

Foreword

Despite being the first book in the Bible, Genesis is generally not the first book within that you should read. Our modern Christian faith usually starts with exposure to the gospels of the New Testament (NT), progressing through Revelation. However, many people (Christians or not, old or new) don't read the Old Testament (OT). Why?

I've discussed the answer to this in detail in previous studies, but a short list is as follows:

1. We're rarely encouraged to. In some circles, we're told it isn't even necessary anymore.
2. "The OT God is different than the NT God."
3. "The OT God is too mean!"
4. "It's booooring!"

The Bible is jam-packed with immensely-important information and I can't list it all here (Nor do we ever stop learning new things when we re-read His Word, amen?). Further, I can't give you every possible opinion on topics that are up for debate. The intent here is to get you interested in digging into God's Word and strengthen your relationship with Him. Further, an increased knowledge of God's Word will help you recognize the false teachings that abound in our world.

Remember: God's Word is The Truth. My commentary here (personal or compiled), or the footnotes in your study Bible or even your pastor's sermons do not hold the same, perfect, holy authority as the Bible itself. We compare everything to the Word of God to separate the truth from the lies (2 Cor 10:4-6).

Background

Genesis ("The Beginning") was written/compiled by Moses, through the inspiration of God. Despite secular belief, the book only spends two of its fifty chapters describing creation. The rest is filled with history that sheds light on the Trinity, the fall of man, God's plan for a Savior for both Jew and Gentile, marriage, sex, and parenting, among others. Further, we'll see how the nation of Israel (and its modern enemies) came to be, and why they're such important players in the world today.

Note: You may want to bookmark the website www.answersingenesis.org as it contains a plethora of scientifically/archaeologically-backed information on many of the tough questions we won't have space to cover here. In fact, you may notice a familiar name from the Lightner family among article credits there.

Read Genesis 1

v1 "In the beginning" refers to human time. As we'll see elsewhere in Scripture, God has always existed and it appears that angels had already been created. Further, it looks like Satan's rebellion had already taken place (or would be, shortly).

Q (v2): Who created the heavens and the earth?

Q (v2): What form did earth have to start?

Q (v3): What is the true source of light?

v4 is the first of many mentions that God's original creation was good. It was healthy, it was whole, it was acceptable in His righteous, perfectionist sight. Everything God created was good at the start.

v5 Note that the first day started with night. While our new "day" typically starts at sunrise, the Hebrew "day" starts at sunset. Further, God's naming of his creation indicated His authority...we'll come back to this later.

Q: Did God create the universe in six days or six billion/trillion/really big number of years?

v6-8 The translation of the word "vault", "expanse" or "firmament" can be misleading here. It's referring to the sky. God created a container of water in the sky, separated from the water below. The earth is now a ball of water, with an atmosphere that may have been very cloudy and dense with moisture. This theory (again, we don't know for sure) will come into play later.

v9-10 Here God creates the land, making note of its distinction from the seas. "Seas" in Hebrew is always plural, so we're not really sure if there were multiple bodies of water, or just one massive continent and one massive ocean around it.

v11-13 Plant life is created on the third day; each according to its kind, with reference to reproduction through seed.

Q (v14-19): For what reasons did God create the sun, moon and stars?

v20-23 Air and sea life are created on the fifth day. The word for "birds" is literally "fliers," likely including flying insects and some dinosaurs. The sea life includes mention of "great sea creatures," again likely referencing aquatic dinosaurs, which possibly lead to references to the Behemoth or Leviathan elsewhere in Scripture. These "mythical" beings fascinated and terrified the ancient world and intrigue us today...and yet creating pseudo-Godzillas was just another day for God. No big deal for the Creator of the universe.

Like plant life, these creatures were also made according to their kinds, and given a blessing to reproduce.

v24-25 Here God creates the land-based animals, with the repeated emphasis on their kinds and encouragement to reproduce, spread out and fill the earth.

Q: So does this chapter prove that evolution is a load of...garbage?

Q (v26): What does it mean that we were created in God's image/likeness?

In any case, we were created to rule over the earth as his regents. This does not mean He encourages us to trash the place...we are expected to care for His property wisely. Further, it shows us our value...God sees Himself in us. This is why murder is such an offense to God.

v27 is actually written as a poem in the original Hebrew. It's unfortunately lost in translation for us.

Q (v27): What genders are part of God's creation?

v28 Once again, mankind is given the order to reproduce (more on this later) and fill the earth. However, man is not described as being created "according to their kinds." Mankind is an encompassing group of equal worth. Black, white, tall, short, disabled...God sees them the same.

v29-30 Man and beast all started out as vegetarians. (Note that the Bible supports eating meat elsewhere, but it wasn't part of His original plan. The book of Isaiah indicates that we will all return to being vegetarians in the new Earth after the end of time.)

v31 Again, God sees that all that He has made is good.

Background

Be sure to read the Foreword to the last lesson for some introductory information on Genesis and this study. Just like chapter 1, there's a lot of major content in here, so prepare to dig in.

Read Genesis 2:1-7

Q (v1-3): Did the omnipotent God really need a rest?

cf. Is 40:28

Q: Then what was the purpose of the Sabbath ("rest")?

cf. Ex 31:13, Mk 2:27

v4 While chapter 1 was an overview of the six days of creation, chapter 2:4+ takes a step back to start a more detailed retelling of the creation of man and his relationship with God.

v6 The original word for "mist" is hard to translate. In short, it doesn't appear that rain was a thing yet. God was irrigating the planet through dew or small springs...i.e., water from below, not above.

Q (v7): What differences do you see in how man was created vs everything else?

Read Genesis 2:8-17

Q (v8 & 10-14): Where was Eden located?

v9a God's creation wasn't purely practical...He made some things purely to be pleasing to our senses.

Q (v9b): What's the deal with the trees? Did they have magic powers? Why leave them there?

Q (v15): How did God plan for Adam to spend his free time?

Q (v16-17): Was God lying when He said that Adam would die if He ate of the forbidden fruit?

Read Genesis 2:18-25

v18-20 is the first time God says that something isn't right with creation. In dramatic Father-and-son fashion, God then brings the already created, but unnamed animals to Adam. As they pass by, Adam names them, using the authority given to him by God. However, we can easily picture Adam coming to the realization of v20b: "Two of them, two of them, two of them...one of me...two of them...one of me..." God was setting His son up for one of the best gifts ever (see *Mt 6:8b*).

Q (v18): Does this verse indicate that woman is inferior to man?

v21 In *Gen 15:12*, Abraham also enters a "deep sleep" by the hand of God but appears to have remained semi-aware of what God was doing during that time. It may be possible that Adam also observed, in some form, as God fashioned his perfect bride.

Q (v21): Why would God create the woman from the man's rib? Why not from dirt, like Adam was?

Q (v22-23): Who selected the woman? Who brought the two together?

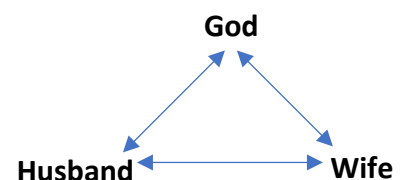
What was man doing (before the divinely-administered sedation, anyway)?

v23 "This is now" can be translated "At last!" Adam now saw someone similar to himself, and yet different. Enchanting, enthralling, beautiful. This is what would make him complete. This is what he didn't know he needed until God figuratively dropped her in his lap.

v23 Adam continues in His right to name God's creations. However, he gave her a name matching his own, indicating parity.

v23-24 You're seeing here the institution of marriage (*Mt 19:3-6*). God brought one man and one woman together to be joined for their lifetimes. This joining wasn't just hugging or having sex. Marriage is becoming one in all areas of life: spiritual, mental, emotional, financial and only last: physical. Sex is not a purely physical event, despite what cultural revolutions or hedonists may say – it is a joining of souls, for lack of a better term. Doing things out of order or in an incomplete manner results in relational problems (some secular science is even acknowledging neural changes brought about by premarital or extramarital relations, causing future relationships to be less rewarding/harder to maintain).

Further, this joining includes a separation from previous attachments. Parents become occasional advisors and not rulers. Best friends become normal friends. The bride and the groom seek God first, spouse second, and themselves last, often portrayed in the triangle shown to the right.



Finally, God's desired result of healthy marriage is godly children and thus, a godly society (*Deut 6:1-9*). Do you see why Christians are so protective of God's plan for marriage and sexuality?

Do you see what happens to the world when we abandon God's plan as being inconvenient or archaic?

Read *Eph 5:22-32* to see that the picture of marriage is also a picture of Christ's relationship to the church.

Q (v18-24): But why wasn't God good enough for Adam?

v25 In their innocence, the couple was comfortable with their nakedness, physically and otherwise. There was no keeping of secrets or shame in talking about feelings, etc. Thanks to sin (coming in the next chapter), this is very difficult for us to accomplish now, even in a faithful Christian marriage.

There's an implication that sexual relations may have been part of this. It's unlikely that the conception of their first child in chapter 4 was their first sexual experience together.

Read Genesis 3:1-5

v1 The original text of the Bible didn't have verse numbers, nor was it broken down into chapters. Scribes and translators added those in the 1500s AD to make referencing it easier. As such, part of reading the Bible in context (an important topic discussed in earlier lessons) is realizing that there isn't always a pause or break between the ideas of one [verse/chapter] and the next...they may be part of a continuous chain of thought.

Chapter 2 ended with a comment about Adam and Eve being naked. Chapter 3 opens with a comment about the serpent being crafty...which in Hebrew sounds very similar to the word for "naked." There's a bit of wordplay here that we miss because of language and chapter breaks.

...that's...probably not really a big deal to you, but I needed an excuse to bring up why and when verse numbers were added and what effect it occasionally has on context. Back to the serpent...

Q (v1): Who was this serpent, and how do we know?

As some background information on our enemy:

Satan = adversary

Devil = accuser/slanderer

Lucifer = day star (bright star, Latin name for planet Venus, there's a *ton* of really cool science and history involved with Venus that you should look up some time if you have any interest in science or why the planet was such a big deal to ancient cultures)

The Bible says that, among other things, he is a deceiver and the father of murder and lies (*Rev 12:9, Jn 8:44*). He sneaks in and causes division and strife (*Mt 7:15, 1 Pet 5:8*)...as Adam and Eve's marriage will soon find out.

From what we can infer from Scripture (little is explicit), Satan was originally an angel (*2 Cor 11:14*) of immense beauty who, dependent on words that are difficult to translate, was created to worship (*Ez 28:11*). However, pride caused him to seek to take the position of God (*Is 14:13*) and lead a rebellion with a third of God's angels (*Rev 12:4*). This attempted coup was crushed by God, and Satan and his angels were cast out of heaven...some, including Satan, to earth (*Luke 10:18*) and some to prison (*2 Peter 2:4*). All of them are destined, without exception, for eternal damnation (*Rev 20:10*).

We don't have time to go into it here, but the Bible clearly states (book of Job, etc) that even running amok on earth, Satan and his fallen angels (demons) are still leashed by God. They cannot do anything without His permission and are often helping move His plans along, blinded by their rage and ultimate helplessness.

On a related note and getting back to v1, it's likely that God had placed similar restrictions on Satan here. He was unable to harm Adam and Eve directly and so he sought alternate means to ruin God's day (except we already know God planned for this through Christ...remember from previous lessons and that *Luke 10:18* reference that Christ was present before time began.)

Was Satan inhabiting the body of a serpent, or was he disguised as one? We don't know, and it doesn't really matter. Interestingly, though, neither Adam nor Eve appear surprised that an animal was speaking to them. This has led some to speculate that the animal kingdom could originally talk before sin ruined everything.

Q (v1): Speaking of the father of lies, how does Satan introduce himself?

Q (v1): What word does Satan use when referring to God?

How does that compare to most of the other references in Genesis so far?

v3 God never said that they couldn't touch that tree. It's possible that Eve is fibbing, but it's also possible that Adam & Eve made it a rule to avoid temptation (we could learn from this when separating ourselves from unavoidable things that tempt us).

v4 Satan is either telling a boldface lie (i.e., calling God the liar) or he's telling a half-truth. That is, Adam and Eve really wouldn't die...immediately. However, a half-truth with the intent to deceive is still a no-no.

Q (v5): In tempting Eve to sin, Satan appealed to her _____.

Read Genesis 3:6-13

v6a puts us in the helpless position of watching this tragedy occur, step by step. But it also reminds us of our mindset when we choose to sin...we give sin an inch, and it takes a mile and before we know it, we're in up to our necks.

Q (v6a): Looking back at the good trees in Genesis 2:9, what was so different here?

Q (v6b): So wait, where was Adam this whole time?

v7 If you ever wanted to know where the cliché of covering private parts with leaves comes from, here it is. We also see how Adam and Eve's relationship immediately suffers...they now experience shame (due to vanity, pride, etc). The openness they had to one another at the end of chapter 2 is now lost. Their relationship is broken.

v8 And now their relationship with God is broken, too. They fear their Creator, Provider and Parent. The openness they had with God is also lost.

Q (v9-11): Did God really not know where His kids were and what they were doing?

Q (v12-13): In these verses, Adam and Eve played the first _____ game. Whose fault was it really?

Read Genesis 3:14-19

v14 God first directs his judgment on the serpent, who is the recipient of the first curse: to crawl on its belly and have the appearance of eating dust. This has led to another bit of speculation that snakes originally had some other means of locomotion. It's possible that this may be flight, based upon a few other vague references in Scripture. Once again, if you wanted to know where the idea of winged serpents came from in mythology etc, this is it. But this isn't really about snakes is it?

v15a While it's true that man and snake are rarely anything but enemies, there's more meaning and prophecy here.

Q (v15b): Who or what is the woman's seed? (Easier question for NKJV readers)

From the time of v15 on, Satan has lived on borrowed time. His furious attempts to destroy the followers of Christ and distract the lost have only increased since. He has nothing to lose and will fight to the very end (*Rev 20:7-10*).

v16a Eve is punished, but not actually cursed. Unfortunately, the joy of a mother's childbirth will now be marred by pain (I know my mother loves reminding me on a regular basis of her 21 hours of labor, ended in vain with a c-section and a scar souvenir!).

v16b The second part of her punishment isn't very clear in most translations which say that "your desire will be for/towards your husband." However, in the context of the next part of the verse, "but he will rule over you" indicates that there will now be a power struggle between men and women, husbands and wives.

The ESV translation is clearer: "but your desire will be contrary to your husband." Women will attempt to dominate men, and men will attempt to act as tyrants over women. Again, sin (and the pride and selfishness inherent to it) has damaged relationships. God made men in charge of women. That's the natural order of things and it works well when done by His rules...except now it's a struggle on both sides because of sin.

Remember the picture of the marriage triangle I used last week? God is needed by both husband and wife to overcome this relational hurdle (and all the other conflicting differences between men and women).

v17a The issue with Adam is that he "sinned with eyes wide open." He was not deceived. He caved to peer pressure. He was given God's rules personally before Eve was created. He was given authority over all of creation, including his wife. As such, he was held to a higher standard and was accountable for not stopping his ward from disobeying (*). It's not always "good to be the king", more often than not, "heavy is the head that wears the crown." (*Ez 3:16-21, Jm 3:1*)

(*) Biblical commentator Matthew Henry adds, "...men's frivolous please will, in the day of God's judgment, not only be overruled, but turned against them, and made the grounds of their sentence."

v17b-18 Just as God did not actually curse Eve, He did not directly curse Adam. The earth becomes the recipient of the second curse instead. Hereafter, Adam's work will be far less pleasurable as the environment will be against him. No longer will crops effortlessly yield sustenance. No longer will the weather be cooperative.

v19 Finally, death is confirmed. Our originally immortal bodies will now age, become ill, fall apart and perish. (We'll also be capable of biting our tongues, getting zits on date nights, choking on our own spit and stepping into the corners of furniture!)

It should also be noted that the earth will now age, become ill, fall apart and perish as well.

Read Genesis 3:20-24

Q (v20): Why would Adam give his wife a second name now; specifically one about being a mother?

v21 Oh right, no longer will animals be our trusted friends, either. Here we see the first animal sacrifice for the purpose of covering Adam and Eve's sin (represented by their shame in nudity). This had to be an absolutely horrifying experience for a couple that had never experienced the shedding of blood...much more a flaying. This of course foreshadows God sacrificing His Son's blood to cover our sin.

v22-23 God quickly removed Adam and Eve from the garden, not only as a punishment, but to keep them from the tree that would keep them alive forever in their sinful state. Further, this exile was representative of the relationship they had broken with God...sinful beings cannot remain in His holy presence.

v24 However, the next verse shows that the tree of life remained...granting some hope that we would once again be granted access to it and the God we rejected. This verse also makes the first explicit reference to angels.

Review and Application:

Q: God's creation was originally "good." Who is at fault for its downfall?

Q: Do you now have a better understanding of where sickness, death, natural disasters, war etc come from?

Q: Do you now have a better response (at least in part) for the common question, "If God is good, why is there evil in the world?" or "How can a good God allow something [bad] like this to happen?"

Note: A “good” God’s justice demands punishment for sin...and that sword cuts both ways!

Would you be happy if a judge let the murderer of your child or spouse off the hook because he looked sorry?

We are the ones who bold-face rebelled against God. We are the ones needing correction and redemption.

God owes us nothing. We deserve nothing. The sooner we acknowledge that fact, and then recognize how His justice has been tempered by love (offering unmerited mercy and grace through second and third and fourth chances and the ultimate offer of reconciliation through Christ), the sooner our hearts become more at ease.

cf. Lk 17:7-10

Q: Can you point out multiple examples of God’s patient, merciful and self-sacrificial love in the OT so far?

Background

As a reminder from our lesson on chapter 2, we don't know how much time has passed between 3:24 and 4:1. It may have been days, it may have been years or decades.

Read Genesis 4:1-5

v1 While it's obvious that Adam and Eve had (and likely were having for a while now) sex in this verse, the root wording is great. The literal term is that Adam "knew" his wife. Re-read 2:23-25 for the significance. God created sex as a sacred event (*Heb 13:4*) between a lifelong-married husband and wife. While God certainly intended sex to be pleasurable and for procreation, it is also part of the complete union of the couple. In short, failing to take God's purpose and timing for sex into account leads to broken relationships (as we see in the world around us and often from our own past).

v1-2 Adam and Eve received what they were promised: a seed. What high hopes they must have had in this first actual child on earth. The word Cain means "acquired" and appears to be related to the word for "craftsman." Her second child, Abel means "vapor"...something fleeting, like a breath...which would only have been appropriately given after what was to come in v8 :(

This leads us to believe that Cain and Abel may have been named later in their life (like Eve, their mother) in description of their lifestyle, personality or purpose. Names were not given lightly in the ancient world, and a person often had more than one. Names had meaning and were often a pun or play on another word that sounded familiar. As we've discussed before, naming someone indicated having authority over them. Knowing someone's name indicated a familiar relationship. You'll see these important facts about names come up through the OT, into the NT (e.g., *Mt 16:18*, *Acts 13:9*) and ending in Revelation (*Rev 2:17*, *14:1*, *14:11*, *19:12*).

v3-4 Here begins the first of many examples of sibling rivalry (with the younger being favored) in the Bible. (e.g., Japheth and Shem, Esau and Jacob, Zerah and Perez, Manasseh and Ephraim etc)

We also have the sudden appearance of sacrifice, despite no record (for us) of God directing it.

Q (v3-4): Why did God respect Abel's offering, but not Cain's?

Read Genesis 4:6-11

v5-6 While we're not exactly sure how the boys knew their offering was or wasn't accepted, Cain was visibly angry that his effort did not produce fruit (pun intended) and clearly had no intention of repenting.

Q (v6-7a): Cain's behavior was an insult to God in many ways.

How did the purported "judgmental, violent God of the OT" respond?

Q (v7b&c): What did (does) God mean, "sin lies at the door and its desire is for you"?

v8 This was straight-up premeditated murder. One generation into humanity and murder has already surfaced. Remember this the next time someone tries to tell you that we're inherently good beings. Remember this the next time someone tries to tell you that God did not call the righteous to suffer at times. Note that Christ confirmed this event as historical fact (*Mt 23:34-35*), making Abel the first martyr. Further note that Christ publicly acknowledged his sacrifice and declared him righteous...a worthy reward (*Mt 25:21, Rev 2:10*).

v9-10 Cain has apparently reached a point of no return here and continues to defy God (despite God giving him yet another chance to confess). Cain was now a murderer and a liar...sounds familiar (*Jn 8:44*). In reality, as the elder brother, Cain was Abel's keeper in a way.

While God sees everything, the Bible confirms that He takes special note of cruel injustices (*Ex 22:21-26*) and the shedding of blood (*Gen 9:6, Jer 22:3, Heb 9:11-28*).

v11 The third curse in creation is awarded to Cain. No longer would the earth cooperate with Cain's labor; which was problematic since he was a farmer (*v2*). He would have to rely on others for food (everyone was still a vegetarian at this point) and that would be hard to do when he just murdered one of the only family on earth at the moment.

Read Genesis 4:12-18

v13-14 Suddenly Mr. Murder is worried about someone killing him. Cain expresses no regret at his action; only that he's going to be punished.

Q (v14-17): Wait, if Cain just killed one of the four people in existence, who was "anyone that finds me"? And where did he get a wife in *v17*?

v15 We're not sure if this "mark" was something physical/visible or just an unseen "force" (for lack of a better term) that kept him stigmatized from others. This verse is part of what led to the punishment of branding or other marking for criminals/sinners throughout history (more recent examples such as Hawthorne's *The Scarlet Letter*, Hitler's Jewish Badges, Ohio's "party plates" etc.)

Q (v15): Why did God prevent Cain's murder, going so far as threaten septuple punishment on an offender?

There are a number of likely reasons:

1. God didn't want to encourage more murder. See also *Deut 32:35*.
2. God was still being merciful to Cain, whom He loved, despite everything that had happened.
3. God had future plans for Cain and his offspring.

Q: What's the deal with seven anyway? I've heard it a lot in the Bible.

v16 The land of Nod may not be a literal location. It's just a wordplay on "vagabond", which is fitting for someone who "left the presence of God".

v17 This is not the more well-known Enoch coming later. But it does speak to how quickly the population was growing, if Cain was able to name a city after him.

v18 Here's the first little genealogy in the Bible. For future reference to new believers: you don't have to worry about pronouncing the names or locations in the Bible correctly. Just wing it. None of us say them correctly, either, regardless of how confident we may sound.

Read Genesis 4:19-24

v19-22 Not only was the population growing, it was accelerating in skill. People quickly picked up animal husbandry, carpentry, music, mining and metallurgy. Interestingly, these skills are only listed for Cain's line...the one alienated from God. Does that mean the faithful weren't innovators? No, but it may point to the fact that those without God tend to cling to their jobs, possessions and achievements as their measurement of fulfillment or success in life.

Q (v19-24): How is mankind progressing, in terms of sin?

Q: But there are a lot of examples of polygamy in the Bible! Even of godly people! How do you explain that?

Read Genesis 4:25-26

v25 After the downer of the past twenty-some verses, we get a bittersweet ending to the chapter. Having lost their two sons to exile and death, respectively, Adam and Eve have another son to carry on the God's promise of a Seed. Seth means "to place", as in, he was "in place" of the lost child(ren).

v26 "Calling upon the name of the Lord" wasn't just people praying. The root word indicates an invitation or a proclamation of praise. This was evangelism. This is what we are still called to do today: give glory, and point people to God in whatever ways and locations He's called us to.

While God has called some to be outspoken missionaries or preachers in foreign nations, many more He places in less auspicious...even mundane locations. Act with integrity at your job. Be polite and helpful at the grocery store. Be a loving stay-at-home mother. Face adversity with faith. Forgive often. Imitate Christ. Those around you will notice this. And if they don't already know that you're a Christian, they'll ask what makes you so different...giving you opportunity to "call on the name of the Lord."

Background

Chapter 5 is another genealogy, which tends to bore modern readers. However, knowing your family tree was a matter of life, pride and sometimes your job (*Ez 2:62*) at the time the Bible was written (and still is, in some cultures).

Note that most ancient genealogies would only list “important” figures that related to the topic at hand. So, a firstborn child may not be listed if a subsequent child was more related to the story. Or a man may have been said to “father” a grand or great-grandchild if the interceding generations weren’t of note. We’re going to see this right away in v3 where Adam’s first listed child is Seth. This makes sense to the story since:

1. Cain, the firstborn, was disowned and exiled
2. Abel, the secondborn, was dead
3. The line of the promise (i.e., Christ) would come through Seth. (*Lk 3:23-38*)
4. If we listed every child Adam had in his 930 years, the Bible would be too heavy to carry.

The nice part for us readers is that there’s a lot of really good information in this genealogy so don’t skip it!

Read Genesis 5

v1-2 We have here summary reminders of God’s creation of man in His image, genders and the blessings given to man (likely part of why humans were not directly cursed due to sin).

v3 Likewise, Adam is described as producing a child “in his likeness, after his image”. We discussed marriage to siblings in the last chapter, so be sure to catch up on the old lessons if you’ve not already done so.

v5 Every entry in the genealogy ends with the unfortunate reminder of the results of sin: “then he died.”
cf. Ro 5:12

v3-32 Since these people had overlapping lifespans (and some may have been skipped, as mentioned in the Background section), we have no idea how much time this chapter encompasses, though it was certainly more than 1,500 years.

Q (v3-32): Some scholars have said that the ages listed here cannot be real and must instead be a sort of numerical representation of the person’s importance. Do you agree? Why or why not?

Hint: Does this topic relate to any of our major discussions in previous chapters?

v21-24 Enoch is the first of two mysterious figures in the Bible. All that we know of him is that he had a very close relationship with God (*Heb 11:5*)...so much so that instead of dying, God simply took him away. The only other person that we know this happened to was Elijah (*2 Kings 2:11*).

As we mentioned in an earlier lesson, the stuff God put in the Bible, He put in for a reason. Likewise, the stuff He left out, He left out for a reason. So, as much as our curiosity is piqued, God didn't feel that we needed to know more about Enoch at this time. There was a more recent "Book of Enoch" written (likely compiled), that may have some actual divinely-inspired writing of Enoch in it. However, it also contains a lot of conflicting information with the Bible and the authorship and date of the included writings are highly suspect. For these and other reasons it is considered apocryphal (false, non-canon, excluded) by both Jews and Christians. Stick with your Bible, not the tabloids.

v27 If you ever heard someone or something old called "Methuselah", now you know where it came from. Like his father, there's a ton of tradition as to what Methuselah did in his life, but none is recorded in Scripture, and as such, we must consider it of dubious authority. He died the same year as the upcoming Flood.

v28 In the first Biblically-recorded example of prophecy through a human, Lamech names his son Noah ("comfort" or "rest") in expectation of the change to come to the world that Noah would play a pivotal part of.

Q (v29): Considering Lamech's only recorded words,
what do you think of mankind's constant search for earthly immortality?
(e.g. The Philosopher's Stone, The Fountain of Youth, gene-therapy to stop aging, mind-uploading)

v32 Here's the second obvious example of a genealogy being tailored to the author's purpose: Seth was the middle child (10:21) and yet was listed first. Why? Because through him, the nation of Israel and Christ would follow. Shem is the source of the term "Semite".

Foreword

This chapter has a number of oft-debated items that aren't related to our salvation (see our chapter 1 lesson). In fact, they can be a tantalizing distraction from the message of Scripture. Humans are fascinated with the occult – that is, secret, hidden, mysterious or sometimes forbidden knowledge. We'd rather go to a "haunted house" than church. We'd rather hear scandalous rumors of Enoch instead of the saving truth of Christ.

I want you to read the Bible to learn about God and His promises for you. As such, I could skip over the gray areas in hopes that you don't notice and let your mind and heart wander. However, I also want you to read the Bible to build up your spiritual immune system, so that you aren't corrupted today by the same temptations and false teachings that overtook Eve millennia ago.

So instead of skipping over the parts of the Bible we don't like, let's dig further in. Again, what God left in the Bible, He did for a reason...and this could hardly be called a verse-by-verse study if we ignored the tough stuff.

Read Genesis 6:1-8

Here we go, into the thick of it...

Q (v1-2): Who were "the sons of God" and what exactly were they doing in this passage?

v3 This verse also has a couple of possible interpretations, complicated by the fact that the root word for "strive/contend" is not used elsewhere in Scripture, so scholars aren't 100% sure of its meaning:

1. God is going to reduce the lifespan of mankind from roughly 900 years to roughly 100, presumably to reduce their ~~carbon~~ sin footprint. This does come to pass, but slowly over progressive generations after The Flood. We'll discuss this more then.
2. Another possibility is that God was extending a 120-year grace period to mankind before The Flood. Since we don't know exactly when He made this decision, it doesn't conflict with the known timeline of The Flood.

v4 People love getting worked up (and distracted) by these giants. The root word is Nephilim, which means "fallen ones" (which encourages fallen angel proponents in v2). It's only used here and in Numbers 13:33 where it's referring to literal giants (~10' tall) in the promised land. Remember that when people make it out like the Nephilim are on every other page of the OT. This is also likely why many Bible translations forego using the potentially titillating term "giant" and go with the more neutral/literal "Nephilim" since its used too infrequently to confirm exact meaning.

Additional complication comes from the fact that these "giants" are related at the end of the verse to "mighty/renowned/heroic" or "great" men of that day and age. This makes the word apply to both giants and warrior leaders in general (see Nimrod in 10:8). Note that just because someone is a hero of their day and age, doesn't mean they're righteous...again, look at our modern politicians and entertainment celebrities : /

All that being said, and the tabloid-bait section of this chapter complete, remember that there are reasonable and non-sensational explanations for many of these long-debated mysteries. Does that mean that unusual things didn't happen? Does that mean that we can't talk about the possibilities and even have a little fun theorizing? No. But again, God left that part of the story out for a reason. So, I'd suggest going with the simpler explanations that have some grounding elsewhere in Scripture and don't potentially lead into occult interest, and then get our focus back on God and...

v5 ...the problem of sin. Genesis (and well, the rest of the Bible) is going to hammer us with the constant reminder that "every intent of the thoughts of man are evil". Even the great Biblical "heroes/saints" regularly goof up and the Bible does not gloss over those failures.

"For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God." -Ro 3:23

Without Christ and His Spirit, we are powerless to overcome our sinful desires.

Q (v6-7): Is God capable of regret? Couldn't The Omniscient One see all of this coming?

Read Genesis 6:9-22

Q (v9): Was Noah sinless? The wording makes it sound like that here: "just, perfect, righteous, blameless."

v10 We'll cover Noah's sons in a little more detail in chapter 9. Shem was actually the middle son (9:22-24, 10:21). However, he was listed first due to the author wanting to stress his importance as a forefather of the nation of Israel (and eventually Christ). This practice was discussed in last week's lesson.

Q (v11): How do you think God views mankind and creation today?

v13 It's likely that, like elsewhere in Scripture, God sent prophets and warnings to the people of the world, but they ignored them/Him.

v14 We don't know what kind of wood was used for building the ark. The original word sounds like "gopher", which is why some translations call it gopherwood. Others say cypress, which is just a best guess. It may be a tree that no longer exists. "Pitch" is simply waterproofing tar.

v15-16 The schematics for the ark are left pretty vague. Maybe Noah was an expert shipwright already (*), maybe Moses left the information out (seems unlikely based upon his thorough documentation of the tabernacle) or God gave Noah more information as he went along. There's a significant amount of information available on the ark (not to mention a [real-world recreation](#) of it) at [answersingenesis.org/noahs-ark/](#) so I'm going to defer a lot of the usual questions to there for now.

In short, the ark was somewhere around 500' long x 80' wide x 50' tall (**). This is about half the width of a football field and 1.5 times as long. These proportions are similar to modern cargo vessels, and in fact, simulations show that it was a very sturdy boat for a worldwide flood with heavy winds. There were three decks of some sort - the root word is actually "nests". Research has shown that all the animals would have fit (remember our discussion of animal "kinds" from chapter 1).

(*) For all we know, Noah didn't live anywhere near the water and this was something entirely new to him and those around him! Imagine the ridicule he'd earn (but also the chances to "call on the name of the Lord").

(**) A cubit was the length of a forearm, from tip of the middle finger to elbow...somewhere around 18" or so. This "standard" of course varied over time, which is why we don't have a precise measurement.

v17 Well, most of the sea life survived (7:22).

v18 Here's the first instance of a covenant in the Bible. It was basically a contract, and in this case, God didn't lay out the fine print until after The Flood was over.

Q (v18): There are multiple types of covenants in the Bible. Can you guess which one this was?

1. Parity: A contract between two equal parties. If you've read the Bible before you might remember David and Solomon's parity covenants with Hiram. Or Abraham and Abimelech.
2. Suzerainty: A contract between a king and his vassals...that is, unequal parties. Typically, it's something about a king offering protection to his people (or offering terms of peace to avoid killing them in a siege!), in return for their obedience etc. Examples would of course be many of God's covenants with His people, or Joshua's covenants with many Canaanite cities in the Promised Land.
3. Promissory: This covenant is entirely one-sided. One party promises to provide something to the other party, for nothing in return. God made one of these with Abraham and his descendants. God also promised the same to David regarding the line of kings to proceed from him.

v19-21 God actually handled bringing the animals into the ark. Noah only had to bring the food.

v22 I love these verses. See also *Gen 12:4a, 22:1, Ex 40:16 and 1 Sam 3:10*. There's nothing secret or metaphorical here. It's just "God commands/calls, servant does/listens." "Yes, Sir. No, Sir. Thank you, Sir."

For the record, I'm not great at this. I like to know the plan ahead of time and sometimes I feel there's other things I should finish first. Except God rarely works that way, does He? He can put us on the spot and if we're lucky, reveals the plan as we go. My job is to respect His authority (and the sacrifice He made for me through Christ) and do what I'm told, trusting that He knows what He's doing, has the situation well in hand and will take care of me throughout and after, despite what things may look like. The trust part gets easier, the more time we spend with Him (*Ro 8:28*).

Does that mean that I can't question Him? No, so long as I'm being respectful, am willing to get started on the request anyway and can accept that He may not give me the answer I want, or when I want it.

Foreword

This is going to be a short lesson since a lot of the content here is reiterated from the last chapter or is somewhat repetitious from verse to verse. However, you may want to consult Answers in Genesis' articles on The Flood (<https://answersingenesis.org/the-flood/>) to fill up the time.

At this point, let me remind you that AIG isn't the Bible. It's just reasonable explanations of what may have happened in there, based upon our understanding of science. I'm not endorsing it as infallible, but rather as a relatively reliable source of further information for those who want more details than we can fit in these lessons.

Read Genesis 7:1-6

v2 Taking more clean animals is a new detail in this chapter. This would make some sense regarding both food and sacrifice after The Flood. The stranger bit is that this is the first time we've heard of clean and unclean animals...they're not commanded or detailed until *Leviticus 11*. Maybe God had given those instructions off the record? Maybe Moses knew in retrospect that they were clean and added that clarification when writing?

v4 Remember that vault of water above that we talked about in 1:6-7? It's possible that heavy cloud cover was emptying itself out now. This reduction of solar protection after The Flood could partially explain why lifespans started to decrease afterwards.

v6 God warns of 40 days and nights of rain, but The Flood itself will last much longer, as we'll see.

Q (v6, Rhetorical): When did The Flood take place, anyway?

We can pretty safely trace it to ~1,650 years after creation, based upon the genealogy in chapter 5.

With regards to how far from today: if a literal interpretation of the days of creation in chapter 1 is taken, then based upon other major historical events that we know the dates of, The Flood was around 4,350 years ago...making the earth around 6,000 years old.

Again, this is just for reference and is based upon our current understanding of history.

Read Genesis 7:7-16

v11 Not only did the vaults of heaven open for rain, it looks like the subterranean springs also broke forth. These might have been what watered the earth in 1:6. Water bursting forth from below would account for some of the large changes in the Earth's landscape after The Flood.

v14-16 As God said in 6:21, the animals came to Noah and loaded themselves on the ark. Further, God Himself shut (and we'd assume sealed) the door once everyone/thing was inside. We are ultimately incapable of saving ourselves. God is our deliverance.

v18 The term "the waters prevailed" is used repeatedly through the end of the chapter. The author appears to be running out of words to explain the absolute devastation of this liquid cataclysm.

v19-20 Some have claimed mention of mountains being covered is hyperbole (something I can't currently think of any clear examples of in the Bible). However, 8:5 and *Ps 104:8* confirm the event. It also continues to show that this couldn't have been some sort of local flood.

Skeptics (including my college religion professor...who was also the head of the religion department...at a private Christian college!) have pointed out that this would be an impossible amount of water, considering the height of some mountains today (~5.5mi tall). However, going back to chapter 1's lesson, the land on Earth may have been a single continent with no tectonic plate activity to push up our modern mountains yet. That is, the tallest mountains contemporary to The Flood may have only been, say, 1mi tall.

v24 The Flood did not peak until around five months had passed. We'll read about its decrease in the beginning of the next chapter.

Read Genesis 8:1-12

Q (v1): Did God forget Noah?

v2-3 There's symmetry in The Flood's duration. There were 40 days of rain and 150 days for The Flood to reach its peak. Now we have 150 days for The Flood to recede. Bet there's another 40 days coming to wrap things up?

v4 Speaking of repetition, the day the ark came to rest on Ararat appears to be the same as:

1. Israel's entry into Egypt during the famine
2. The Red Sea crossing
3. The Feast of Firstfruits
4. Entry into the Promised Land
5. Temple cleansing under Hezekiah
6. Esther's exposure of Haman, which reversed the Jews' impending slaughter
7. Jesus' resurrection

v6 Well, there's our closing 40 days of symmetry.

v7-10 Noah sent out two birds to scout for land: one unclean (the raven) but hardy, one clean (the dove) but delicate. From what we see in v13, it doesn't look like Noah could see the ground outside. He was entirely trusting in the birds (and God).

Q (v7-10): How do you handle situations where God only provides you with information on the beginning or end of His plan, but not all of the events or timing in between?

v11 If you ever wondered where the picture of an olive branch (often with dove) indicating peace came from, look no further. The humble, harmless dove offers hope for mankind.

Read Genesis 8:13-19

v14 So Noah was on the ark for somewhere around 1 year and 10 days...a bit longer than the 40 days we initially expected.

Q (v13, 15): Why didn't Noah get off the ark as soon as he saw the ground was dry in v13?
Who would want to wait nearly two more months to get off that smelly thing?

v17 Just as at the original creation, man and animal are given the command to multiply and fill the earth.

Read Genesis 8:20-22

v20 This is the second mention of sacrificial worship in the Bible (the first being Cain and Abel in 1:3-4). However, it's probably safe to assume that it was commonplace among the faithful up to this point. It looks like he made it before getting about to his own housing etc.

Q (v20): Considering the number of animals now alive, what was the cost of Noah's sacrifice?

Q (v20): Have you ever made an offering to God after a great trial or success in your life?

v21a Last time I'll bring anthropomorphism up in Genesis: God doesn't actually have a nose. The "pleasing scent" is a metaphor for God's approval of Noah's offering (of physical goods, or obedience or time, etc). We just reference a nose to make His reaction more relatable to us humans.

v21b The plus side is that God promised not to reboot the Earth again. The down sides are that He points out that the problem of sin remains, and that He can...no, will still destroy it by means other than a flood at the end times.

v22 This is another passage that's poetry in the original language. We lose some of the impact in English, unfortunately.

Foreword

Did you know that the story of a great flood is told in ancient cultures from all over the world? This includes even Native Americans, Mayans, Asians and aboriginal Australians...not those we'd typically associate with the Middle East or cradles of humanity.

Secular science treats The Flood as a myth, or something localized, and certainly doesn't treat the Bible's account as the original. What do you think the consequences would be if the world accepted available evidence supporting the Bible's claim?

Read Genesis 9:1-7

v2-3 We have a number of changes after The Flood:

1. While not explicit here, the landscape would have been changed dramatically.
2. The earth's atmosphere may have changed. We'll come back to this in v12+.
3. Animals will now live in fear of humans. Apparently, this wasn't the case before (and certainly would have made the whole ark thing more difficult).
4. If animals were not already carnivorous, they were now. Humans are no longer herbivores but are now encouraged to become omnivores...

v4 ...however, a restriction is given for humans: that the animal must be drained of its blood first. The book of Leviticus will go into more detail on this. The basic understanding is that all life belongs to God. As such, an animal's "lifeblood" belongs to Him. We may use the rest of the body for food, clothing, tools etc.

v5-6 On that note, the punishment for murder is now death...whether committed by man or animal.

Q (v5-6): Why does God take such issue with murder?

Q (v5-6): Does the Bible then support capital punishment? Even with God's grace and Christ's sacrifice?

Q (v5-6): In light of all of this, how do you think God feels about suicide?

Read Genesis 9:8-17

v8-11 Here's the second covenant in Scripture. This time it's a promise to man and beast not to destroy the world with a flood again. I'd be leaving critical information out if I ignored the fact that God will again judge the world at the End Times with fire (*2 Pt 3:7*).

v12-17 God set a rainbow in the sky as a perpetual reminder for mankind of His promise and His grace.

Q (v12-17): Wait, wouldn't a rainbow have been seen in the roughly 1,650 years of human existence so far?

Q (v12-17): But that's not what a rainbow means nowadays, does it?

Read Genesis 9:18-29

v18-19 Chapter 10 will cover the sons' genealogies and dispersion amongst the known world, so we'll save that for the next lesson (it's going to be a short one, anyway). Ham is called out as the father of Canaan for the benefit of the original readers: Israelites about to enter the Promised Land, which was full of hostile Canaanites.

v21 Again, the Bible doesn't gloss over the low points of its human heroes' lives. cf. *Ro 3:23*

v22-24 What exactly Ham did to his father isn't known. It seems likely that he made fun of Noah to brothers Shem and Japheth. Maybe he drew rude pictures on his body with a magic marker like modern frat boys? It may also be possible that his son, Canaan, was directly involved in the jest.

v25-27 Noah blesses Shem and Japheth for respectfully covering his drunken shame and curses Ham, through his son, Canaan. This was significant for the Israelites, who we'll find out were descendants of Shem. Moses wanted them to see that God had already given the contemporary Canaanites into Israel's hand.

It should also be noted that these verses were used (out of context of the rest of the Bible, of course) to justify slavery, as Ham's descendants appear to have included Africans.

Read Genesis 10:1-20

v2-5 Based upon the names and cities mentioned here, especially Javan (early reference to Greece), it appears that Japheth populated what would become Europe. Japheth's entry in this genealogy is very short.

v6-20 Based upon the same criteria as above, Ham's descendants appear to have populated Africa and parts of the Middle East. Cush is a reference to Ethiopia, and Mizraim would be Egypt (translated exactly as such in the NIV and ESV).

v8-12 As a child, besides finding Nimrod's name funny, I thought his description as a "mighty hunter before the Lord" indicated his strength and possibly faith in God. Except the root words and context indicate that like Lamech (4:19-24) and the "mighty men" before the flood (6:4), Nimrod appears to have behaved as an arrogant tyrant "in the face of" (vs "before") the Lord. Not helping his case any, we see here that he also founded the future Assyrian and Babylonian empires, which would become known for their idolatry, pride, strength and cruelty.

v15-19 We're going to be hearing a lot about the Canaanites for the next few books of the Bible, so get used to hearing some of these names. They inhabited much of the land that would eventually be promised to the Israelites.

v16 We'll find out later that the Jebusites were early occupants of the city of Jebus, which would become Jerusalem.

v19 Sodom, Gomorrah and to a lesser extent, Admah and Zeboiim (sometimes Zeboyim), would become known for their sinful depravity.

Read Genesis 10:21-32

v21-28 As we discussed in chapter 6, the line of Christ would come through Shem, so some of these names may sound familiar if you've read either of Christ's genealogies in the NT. Shem would be the father of the Israelite and Arab nations of the Middle East. This is the source of the term "Semitic" peoples or languages. Over more recent times, it evolved into specifically the Jews (for example, the term "antisemitism").

v24-25 While Shem was the source of the term Semite, Eber was the source of the term "Hebrew". This is why Eber is mentioned early in v21...he was a forefather of the Israelites.

v25 Peleg (also mentioned in *1 Chron 1:19*) has a rather unassuming, but possibly major sidenote. In his time "the earth was divided." This may refer to the Tower of Babel coming up in the next chapter. However, some scholars believe this refers to the gradual splitting of Pangaea that we've mentioned before.

v32 Noah became a sort of second Adam here, being a new forefather of all the nations of the world after the flood.