

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.
Do you read the second book in a series but not the first? Do you watch the movie sequel but not the original? Prequels fill in the gaps and provide backstory for later episodes. You do not have a full understanding (or appreciation) of the NT without reading the OT!
2. "The OT God is different than the NT God."
Read *Exodus 3:14*, *Numbers 23:19* and *Hebrews 13:8*. God does not change. A big part of the problem is that those who hold to this belief haven't read the OT in context. That is, they only read (or listen to) snippets from biased platforms such as social media. The point of a verse-by-verse (deeper, meatier) study is to read each verse, taking into account the surrounding verses, chapters, history and culture of the time.
3. "The OT God is too mean!"
Again, not in context. God is incredibly merciful to both pagans and the faithful in the OT. If you believe that He's patient and loving (etc) now, you have to believe He was then and seek for it (I promise you will find).
4. "It's booooring!"
Well, if you're reading genealogies or the counts of plates donated to the temple, maybe...though those were incredibly important to the people of the time (again, context). But, ignoring all of what we learn about God and ourselves, ignoring all of the prophecies that would be and are being fulfilled today, the OT contains a massive amount of factual, fascinating history and drama. We've scolded people for watching smutty shows like *Game of Thrones*, when they could instead read the OT to get their fill of non-fiction intrigue, love triangles, sex, murder, rape, incest, family feuds, dragons, angels, demons, giants and more. These books have an abundance of Jerry Springer, *Friday the 13th* and Disney fairytale endings within and God wants you to read them.

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?

God, of course - not a cosmic accident with infinitesimally small chances of occurrence. An intelligent and loving parent carefully crafted each and every sub-particle of the universe and everything in it.

But wait, there's more:

The term for God here, "Elohim", is actually plural...and yet "created" is singular (*). One verse into the Bible, and we already have hints of the triune God and the human inability to wrap our comparatively feeble minds around the concept of three in one.

(*) This grammatical contradiction is more apparent in other languages that conjugate verbs differently based upon the quantity of subjects. In English, a simple example would be something like this:

"She (singular) owns the cat." and "They (plural) own the cat." Those both sound correct, right? How about "God own the cat." That doesn't sound right, and yet it sort of is. God is both plural and singular.

Another example you may think of is when Jesus said (*Jn 8:48*), "Before Abraham was (past), I Am (ever-present)." God ruins our grammar! But rightly so...He cannot be contained by our minds.

(Wait, you mean Jesus existed before time as well? Yep. He took part in creation. We'll see elsewhere in Scripture that the Holy Spirit was there as well...if not already mentioned over the waters in this verse.)

Maybe you like the idea of a god that you can fully-understand...compartmentalize...control? Yet, what is the benefit of a god that lives by your rules, by your morals or is limited by your mental capacity? History and mythology are littered with human-made, petty, impotent gods. They make us feel good about ourselves, but they're powerless to save and never worthy of admiration or hope.

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

Chaos, darkness and water. Note that this conflicts with secular science's theory that it was molten rock.

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

God. The sun hadn't been created yet. God brings light into darkness. God speaks and creation responds.

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?

Oh ho ho, I'm not touching that with a ten foot pole here! I will make a few points, however:

- 1. The root word for "day" here is used elsewhere in the Bible for a literal 24-hour day.**
- 2. We fit science into the Bible, not the other way around.**
God created science (systematic knowledge of our world). God *encourages* science. You can be both a Christian and a scientist. The question is whether you treat science or God['s Word] as the authority.

In short, the secular world tries to fit God into our understanding of things.

e.g., The divine parting of Red Sea in the book of Exodus was impossible, so there must have been a combination of certain types of natural disasters to drain the body of water temporarily. Science is the authority that God (and His Word) must yield to.

The Christian world tries to fit our understanding of things into God's Word.

e.g., God, as omnipotent Creator, is capable of splitting the water and creating dry ground for the exact amount of time needed. Even if He didn't do this by miraculous means, He certainly controlled the otherwise impossible timing, location and chances of the earthquakes/hurricanes etc required to perform the miracle (and that still doesn't explain the dry ground). God (and His Word) are the authority and our feeble understanding of science must yield to Them.

This leads to #3:

- 3. You either believe God or you don't.** *cf. Rev 3:14-16, Joshua 24:15*
There's no middle ground on this one. God either wrote the Bible (through His Divinely-inspired servants) or He didn't. The Bible either is true or it's a lie. Do you believe that God is capable of creating the universe in six days? How about one day? I, personally, encourage you to hold to what the Bible says literally. However, if I find out in heaven that it was a metaphorical day, I'm ok with that too.

This leads to #4:

- 4. This issue, within reason, isn't unto salvation.**
What does "unto salvation" mean? Well, so long as I'm following the cautions in #2 and 3 above, it doesn't really have any bearing on my salvation. That is, I have accepted Jesus Christ as the perfect Son of God, whose atoning sacrifice for my sins has reconciled me with God, and who I now dutifully serve.

God's requirements for salvation didn't include whether I think the sabbath is Saturday or Sunday.
God's requirements for salvation didn't include whether I think wearing antiperspirant is unnatural.
God's requirements for salvation didn't include whether I tithe on my gross or net income.

The issues that don't affect our faith (salvation) in God and His Son aren't worth arguing about.
So, again, within reason, let's not bicker over petty stuff...it makes Christians look bad to the world.

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.

Advanced Note: The sky here is called "heaven." Do you remember in *2 Cor 12:2* where Paul talks about being taken up to the "third heaven?" It probably made you start thinking about God's heavenly realm as having multiple layers...much as the fictional Dante's Divine Comedy helped popularize the idea of layers of heaven and hell - each having more intense holiness or suffering, respectively. Yeah well, there's no Biblical precedent for that. Neat story; likely not true. In any case, in Biblical times, the visible sky was called the first heaven, space was the second heaven and the third was God's realm.

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.

There's a possibility that it was just one supercontinent...you may have heard of Pangea? If you look at a map of the globe, you may notice that most of the continents look like puzzle pieces that would neatly fit into one another. There is scientific evidence that would lead us to believe this is true. It would also explain how man and animal spread so quickly through the world, if the continents parted during cataclysmic events such as the worldwide flood and some of the massive earthquakes mentioned in the OT. (This is fitting science into the Bible, as mentioned before. It's exciting to see it in action.)

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?

Primarily for light, of course. He also specifically made them for telling time. Again, God wanted us to get involved with science. He looked forward to our discovery and research into astronomy and physics here. Before atomic clocks and GPS satellites, people used the stars to determine the time of day, time of year, celestial events (eclipses, etc) and navigate on land and sea. This leads to another, unwritten point:

We can't help but view the stars and our solar system without being in awe of its beauty and grandeur. Think about the fact that God made it to elicit that "wow" effect from us, and for His glory.

Note that the stars were not created for fortune-telling etc. God encouraged astronomy not astrology. Astrology is strictly forbidden elsewhere in Scripture. Some Biblical translations modify the wording here a bit to make it clear that worship or divination of celestial bodies is not what He had in mind. Interestingly, God doesn't even mention the sun and moon by name. They're just a sidenote compared to Him.

Finally, secular science says that the stars were created before earth...not after.

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. **(Read Job 41 for a chilling passage regarding God’s detailed care in creation, man’s place vs God’s and God’s place vs His creation).**

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?

Yes and no. It shows without doubt that God created life in a “mature” state...that is, we didn’t grow over the course of billions of years from amoeba that were planted here by a passing comet. Humans were created humans. Dogs were created dogs.

However, the idea that species evolve over time is not a falsehood. It’s observable, even in our short lifespans that physical characteristics of plants and animals can change based upon environment and breeding. Christians do deny evolution as a rule for change; they deny that it was a source of life.

For example, God did not originally create every one of the hundreds of types of dog that exist today. Many were “created” by years of selective breeding by man for specific purposes (guard dogs, herding dogs, companion dogs). Likewise, many were “created” by years of breeding in specific environments (hot, cold, rugged, domestic etc) which encouraged certain characteristics to thrive. God likely created one or a small number of “base” breeds of dog, cat, hamster, sparrow etc...and they legitimately evolved in shape, size, color etc over the course of time due to their environments. We’ll come back to this later when we get to Noah’s ark. Yet again, science isn’t bad when we fit it into God’s Word.

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

First of all, the “Our” in this verse refers again to the triune God. It’s not a reference to angels, since v28 explicitly states that we’re created in God’s image.

Secondly, it’s highly unlikely that we look like God...two arms, two legs, sexual organs (I won’t use the proper terms since people tend to get squeamish for some reason when I do.) What would He need those for - He’s a spirit, outside of space and time. As a teenager, I was actually thrown out and banned from a Christian group after politely but firmly disagreeing with the leader’s statement that “God must have a penis (oops, I said the forbidden word) because of this verse, and anyone who disagrees is a heretic.”

We take after God’s personal, moral and intellectual image. We love to create (writing, painting, wiring, coding, having children), we are full of emotion (love, joy, laughter, anger) etc. How do you react to having a pet or child? Isn’t preparing for them, protecting them, guiding them, cuddling them, teaching them and observing their interactions with what you’ve provided them a joy? Where do you think we got that from? How amazing is it to notice the differences in each one...and how they look or behave like parts of their parents?

Another possibility worth mentioning is that the preposition “in” can also be translated “as”. “Let Us make man as Our image.” In this case, we’re created to be physical representations of God and His reign on earth. God’s later prohibition of creating [“graven”] images of Him would be in part because we are already the images of His majesty.

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?

Male and female. I know that’s not PC now. I’m not here to argue. I’m just telling you what’s in God’s Word. We don’t choose; God does.

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

No. He can do anything. He doesn't get tired.

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

cf. Ex 31:13, Mk 2:27

As far as God goes, He "rested" on the seventh day to reflect upon His accomplishment - much as humans like to take a step back and appreciate their work when done. Where do you think we got that trait from? Oh right, we were created in God's image!

But Jesus said in *Mark 2:27* that, contrary to popular belief, the Sabbath was created for us. Specifically, we are to use it as an opportunity to rest from our work. God knows that we'll burn ourselves out laboring non-stop (especially in this country and culture) and wants us to take the opportunity to relax and spend some time interacting with or considering all the blessings that He's surrounded us with. The natural response in that situation should be appreciation and seeking a closer relationship with Him. *That's why we get together on Sundays to worship.*

***Exodus 31:13* adds that we use this opportunity of being different than the rest of the world to teach others (including our children) about God. Just as Christ in the NT asked His followers to stand out in a crowd, God in the OT wanted His children to be different than the nations around them. In both cases, being an oddball attracts attention, leading to witnessing opportunities, leading to reconciliation to God, leading to His glory.**

Now, I said we worship on Sunday because that's when we typically observe the Sabbath in Christianity. However, it appears that the Sabbath was actually a Saturday, which is when the Jews observe it. The day isn't that important, though. The idea is that you set regular time to clear your schedule and mind and seek after and rest in God. Maybe you have to work Sundays. Maybe you work second shift. God's ok with that (*Hos 6:6, Mt 12:1-7*). Just get a time of rest into your routine as He told you to and be sure to share some of it with other believers.

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.

This is a good time to bring up the fact that the books of the Bible aren't always laid out in strict chronological order. There may be gaps of years or decades between chapters. Some chapters or books may go *back* in time to cover a related item that happened previously or concurrently with another event. Think of these as flashbacks, or "Meanwhile in..." interludes on your favorite TV show serial. Some books even re-tell another one's content from a new viewpoint (such as *Kings/Chronicles* or the gospels of *Matthew/Mark/Luke/John*).

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?

The root word for “formed” is the same used of a potter working on a clay pot. There is design and intent and care and a steady hand implied. We are God’s masterpiece and He gave the appropriate amount of attention to detail.

Further, we are the only creation that He breathed into. Just like the animals before us, we are living beings, yes. But we also have an infusion of God’s spirit...His character...His image. This separates us from the rest of creation.

Read Genesis 2:8-17

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

No one knows. The rivers mentioned would have been obliterated/rerouted in the flood.

This is a good time to bring up another major point of the Bible:

What God put in the Bible, He put in there for a reason. What God left out of the Bible, He left out there for a reason. Knowing where Eden was isn’t important to our faith, so He left it out. We tend to get focused on insignificant (but mysterious) details and then miss the big point. We’ll cover this more in chapter 6.

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

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

The trees likely didn’t have any special power in themselves (*). They were signs of obedience and disobedience to God. Obedience leads to eternal life, while disobedience leads to separation from Him, loss of innocence (knowledge of sin and thus contrasting good) and eventual death. There is a lot of high-level metaphysical and philosophical discussion on the point of the trees that will give you a headache...and none of it is anything we can confirm until we see God in heaven. Despite our free will, He had already planned for the occasion of our disobedience through Christ, literally ahead of time.

(*) On that note, *Revelation 2:7* and *22:2* indicate that trees of life will exist in heaven, so we’ll get to find out for sure later.

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

Well, enjoying the splendors of the garden and spending time with God, sure. But here we see that God made Adam to...yes, work. However, this would be an enjoyable sort of work before the curse to come in the upcoming verses. Hobbyist gardeners can relate to the fun of tending a garden...when they don’t have to deal with weeds or pests. Construction workers may enjoy the outdoors and seeing the results of their labor, floor by floor...without the sunburn, slipped discs and wage disputes.

So don’t expect to sit on a cloud and play a harp for eternity in heaven...God’s going to put you to work...but in a job that makes use of your talents and that provides you with happiness and accomplishment. The cliché of “Find a job you like; then you’ll never work a day in your life” applies here.

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

God cannot lie (*Titus 1:1-2*), so that’s out. The literal translation of this phrase is “dying, you will die.” That is, it would be a gradual process with a guaranteed ending...death.

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?

No, God simply described woman as a helper...literally "one who helps" ...and it's the same word used of God when He assists us.

"But wait", you may say, "1 Peter 3:7 says that women are the weaker vessel!" Yes, this is true and is an elementary observation of sexual dimorphism. Human males were built (by God) to be comparatively larger, more muscular, more aggressive and defensive. Men were created (in part) to be the physical protectors of women. That's it. There's nothing said about man being a superior gender. This could turn into a massive study in itself, so I'll leave it at that for now.

Again, we'll discuss this more later, but there are things God made men better at. And there are things that God made women better at. Only when they work together do you have a whole, functioning unit. They help one another. As soon as one feels that it's superior, things go south.

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?

The point was that Adam would 100% identify with this partner. She was, as he said in v23, part of his core.

Biblical commentator, Matthew Henry, said this:

**"..the woman was made of a rib out of the side of Adam;
not made out of his head to rule over him,
nor out of his feet to be trampled upon by him,
but out of his side to be equal with him, under his arm to be protected, and near his heart to be beloved."**

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

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

God selected the man's perfect match and God brought the two of them together.

Adam was keeping himself occupied with what God had given him to do.

Why am I asking you these questions? Because modern dating often emphasizes barhopping, dating websites, or exposing yourself (physically or otherwise) on social media. In short, we are doing most of the work. We have a picture in our heads of what we want and we either scramble about desperately grasping at straws, or we isolate ourselves hoping that our prince or princess will suddenly show up on the doorstep.

We already discussed that God knows our needs ahead of time. We already discussed that as our Creator, God knows us and what we need (need ≠ want) better than we do. I propose, based upon this passage, that we prioritize serving God in whatever capacity He's already given us: volunteer work, church service, family care etc and let Him bring what we need to us.

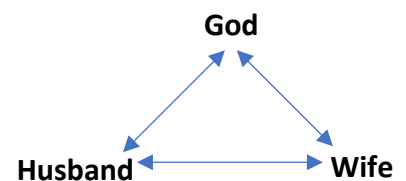
That's not to say you can't go out on dates etc. But you should prioritize God's place in your life first (which is necessary for a successful marriage anyway), and be willing to see what He's offering (as it's often not what you were looking for...in fact, it may have been sitting next to you all along). God is the best matchmaker, not the Tinder app on your phone. If you rush a mate or force God's hand, you'll both pay for it later.

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?

I.e., if God's so great and awesome, why did Adam need anyone else?

Can we get by with only God? Yes. Everything we have comes from Him anyway (*1 Cor 4:7b*) and He's the only One that saves us, never lies to us and will never ultimately disappoint us.

Except God created us as social creatures. We were made to spend time and interact with other humans, as well. Most of us will suffer if alone (physically, emotionally, mentally or spiritually) for any length of time. While I adore God, it's often hard for me to relate to Him...I can't interact with him using the five senses that He gave me and I can't begin to understand what's going through His head (...which isn't entirely different than dealing with the opposite sex, I admit!). It's also hard to fulfill that command to be fruitful and multiply by myself.

Let me give you an example. I don't have children, so a lot of my learning and eureka moments about God's parenting skills comes from pets. As of writing this, it was about 18 months ago that my wife and I purchased a puppy, which we named "Jude". As dogs are wont to do, he follows us everywhere and worships the ground we walk on. We love him and accordingly provide him with varied (healthy) food, treats, training, exercise, grooming, attention and plenty of new toys. We've also encouraged him to work (there's that awful word again) in the manner to which his breed was created for (guardianship) which keeps his mind sharp and makes him feel as accomplished as a dog can be.

However, despite our being "perfect" providers for him and having a mutual adoration...Jude still longed for other playmates – similar to himself...you know, quadrupeds. He'd whine and struggle to be near passing dogs. He'd cry when our two cats refused to play with him...even after he ran to bring his favorite toy to them as an offering. I don't know if he understood what he was missing, but we did.

It was not good that our "son" was alone. He needed a companion similar to himself. His human parents couldn't be expected to share his love of sniffing butts or chasing squirrels. His naturally-independent feline siblings couldn't be expected to adopt pack mentality. Nor were they eager to play with a miniature polar bear that weighed 102lbs more than their combined weight and was charging in their direction like a runaway freight train...toy in his smiling mouth or not. He needed another dog (and one big enough to handle him). Enter the new puppy, Eve (not a coincidental name), of the same breed and from durable stock.

Now, rather than feeling jealous of his new companion, we are overjoyed to watch the two of them enjoy what we carefully planned and prepared for them, knowing that we will remain their alpha pack leader.

I hope that through your children or pets or someone you've taken under your wing, you've experienced just a fraction of how God feels about us. This is not happenstance. God gave us these relationships so that with our comparatively feeble minds, we can experience firsthand how He feels about us (and give Him glory in return – *Ro 1:20*).

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?

Everyone knows the serpent was Satan. But what proof do we have for the ultra-skeptical/detail-oriented? Well, once we hit the all-but-explicit prophecies of Christ killing the serpent in v15, there's little doubt. But we also have verses like Revelation 12:9 and many many other references to Satan's character that match what we see the serpent doing here.

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?

He doesn't. No "Pleased to meet you." No "Can you guess my name?" He jumps immediately to deception and casting doubt on God's Word. Sound familiar? Another big point about Satan: he has a limited set of tricks and uses them over and over again. You'll notice he has done the exact same thing every day of every year throughout the world in religion, science, politics etc: "Did God really say...? Surely, He actually meant...There's no way that rule still applies today...We're smarter than that now...You deserve better" etc.

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?

"God" is Elohim, which just means god, judge or ruler. We capitalize the 'G' to indicate the one true God.

"LORD" (all capitalized, usually in a special font, as shown to the left) is Yahweh/Jehovah, God's "personal" covenant name, as far as humans are concerned. It won't actually be officially revealed until Ex 3, but since this book was written after that point in history, the readers would understand. Don't confuse this with:

"Lord", which is Adonai, a literal lord, ruler or master.

Satan appears to have intentionally left off God's proper name or title...just referring to him as "oh you know...that god guy." This is like intentionally calling your physician "mister" or a police officer "hey you." It's a snide remark. Kids today (who should get off my lawn) would say it's "throwing shade."

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 _____.

Pride. What Satan was saying was, "God's holding out on you. He has secret knowledge and freedoms that you should also have." This was the exact same sin that caused Satan to fall. Further, the lure of hidden knowledge is still a problem for humans today (see any cult or "secret order" or bit of apocrypha etc. In the NT times, it was called gnosticism).

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?

Not much. She just wanted something different. Sin does this. Even when we're perfectly content, it finds a way to lure us into wanting something else.

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

Right next to her! Silent. Just going along with it. We'll get into this a little later.

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?

No, just as we do as parents or pet owners, we ask our wards rhetorical or pointed questions to start dialog and give them to the opportunity to think/feel/respond appropriately. God had the right to wipe them out on the spot. Yet He wanted to salvage the relationship with the children He still loved.

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

When confronted with their sin, the guilty Adam blames Eve, then God. Eve blames the serpent. It was ultimately Adam and Eve's fault (and as we're going to see, more Adam's, believe it or not).

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)

Even in punishing the rebellion of His creation, God promised a seed ("offspring" or descendants") to Adam and Eve, meaning they'll still live some time. But as hinted at in the NKJV translation (which capitalizes references to God), Eve's Seed is a promise of Christ, who ultimately descends from her (*Lk 3:23-38*). *15c* confirms what most of us already know: that Satan would cause harm to Jesus at the cross (metaphorically "striking His heel"), but Jesus would return from the dead to ultimately deliver a deathblow to Satan (metaphorically "crushing his head"). Read *Is 53* for more information.

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 pleas 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?

One would assume it was in acknowledgement of their only hope...the promised children to come from Eve. Through Eve (meaning “to live”) our only hope of everlasting life and reconciliation with God would appear.

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?

Some have assumed it was because Abel offered a blood sacrifice, whereas Cain offered foodstuffs. There are two problems with this:

- 1. Nothing in the text describes a need to cover sin. These offerings appear to have been for worship.**
- 2. God later directed Israel to offer both grain and meat offerings.**

The difference appears to be that Abel offered his best: the firstborn and their fat. Whereas there is no similar description of Cain's...he may have just been going through the motions (*1 Jn 3:11-12*, *Heb 11:3-4*, *Jude 1:10-11*).

A comparison can be made here as to how we serve the Lord. Some of us seek His face and will with devotion, humility and an eagerness to please. Whereas others go to church, say prayers and even serve their community...but out of tradition, a search for praise or even a feeling as if they're "good enough" on their own (self-righteousness). God knows our hearts and intents, as we'll see.

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?

With mercy (not giving us what we deserve) and grace (giving us what we don't deserve). God asks yet another parental rhetorical question and gently shows His son how to correct the issue. He clearly wants to maintain a relationship with Cain, despite the sin and rebellion that he's in.

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

Satan and our sinful nature never leave us alone...ever (1 Pt 5:8). If you give sin an inch, it will take a mile. We just saw that happen with Eve, step by step in the last chapter.

But when we accept Christ as our Savior we will no longer be tempted by sin, right? Incorrect. Christ and His Spirit give us the power to resist sin, yes. However, even with those spiritual walls raised around us, Satan will walk around them, kicking each and every brick until he finds one that's loose. Thankfully, over time, we get better at noticing those weak spots and patching them up.

I'm sure every one of us can think of a time this week (probably today!) that we gave in to sin just a little, and it took us somewhere we regretted (Ro 7:8a & 18-25). If you're having trouble "ruling over" habitual sin, then in the context of these verses, I'd first ask how much time you're spending daily in prayer or in your Bible (*)...it's a lot easier to keep sin out of our hearts and minds if we've already filled those spaces with God for the day.

(*) The time doing so should be dedicated to God. It shouldn't just be, "I read two chapters and said an 'Our Father who art in heaven' prayer at bedtime". Turn off your TV and your phone. Get up early. Whatever it takes to give Him the time He deserves. Do your friends or family members like when you're texting while they're trying to talk to you? No? Then neither does God.

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?

The reality is, especially based upon 5:3-4, is that Adam and Eve had a lot more children than just the first two: Cain and Abel. Adam lived to be 930 years old...that's time for lots of kids. We have no idea how old Cain and Abel were when the murder occurred. In terms of our current lifespans, we assume they were in their teens or 20s...when in reality they could have been more than 100 and had many siblings.

It seems unlikely that God created more people, as we're not told of it, and it doesn't fit the problem with Adam & Eve's original sin.

As far as a wife goes, in the context of a recent "good" creation and near-perfect genes, it wouldn't have been a problem for siblings to marry one another. The prohibition of family marriages came much later (*Lev 18*), when lifespans were dramatically reduced and genes were likely damaged enough by sin, inbreeding and the environment to prohibit. If Adam & Eve's first child was a murderer in short time, it's not hard to believe that a later sister would be willing to follow him.

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.

Seven stands as a number of completion or totality in the Bible. It's not always literally seven things...think of it like an example of modern hyperbole when we say, "I've got a million things to do!" You don't literally mean 1,000,000 things...you just mean a whole heck of a lot...all the things. (cf. *Mt 18:21-22, Lk 17:3-5*)

It is used frequently, along with the numbers three, twelve and forty, among others.

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?

Well, we've started polygamy (not part of God's original plan – 2:24) and we went from murder to boasting about murder (to others, and in the face of God).

Q: But there are a lot of examples of polygamy in the Bible! Even of godly people! Explain that!

Yes, but note some major points (this discussion could go on for a long time):

- 1. Genesis 2:24 states one man and one wife is God's plan. Whether we choose to obey or not is irrelevant.**
- 2. God is notably upset about men marrying a multitude of women in 6:2. (cf. Deut 17:14-17)**
- 3. Jesus wasn't keen on breaking God's plan for marriage (Mt 19:7-9), so we can rule out "marriage changing with the times" and confirm that while God tolerates some things, He doesn't necessarily approve. Further, there are sometimes less-obvious consequences for going against His plan, which brings us to:**
- 4. How many times do you hear of a man having multiple wives (and thus, split households of children) that turns out well? Abraham, Jacob, Moses, David, Solomon etc...they all followed cultural norms (instead of God's) and ended up with a headache of marital strife and disobedient children.**

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?

Just like our discussions of creation in chapter 1, the major point here is if you trust that God did (or could do) exactly what he said, as unlikely as it may sound at first. I, personally, believe that God’s Word is largely literal and as such, pre-Flood humans were living roughly 900 years. Even if these ages were for some reason metaphorical, I still believe that the Creator of the universe can make humans that live a really long time.

Another item to note is that the integrity of the world was very different this long ago, and so close to creation. The earth, its atmosphere and our relatively uncorrupted DNA was likely in much better shape to support longer lifespans. This is another place that any of you science-buffs may have to dig through answeringgenesis.org for some details on changes to the earth, atmosphere and DNA after The Flood in the upcoming chapters. We’ll discuss this topic more in the future, so sit tight.

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)

Humans have long sought a way to extend their earthly lives perpetually. In fact, I recently had a twenty-something-year-old man express to me the same desire. My reaction was much the same as Lamech's: "Who wants to live on this cursed sphere forever? Everything's falling apart. Sin makes everyone jerks! I'd go insane if I had to stay here forever."

Don't misunderstand, I am not advocating an early exit. God has given us a job to do until He releases us (*Gen 4:26, Philippians 1:19-26*) and He has provided us with many things to enjoy on the way.

But there's nothing here on earth that fully satisfies. Even the powerful, wealthy and "successful" here are always seeking more...and often end up in the headlines as suicide cases. Have you read Ecclesiastes yet? Solomon, the wisest human to have existed, having sated apparently just about every earthly desire, ended up in a deep depression over how short-lived and pointless it all was. His (and our) hope is in the Lord...in that promised Seed that offers us a restored relationship with God and then a future restored body and earth. That's where and how I want to live forever! (*1 Cor 2:9*)

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?

As with previous mysteries, we don't know for sure. There are three primary views and all have their ups and downs. I'll give summaries here:

1. **Fallen angels were marrying human women.** This is what people commonly hear and is the most exciting possibility.

This view is supported by the fact that the root words for "sons of God" are used elsewhere in Scripture to refer to angels. Also, we fancifully imagine that the progeny of that partially-divine mating would produce the giant (Nephilim) children mentioned in v4.

However, nowhere else in Scripture do we hear about angels behaving like this, or even being capable of mating. In fact, Jesus said in *Mk 12:25* that angels do not marry. Further, there are giants after The Flood as well, which means that this theory is either wrong (since Noah was not an angel) or that angels came back a second time. Further further, why would mankind be punished (in the upcoming Flood) for angels' misbehavior? Further further further, if the angels did come back a second time after The Flood to create more giants, why wasn't there a punishment again?

This theory is fanciful but seems unlikely.

2. **Faithful men of God were marrying pagan women.**

This is supported by the fact that the root words for "sons of God" are also used elsewhere in Scripture to refer to believers in God/Christ. We know that believers are prohibited/dissuaded from getting into mixed marriages (too many OT references to list/2 *Cor 6:14*, respectively) and we already saw the results from Cain's story and offspring in chapter 4.

Problems (in short) are that there's some shoehorning of root words to fit this idea. Further, why would the marriage of faithful and pagan produce giant children? That is, unless the word for "giant" isn't what we think it is...read on:

3. **Powerful men marrying multiple women as part of a power grab.** This one makes more common sense...at least in the face of my personal opinion, which frequently shaves with Occam's Razor.

This theory is supported by the fact that the root words for “sons of God” can also also refer to men in authority: kings, judges, nobles etc (Ps 82:6, Jn 10:34). As a recent Scriptural example, let’s look back at Lamech at the end of chapter 4. There you had a powerful man who apparently started polygamy and brashly boasted about committing murder and his defiance of God.

This problem with man hasn’t changed. Whether the country each man is in supports multiple marriages or not, men tend to seek relationships with multiple women, increasing wealth and the recognition that goes with these things. We don’t need to look far in politics or the entertainment industries to see modern examples. Nor do we need to see how this behavior devastates families and society as a whole, which would understandably tick God off. But what about the giant kids thing? That doesn’t make sense here either. Correct, keep reading on:

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?

He certainly did. And it certainly hurt his heart to see the damage being caused by and to His beloved children and creation. What we have here (and in similar locations such as *Ex 32:14*, *1 Sam 15:11*, *Jer 26:3*) is an anthropomorphism. That is, we are assigning human characteristics to something that's not human...in this case, God - usually to make them more relatable.

The perfect, holy, just and loving God has every right to be pained at our behavior and disappointed at what we could have had if we were obedient. The root word almost indicates a sighing (there's another anthropomorphism, as God has no lungs with which to sigh) and is part of the names of Nehemiah and Nahum.

Further, see *Mal 3:6*, *Sam 1:15:29* and *Heb 13:8* for OT and NT backup that God does not change (i.e., regret).

Read Genesis 6:9-22

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

If we've seen anything by even the sixth chapter of the entire Bible, it's that humans are sinful beings. Look back at the comments on v5. The idea here is that Noah stood out from the rest of the world. He faithfully (i.e., with best of intentions) followed the standards set by God. He "walked with God" as Enoch had done.

The root word for "just/blameless" indicates righteousness, or accurately following a standard or example. It may remind you of someone morally upright, or abstinent from drugs, etc being called a "straightedge". See *Gen 15:6*. Our righteousness does not come from our never sinning (that's not possible). It comes only through faith in God through Christ, and then imitating Him. As Christ hadn't been here yet, OT believers were deemed righteous by their faith in God. (Note that faith elicits action. I'm not "faithful" by saying "I believe in God". I'm faithful by putting that proclamation of trust into action and doing what He asks of me, trusting Him through difficult times, etc. See *1 Jn 2:3-6*, *Jm 2:14-26*.)

The root word for "perfect/blameless" indicates completeness. Noah was a man of integrity, missing no qualities that a human should have.

Further, elsewhere in Scripture, we hear of humans being called perfect (e.g., *Job 1:1 & 8*), even by God, while their sin is also acknowledged.

v10 We'll cover Noah's sons in a little more detail in chapter 10. 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?

I don't include this question as a scare tactic. But there's a sobering reality that humanity is still corrupt, and the earth falls apart around us as part of this. Despite thousands of years of cultural and scientific "progress" since Genesis 6, not much has changed (*Ecc1 1:9*). We still need to be reconciled with God before the next judgment. Later reading in the Bible will show that we are nearing or possibly in the end times (*Mt 24:3-14*).

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](http://answersingenesis.org/noahs-ark/) 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.

Read Genesis 8:1-12

Q (v1): Did God forget Noah?

No, this is the same situation as 6:6-7: an anthropomorphism. The author is just applying human behavior to a non-human so we can relate to it better.

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?

Well, most of us struggle...especially the control freaks like myself. The clichéd (but true) rule is to trust in God and wait (Ps 27:14, Ps 37:9, Is 30:18). The practical rule is to keep doing what He last asked you to do (Acts 1) (*) while continuing to spend time in the Bible, in prayer and with other believers. From [repeated, to my shame] personal experience, the wrong thing to do is try to force God's hand!

(*) If you're a new believer or are at a loss as to what God would have you do, try volunteering for a new ministry. Churches always need ushers, janitors, teachers, laborers etc. Experience in these areas (even those you find "aren't for you") can help you with discovering or developing Spiritual gifts, or put you in closer touch with those that have insight on your situation.

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?

It would appear that he was waiting on God's command to go. We've seen up to this point that Noah obediently followed the Lord's commands. Further, God had sealed Noah in when this all started. It seems fitting to wait for God to now let him out.

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?

Noah was sacrificing a large portion of the clean animals available to...well, the world. He could have saved those animals to feed his family or kick-start his new flocks and herds. However, he considered God capable of restoring any loss and worthy of his trust. We give God our best, off the top, despite what logic, self-preservation and our society suggest. (cf. Mal 1:8, Mal 3:10, Mk 12:41-43, Lk 6:38)

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

While Christ was the only sacrifice we needed to "satisfy" God (Ro 5:8-11), there were such things as freewill offerings (e.g., Ex 35). Does God, the Creator of the universe, need our stuff? No, this sort of offering is actually more for us. It gives Him the glory He deserves (all of it), reminds us of His love and faithfulness and keeps us thankful.

It's sort of the equivalent of the strong desire to take your friends or family out to dinner after you get a promotion or win a game of some sort. You want to rejoice. You want to thank those who have supported you. Except, in this case, you're taking God out to dinner...so to speak.

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?

v6 clearly states that it's because man (unlike animals) is created in God's image. Committing murder, then, is an attack on God and what He spent time and care creating (including the soul).

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

While I don't want to open up a huge can of worms with that debate, I will point out that pre- or post-Christ, man is still created in God's image. According to this passage, and our previously-described documentation that God does not change: God will not leave any person or institution unaccountable for not putting a beyond-doubt, premeditated and unjust murderer to death. (See also *Num 35:33*, *2 Kings 24:3-4*, *Ps 106:38*, *Jer 19:4-8*, *Mt 26:52*.)

We must infer the aforementioned underlined conditions or an absurdity will be created where upholders of justice (police, judge, executioner, soldier) will themselves be sentenced to death. (cf. *Ro 13:3-5*)

This is another example of needing to review a hard verse in the context of the rest of Scripture, with a healthy dose of common sense. (cf. *Mt 12:1-13*)

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

The same logic that applies to murder (we are made in God's image) applies to suicide (*). Our lives are ultimately not our own; they (and the timing of our bodily departure) belong to God. Ending our lives early is a selfish act that leaves us accountable to God and shows disrespect to, and lack of faith in His ability to make the best out of the worst situations. Whatever your condition, God has lovingly hand-crafted you with talents and abilities to accomplish His purposes, even through the trials (or consequences, to be fair) you're going through. He has also provided you with, or access to, people who rely upon, look up to and love you, whether you believe it or not.

(*) Like many sensitive but serious issues, there are some gray areas such as vegetative states, necessity of extreme medical care, childbirth complications or other self-sacrifice etc that can be up for debate. The point I'm trying to make is that suicide outside of duty (*Jn 15:13*) gets us out of some very temporary (relatively-speaking) pain at the cost of eternal reward.

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?

As I mentioned in comment #2 regarding v2-3, this passage has led some to believe that the original "vault of water" in the sky may have blocked a significant portion of the sun, preventing the appearance of rainbows. The increased solar exposure could also explain the incoming abbreviated lifespans of man. More science for this theory is available in the usual locations.

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

You're showing your age...or rather youth, if you've been told that. The problem is that an ancient, blessed symbol of God has been corrupted over time by Satan to refer to anti-Biblical movements. That's another one of his schemes: confuse the truth with the lie. Many other symbols and institutions (e.g. marriage) have been corrupted. Many words have been corrupted as well: prophet, apostle, prosperity, signs, wonders...even the term "God", to name a few. When someone today uses any of those terms, you often have to ask a few more questions to find out if their meaning matches what's in the Bible. It's very very frustrating.

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.