.* The first murder was especially monstrous because it was committed with deliberate deceit (“Let’s go out to the field”), against a brother (see vv. 9 – 11; 1Jn 3:12) and against a good man (Mt 23:35; Heb 11:4) — a striking illustration of the awful consequences of the fall.

 **4:9** *Where ... ?* A rhetorical question (see 3:9). *I don’t know.* An outright lie. *Am I my brother’s keeper?* Demonstrating callous indifference — all too common through the whole course of human history.


 **4:10** *Your brother’s blood cries out.* “Righteous Abel” (Mt 23:35), in one sense a “prophet” (Lk 11:50 – 51), “still speaks, even though he is dead” (Heb 11:4), for his spilled blood continues to cry out to God against all those who do violence to others. But the blood of Christ “speaks a better word” (Heb 12:24).

 **4:11** *curse.* The ground had been cursed because of human sin (3:17), and now Cain himself is cursed. Formerly he had worked the ground, and it had produced life for him (vv. 2 – 3). Now the ground, soaked with his brother’s blood, would no longer yield its produce for him (v. 12).

4:12 *wanderer.* Estranged from other people and finding even the ground inhospitable, he became a wanderer in the land of wandering (see NIV text note on v. 16).

 **4:13** *My punishment is more than I can bear.* Confronted with his crime and its resulting curse, Cain responded not with remorse but with self-pity. His sin was virtually uninterrupted: impiety (v. 3), anger (v. 5), jealousy, deception and murder (v. 8), falsehood (v. 9) and self-seeking (v. 13). The final result was alienation from God himself (vv. 14, 16).

4:14 – 15 *whoever ... anyone ... no one.* These words seem to imply the presence of substantial numbers of people outside Cain’s immediate family, but perhaps they only anticipate the future rapid growth of the race. Alternatively, Cain’s reference to himself was inclusive of his whole family line, which stood under judgment with him (as did the family line of Adam). Note that Cain built a city (v. 17) and that his descendant Lamech boasted of avenging (defending) himself (vv. 23 – 24).

 **4:15** *mark.* A warning sign to protect him from an avenger. For the time being, the life of the murderer is spared (but see 6:7; 9:6). For a possible parallel see Eze 9:4.

4:16 *Nod.* Location unknown. See NIV text note.

geance^y seven times over.^z Then the LORD put a mark on Cain so that no one who found him would kill him.¹⁶ So Cain went out from the LORD's presence^a and lived in the land of Nod,^a east of Eden.^b

¹⁷Cain lay with his wife,^c and she became pregnant and gave birth to Enoch. Cain was then building a city,^d and he named it after his son^e Enoch.¹⁸ To Enoch was born Irad, and Irad was the father of Mehujael, and Mehujael was the father of Methushael, and Methushael was the father of Lamech.

¹⁹Lamech married^f two women,^g one named Adah and the other Zillah.²⁰ Adah gave birth to Jabal; he was the father of those who live in tents and raise livestock.²¹ His brother's name was Jubal; he was the father of all who play the harp^h and flute.ⁱ ²²Zillah also had a son, Tubal-Cain, who forged^j all kinds of tools out of^k bronze and iron. Tubal-Cain's sister was Naamah.

²³Lamech said to his wives,

"Adah and Zillah, listen to me;
wives of Lamech, hear my words.
I have killed^{ck} a man for wounding
me,

a young man for injuring me.

²⁴If Cain is avenged^l seven times,^m
then Lamech seventy-seven times.ⁿ"

4:15 ^yEx 21:20
^zver 24;
Lev 26:21;
Ps 79:12
4:16 ^aJude 1:11
^bS Ge 2:8
4:17 ^cS ver 1
^dPs 55:9
^ePs 49:11
4:19 ^fGe 6:2
^gGe 29:28;
Dt 21:15;
Ru 4:11; 1Sa 1:2
4:21 ^hGe 31:27;
Ex 15:20;
1Sa 16:16;
1Ch 25:3;
Ps 33:2; 43:4;
Isa 16:11; Da 3:5
ⁱJob 21:12;
30:31; Ps 150:4
4:22 ^jEx 35:35;
1Sa 13:19;
2Ki 24:14
4:23 ^kGe 9:5-6;
Ex 20:13; 21:12;
23:7; Lev 19:18;
24:17; Dt 27:24;
32:35
4:24 ^lDt 32:35;
2Ki 9:7; Ps 18:47;
94:1; Isa 35:4;
Jer 51:56;
Na 1:2 ^mS ver 15
ⁿMt 18:22

4:25 ^over 1
^pGe 5:3; 1Ch 1:1
^qver 8
4:26 ^rGe 5:6;
1Ch 1:1; Lk 3:38
^sGe 12:8; 13:4;
21:33; 22:9;

²⁵Adam lay with his wife^o again, and she gave birth to a son and named him Seth,^{d,p} saying, "God has granted me another child in place of Abel, since Cain killed him."^q
²⁶Seth also had a son, and he named him Enosh.^r

At that time men began to call on^e the name of the LORD.^s

From Adam to Noah

5 This is the written account^t of Adam's line.^u

When God created man, he made him in the likeness of God.^v ²He created them^w male and female^x and blessed them. And when they were created, he called them "man."^y


³When Adam had lived 130 years, he had a son in his own likeness, in his own image;^y and he named him Seth.^z ⁴After Seth was born, Adam lived 800 years and had other sons and daughters. ⁵Altogether, Adam lived 930 years, and then he died.^a


^a 16 *Nod* means *wandering* (see verses 12 and 14).

^b 22 *Or who instructed all who work in* ^c 23 *Or I will kill* ^d 25 *Seth probably means granted.* ^e 26 *Or to proclaim* ^f 2 *Hebrew adam*

26:25; 33:20; 35:1; Ex 17:15; 1Ki 18:24; Ps 116:17; Joel 2:32; Zep 3:9; S Ac 2:21 **5:1** ^sS Ge 2:4 ^t1Ch 1:1 ^uS Ge 1:27; Col 3:10 **5:2** ^wGe 1:28 ^xS Ge 1:27; Mt 19:4; Mk 10:6; Gal 3:28 **5:3** ^yS Ge 1:26; 1Co 15:49 ^zS Ge 4:25; Lk 3:38 **5:5** ^sS Ge 2:17; Heb 9:27


4:17–18 *Cain ... Enoch ... Irad ... Mehujael ... Methushael ... Lamech.* Together with that of Adam, these names add up to a total of seven, a number often signifying completeness (see v. 15). Each of the six names listed here is paralleled by a similar or identical name in the genealogy of Seth in ch. 5 as follows: Kenan (5:12), Enoch (5:21), Jared (5:18), Mahalalel (5:15), Methuselah (5:25), Lamech (5:28). The similarity between the two sets of names is striking and may suggest the selective nature of such genealogies (see note on 5:5). For an example of such selectivity elsewhere see Ezr 7:3, where comparison with 1Ch 6:7–10 indicates that six names were omitted between Azariah and Meraioth. See also Introduction to 1 Chronicles: Genealogies and note on Mt 1:17.

 **4:17** *city.* The Hebrew for this word can refer to any permanent settlement, however small. Cain tried to redeem himself from his wandering and vulnerable state by the activity of his own hands—in the land of wandering he builds a city.


 **4:19** *married two women.* Polygamy entered history. Haughty Lamech, the seventh from Adam in the line of Cain, perhaps sought to attain the benefits of God's primeval blessing (see 1:28 and note) by his own device—multiplying his wives. Monogamy, however, was the original divine intention (see 2:23–24 and note on 2:24).

4:20–22 *Jabal ... Jubal ... Tubal-Cain.* Lamech's three sons had similar names, each derived from a Hebrew verb meaning "to bring, carry, lead," and emphasizing activity. Tubal-Cain's name was especially appropriate, since "Cain" means "metalsmith."


4:22 *tools.* For agriculture and construction; perhaps also for war (see 1Sa 13:19–21).

 **4:23** *killed a man for wounding me.* Violent and wanton destruction of human life by one who proclaimed his complete independence from God by taking vengeance with his own hands (see Dt 32:35 and note).

Lamech proudly claimed to be master of his own destiny, thinking that he and his sons, by their own achievements, would redeem themselves from the curse on the line of Cain. This titanic claim climaxes the catalog of sins that began with Cain's unworthy offering and the murder of his brother.


 **4:24** *seventy-seven times.* Lamech's arrogant announcement of personal revenge found its counterpart in Jesus' response to Peter's question about forgiveness in Mt 18:21–22 (see note on 18:22).


4:25 *again ... another child.* Abel was dead, and Cain was alienated; so Adam and Eve were granted a third son to carry on the family line.

 **4:26** *Enosh.* The name, like "Adam" (see NIV text note on 2:7), means "man" or "humankind." *began to call on the name of the LORD.* Lamech's proud self-reliance, so characteristic of the line of Cain, is contrasted with dependence on God found in the line of Seth.

5:1 *account.* See note on 2:4. *likeness.* See note on 1:26.

5:2 *male and female.* See note on 1:27. *blessed them.* See 1:28 and note. *called them.* See note on 1:5.

 **5:3** *his own likeness ... his own image.* See note on 1:26. As God created sinless Adam in his own perfect image, so now sinful Adam has a son in his own imperfect image.

 **5:5** *930 years.* See notes on v. 27; 6:3. Whether the large numbers describing human longevity in the early chapters of Genesis are literal or have a conventional literary function—or both—is uncertain. Some believe that several of the numbers have symbolic significance, such as Enoch's 365 (v. 23) years (365 being the number of days in a year, thus a full life) and Lamech's 777 (v. 31) years (777 being an expansion and multiple of seven, the number of completeness; cf. the "seventy-seven times" of the other Lamech in 4:24). The fact that there are exactly ten names in the Ge 5 list (as in the genealogy of 11:10–26) makes it likely that it includes gaps (see note on 4:17–18), the lengths of which may be

⁶When Seth had lived 105 years, he became the father^a of Enosh.^b ⁷And after he became the father of Enosh, Seth lived 807 years and had other sons and daughters. ⁸Altogether, Seth lived 912 years, and then he died.

⁹When Enosh had lived 90 years, he became the father of Kenan.^c ¹⁰And after he became the father of Kenan, Enosh lived 815 years and had other sons and daughters. ¹¹Altogether, Enosh lived 905 years, and then he died.

¹²When Kenan had lived 70 years, he became the father of Mahalalel.^d ¹³And after he became the father of Mahalalel, Kenan lived 840 years and had other sons and daughters. ¹⁴Altogether, Kenan lived 910 years, and then he died.

¹⁵When Mahalalel had lived 65 years, he became the father of Jared.^e ¹⁶And after he became the father of Jared, Mahalalel lived 830 years and had other sons and daughters. ¹⁷Altogether, Mahalalel lived 895 years, and then he died.

¹⁸When Jared had lived 162 years, he became the father of Enoch.^f ¹⁹And after he became the father of Enoch, Jared lived 800 years and had other sons and daughters. ²⁰Altogether, Jared lived 962 years, and then he died.

²¹When Enoch had lived 65 years, he became the father of Methuselah.^g ²²And after he became the father of Methuselah, Enoch walked with God^h 300 years and had other sons and daughters. ²³Altogether-

5:6^b *5* Ge 4:26; Lk 3:38
5:9^c *1* Ch 1:2; Lk 3:37
5:12^d *1* Ch 1:2; Lk 3:37
5:15^e *1* Ch 1:2; Lk 3:37
5:18^f *1* Ch 1:3; Lk 3:37; Jude 1:14
5:21^g *1* Ch 1:3; Lk 3:37
5:22^h *ver* 24; Ge 6:9; 17:1; 24:40; 48:15; 2Ki 20:3; Ps 116:9; Mic 6:8; Mal 2:6

5:24ⁱ *S* ver 22; 2Ki 2:1, 11; Ps 49:15; 73:24; 89:48; Heb 11:5
5:25^j *1* Ch 1:3; Lk 3:36
5:29^k *1* Ch 1:3; Lk 3:36
^m *S* Ge 3:17; Ro 8:20
5:32ⁿ *Ge* 7:6, 11; 8:13^o *Lk* 3:36
^p *Ge* 6:10; 9:18; 10:1; *1* Ch 1:4; Isa 65:20
6:1^q *S* Ge 1:28
6:2^r *Job* 1:6 *fn*;
^s *1* *fn*^t *ver* 4
^u *Dt* 21:11
^v *S* Ge 4:19
6:3^w *Job* 34:14; Gal 5:16-17
^x *Isa* 57:16;
^y *1* Pe 3:20
^z *Job* 10:9; Ps 78:39; 103:14; Isa 40:6

er, Enoch lived 365 years. ²⁴Enoch walked with God;ⁱ then he was no more, because God took him away.^j

²⁵When Methuselah had lived 187 years, he became the father of Lamech.^k ²⁶And after he became the father of Lamech, Methuselah lived 782 years and had other sons and daughters. ²⁷Altogether, Methuselah lived 969 years, and then he died.

²⁸When Lamech had lived 182 years, he had a son. ²⁹He named him Noah^{bl} and said, “He will comfort us in the labor and painful toil of our hands caused by the ground the LORD has cursed.”^m ³⁰After Noah was born, Lamech lived 595 years and had other sons and daughters. ³¹Altogether, Lamech lived 777 years, and then he died.

³²After Noah was 500 years old,ⁿ he became the father of Shem,^o Ham and Japheth.^p

The Flood

6 When men began to increase in number on the earth^q and daughters were born to them,² the sons of God^r saw that the daughters of men^s were beautiful,^t and they married^u any of them they chose. ³Then the LORD said, “My Spirit^v will not contend with^c man forever,^w for he is mortal^d; ^x his days will be a hundred and twenty years.”

^a *6* Father may mean ancestor; also in verses 7-26.
^b *29* Noah sounds like the Hebrew for comfort.
^c *3* Or My spirit will not remain in ^d *3* Or corrupt

summarized in the large numbers. Other ancient genealogies outside the Bible exhibit similarly large figures. For example, three kings in a Sumerian list (which also contains exactly ten names) are said to have reigned 72,000 years each — obviously exaggerated time spans. *and then he died*. Repeated as a sad refrain throughout the chapter, the only exception being Enoch (see note on v. 24). The phrase is a stark reminder of God’s judgment on sin resulting from Adam’s fall.

5:22,24 *walked with God*. The phrase replaces the word “lived” in the other paragraphs of the chapter and reminds us that there is a difference between walking with God and merely living.

5:24 *then he was no more, because God took him away*. The phrase replaces “and then he died” in the other paragraphs of the chapter. Like Elijah, who was “taken” (2Ki 2:10) to heaven, Enoch was taken away (cf. Ps 49:15; 73:24) to the presence of God without experiencing death (Heb 11:5). Lamech, the seventh from Adam in the genealogy of Cain, was evil personified. But “Enoch, the seventh from Adam” (Jude 14) in the genealogy of Seth, “was commended as one who pleased God” (Heb 11:5).

5:27 *969 years*. Only Noah and his family survived the flood. If the figures concerning life spans are literal, Methuselah died in the year of the flood (the figures in vv. 25,28 and 7:6 add up to exactly 969).

6:1-8 How the early history of humankind led to such pervasive corruption that God was moved to bring a radical judgment on his creation.

6:1 *increase in number*. See note on 1:22.

6:2 *sons of God saw ... daughters of men ... and they married any*. See v. 4. The phrase “sons of God” here has been inter-

preted to refer either to angels or to human beings. In such places as Job 1:6; 2:1 it refers to angels, and perhaps also in Ps 29:1 (where it is translated “mighty ones”). Some interpreters also appeal to Jude 6-7 (as well as to Jewish literature) in referring the phrase here to angels.

Others, however, maintain that intermarriage and cohabitation between angels and human beings, though commonly mentioned in ancient mythologies, are surely excluded by the very nature of the created order (ch. 1; Mk 12:25). Elsewhere, expressions equivalent to “sons of God” often refer to human beings, though in contexts quite different from the present one (see Dt 14:1; 32:5; Ps 73:15; Isa 43:6; Hos 1:10; 11:1; Lk 3:38; 1Jn 3:1-2,10). “Sons of God” (vv. 2,4) possibly refers to godly men, and “daughters of men” to sinful women (significantly, they are not called “daughters of God”), probably from the wicked line of Cain. If so, the context suggests that vv. 1-2 describe the intermarriage of the Sethites (“sons of God”) of ch. 5 with the Cainites (“daughters of men”) of ch. 4, indicating a breakdown in the separation of the two groups.

Another plausible suggestion is that the “sons of God” refers to royal figures (kings were closely associated with gods in the ancient Near East) who proudly perpetuated and aggravated the corrupt lifestyle of Lamech son of Cain (virtually a royal figure) and established for themselves royal harems.

6:3 Two key phrases in the Hebrew of this verse are obscure: the one rendered “contend with” (see NIV text note) and the one rendered “for he is mortal.” The verse seems to announce that the period of grace between God’s declaration of judgment and its arrival would be 120 years (cf. 1Pe 3:20). But if the NIV text note reading is accepted, the verse announces

⁴The Nephilim^y were on the earth in those days—and also afterward—when the sons of God went to the daughters of men^z and had children by them. They were the heroes of old, men of renown.^a

⁵The LORD saw how great man's wickedness on the earth had become,^b and that every inclination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil all the time.^c ⁶The LORD was grieved^d that he had made man on the earth, and his heart was filled with pain. ⁷So the LORD said, "I will wipe mankind, whom I have created, from the face of the earth^e—men and animals, and creatures that move along the ground, and birds of the air—for I am grieved that I have made them."^f ⁸But Noah^g found favor in the eyes of the LORD.^h

⁹This is the accountⁱ of Noah.

Noah was a righteous man, blameless^j among the people of his time,^k and he walked with God.^l ¹⁰Noah had three sons: Shem,^m Ham and Japheth.ⁿ

¹¹Now the earth was corrupt^o in God's sight and was full of violence.^p ¹²God saw how corrupt^q the earth had become, for all the people on earth had corrupt-

^{6:4} Nu 13:33
^z ver 2^z Ge 11:4
^{6:5} Ge 38:7;
 Job 34:26;
 Jer 1:16; 44:5;
 Eze 3:19
^a Ge 8:21;
 Ps 14:1-3
^{6:6} Ex 32:14;
 1Sa 15:11, 35;
 2Sa 24:16;
 1Ch 21:15;
 Isa 63:10;
 Jer 18:7-10;
 Eph 4:30
^{6:7} Eze 33:28;
 Zep 1:2, 18
ⁱ ver 17;
 Ge 7:4, 21;
 Dt 28:63; 29:20
^{6:8} Eze 14:14
^h Ge 19:19; 39:4;
 Ex 33:12, 13, 17;
 34:9; Nu 11:15;
 Ru 2:2; Lk 1:30;
 Ac 7:46
^{6:9} 1S Ge 2:4
^j Ge 17:1;
 Dt 18:13;
 2Sa 22:24;
 Job 1:1; 4:6;
 9:21; 12:4; 31:6;
 Ps 15:2; 18:23;
 19:13; 37:37;
 Pr 2:7 Ge 7:1;
 Ps 37:39;
 Jer 15:1;
 Eze 14:14, 20;
 Da 10:11;
 S Lk 1:6;

ed their ways.^r ¹³So God said to Noah, "I am going to put an end to all people, for the earth is filled with violence because of them. I am surely going to destroy^s both them and the earth."^t ¹⁴So make yourself an ark of cypress^u wood;^v make rooms in it and coat it with pitch^v inside and out. ¹⁵This is how you are to build it: The ark is to be 450 feet long, 75 feet wide and 45 feet high.^b ¹⁶Make a roof for it and finish^c the ark to within 18 inches^d of the top. Put a door in the side of the ark and make lower, middle and upper decks. ¹⁷I am going to bring floodwaters^w on the earth to destroy all life under the heavens, every creature that has the breath of life in it. Everything on earth will perish.^x ¹⁸But I will establish my covenant with


^a 14 The meaning of the Hebrew for this word is uncertain. ^b 15 Hebrew 300 cubits long, 50 cubits wide and 30 cubits high (about 140 meters long, 23 meters wide and 13.5 meters high) ^c 16 Or Make an opening for light by finishing ^d 16 Hebrew a cubit (about 0.5 meter)


Heb 11:7; 2Pe 2:5 1S Ge 5:22 **6:10** Lk 3:36 1S Ge 5:32

6:11 Dt 31:29; Jdg 2:19 Ps 79; 73:6; Eze 7:23; 8:17; 28:16; Mal 2:16
6:12 Ex 32:7; Dt 4:16; 9:12, 24 Ps 14:1-3 **6:13** Dt 28:63; 2Ki 8:19;
 Ezr 9:14; Jer 44:11 1 ver 17; Ge 7:4, 21-23; Job 34:15; Isa 5:6; 24:1-3;
 Jer 44:27; Eze 7:2-3 **6:14** Heb 11:7; 1Pe 3:20 Ex 2:3 **6:17** Ps 29:10
^s ver 7, S 13; 2Pe 2:5



that the human life span would henceforth be limited to 120 years (but see 11:10–26).



6:4 *Nephilim*. People of great size and strength (see Nu 13:31–33). The Hebrew word means "fallen ones." They were viewed by people as "the heroes of old, men of renown," but in God's eyes they were sinners ("fallen ones") ripe for judgment.

 **6:5** One of the Bible's most vivid descriptions of total depravity. And because human nature remained unchanged, things were no better after the flood (8:21).

 **6:6** *The LORD was grieved... his heart was filled with pain.* Human sin is God's sorrow (see Eph 4:30 and note).

6:7 *I will wipe mankind... from the face of the earth.* The period of grace (see v. 3 and note) was coming to an end. *animals... creatures... birds.* Though morally innocent, the animal world, as creatures under the corrupted rule of human beings, shared in their judgment (cf. 1Sa 15:3 and NIV text note).

  **6:8–9** *found favor... righteous... blameless... walked with God.* See note on 5:22. Noah's godly life was a powerful contrast to the wicked lives of his contemporaries (see v. 5 and note; see also v. 12). This description of Noah does not imply sinless perfection.

  **6:9—9:29** In many legends circulating among the peoples of the ancient Near East, one of the major gods brought a devastating flood on the earth because he was disturbed by the noisy hubbub raised by humans (see Introduction: Background). The author of Genesis also tells of a devastating flood that destroyed all humankind except a single family. In his account, the Creator (who alone is God) was deeply grieved by the moral evil embraced and practiced by the creatures he had created in his own image and to whom he had committed the care of his creation. In his eyes they had so corrupted life in his good creation that only a radical cleansing judgment could check the rampant evil and bring humanity to account.

In his telling of the story to ancient Israel, the author of Genesis attacks the pervasive pagan notions about the gods and about humanity, as expressed in their stories of a mighty



all-destroying flood. He casts this storied flood in a radically different theological light. In the deluge (i.e., in destructive floods and other "natural" disasters) humanity had (and has) to do with the righteous Creator. For just cause, and after long forbearance, he judged (and judges) the creature created in his image and called to be his image-bearer in the creation. God's judgment on human sin represented by the flood speaks of his radical "No" to humanity's corruption of its way in the world. But that "No" is not his final word (see 8:1 and note), and humanity is not at the mercy of a deity who at a whim might totally undo the creation order on which life depends. The God of the deluge has given another word, symbolized by the rainbow—a reassuring word about his enduring commitment to his creation. (See 9:8–17 and notes.)

6:9 *account*. See note on 2:4. *righteous*. See note on Ps 1:5.

6:14 *ark*. The Hebrew for this word is used elsewhere only in reference to the basket that saved the baby Moses (see Ex 2:3, 5 and note on 2:3). *coat it with pitch*. Moses' mother made his basket watertight in the same way (see Ex 2:3).

6:16 *roof*. Perhaps overhanging, to keep the rain from coming in. *within 18 inches of the top*. Noah's ark probably had a series of small windows (see 8:6) encircling the entire vessel 18 inches from the top to admit light and air.

6:17 *floodwaters on the earth to destroy all life under the heavens*. Some believe that the deluge was worldwide, partly because of the apparently universal terms of the text—both here and elsewhere (vv. 7, 12–13; 7:4, 19, 21–23; 8:21; 9:11, 15; cf. 2Pe 3:6 and note). Others argue that nothing in the narrative of chs. 6–9 prevents the flood from being understood as regional—destroying everything on land that lay in its wake, but of relatively limited scope and universal only from the standpoint of Moses' geographic knowledge. "All life under the heavens" may mean all life within the range of Noah's perception. (See the universal language used to describe the drought and famine in the time of Joseph—41:54, 57; see also note on 41:57.)

  **6:18** *covenant*. See note on 9:9. Noah would not be given the particulars of God's covenant with him