

# AN INTRODUCTION TO GENESIS

Its Characters, Covenants,  
and Theology

## A STUDENT STUDY GUIDE

This short compilation of articles and charts is meant to be read alongside the book of beginnings: Genesis.

The articles are written to enhance the readers' understanding of the most foundational book in the Bible: its promises, covenants, and themes that carry forward throughout the entire Bible.

Sean Harris

IN THE BEGINNING, GOD CREATED  
THE HEAVENS AND THE EARTH.

—Genesis 1:1

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Its Characters, Covenants, and Theology**

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# Part I – Outlining Genesis using the Major Characters and Covenants

## Part I: Adam to Terah, the Father of Abraham (Ch. 1-11:26)

### A. The Seven Days of Creation

1. God and the Six Days of Creation
  - a. God separates light from darkness, waters from the waters, and land from the seas
  - b. God creates by speaking all matter into existence from nothing (ex nihilo)
  - c. God fills outer space, the sky, the waters, and the lands with all that is in them
2. Males and Females are made in God's Image (1:27)
3. Two Mandates for Humanity
  - a. Be fruitful, multiply, and fill the earth (1:28)
  - b. Subdue (1:28) the earth and have dominion over every living thing
4. Everything that God made was very good
5. God rests from His work of creating and declares the Sabbath holy (2:3)

### B. Adam and Eve's Family; the *toledoth* (generations) of the heavens and the earth (2:4)

1. Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden
  - a. Adam works the ground without the curse
  - b. Yahweh (the LORD) gives him the first prohibitive commandment (2:17)
  - c. Adam names the domestic and wild animals and the birds
  - d. God makes a helper fit for Adam: the woman, Eve (the mother of the living, 3:20)
  - e. God unites Adam and Eve in Holy Matrimony (2:24)
2. The Temptation and the Fall (3)
  - a. The Serpent tempts Eve to eat from the Tree of the Knowledge of good and evil
  - b. Eve eats (3:6) and gives the forbidden fruit to Adam to eat
  - c. God confronts both with their sin, and neither accepts responsibility
  - d. God outlines the consequences of their disobedience and gives them a promise of hope (3:15)
3. Cain kills Abel over an offering to God, and Eve gives birth to Seth (4:25)
  - a. Cain fails to rule over sin (4:7) and kills Abel
  - b. The wicked lineage of Cain to Lamech (4:23) is presented
  - c. The godly *toledoth* of Adam to Seth all the way to Noah; God took Enoch to heaven without dying (5:24)

### C. God destroyed the world with a flood of water and started over with Noah; Noah's *toledoth*

1. The sons of God procreate with the daughters of man, and God limits the lifespan of humans to 120 years
2. Evil is so great that Yahweh regrets (6:6) making mankind and is determined to start over with one man
3. Noah, a righteous man, finds favor in Yahweh's eyes (6:8) and, by faith, builds the ark that will save him
4. God brings the rain to cleanse the earth of sin and destroy that breathes except those in the ark
5. Noah, Shem, Ham, Japheth, their wives, and all the animals spend over a year in the ark (7)
6. The flood subsides (8:1), and humans must procreate and fill the "new" earth
  - a. God promises never to destroy the earth again by means of a global flood
  - b. Man is now permitted to eat meat after draining the blood (9:3)
  - c. God institutes capital punishment because humans are still made in the image of God
  - d. God reiterates the mandate to be fruitful and multiple
  - e. The rainbow is the sign of God's everlasting covenant with Noah (9:13)
7. Noah begins to subdue the earth, and sin is an ever-present reality for him and his sons (9:21)

### D. The *toledoth* of the nations from Noah: Shem, Ham, and Japheth (10:1)

### E. The Tower of Babel dispersion points to the need for God to start over again (11)

1. Humanity fails to fill the earth and builds a city and a tower to the heavens
2. God scatters humans by confusing their language; thus, the name Babel (11:9)

### F. The brief *toledoth* of Shem that leads to Terah, the father of Abram (11:10)

## Introduction to Genesis

Genesis means beginning or origin. The book was first written in Hebrew by Moses. Genesis like the rest of the Bible is Scripture; therefore, the primary author was the Holy Spirit (2Ti 3:16) guiding Moses to write the very words in the text. Later it was translated into Greek in the Septuagint (LXX). Genesis is the first book in the Torah and the Hebrew Bible, the Tanakh. Characters in Genesis are also referenced in the Quran – the sacred text of the Islamic false religion. Genesis is divided up into two major sections: chapters 1-11 and chapters 12-50. Ten *toledoths* (Hb) (generations) or family records is how the author moves the reader from Adam to Jacob and his 12 sons who become the 12 tribes of Israel the nation. The book is classified as narrative in nature and one of the 17 historical books of the Old Testament (OT) canon.

The central character of the entire story is the LORD God (2:4). The English word LORD is a translation of the Hebrew word for YHWH, pronounced Yahweh or Jehovah. The three most important human characters of the book are Adam, Noah, and Abraham. The most important women are Eve, Sarah, Rebekah, and Rachel. Throughout the narrative, God is always present and actively working to accomplish His will and fulfill covenant promises. He is the hero of the story.

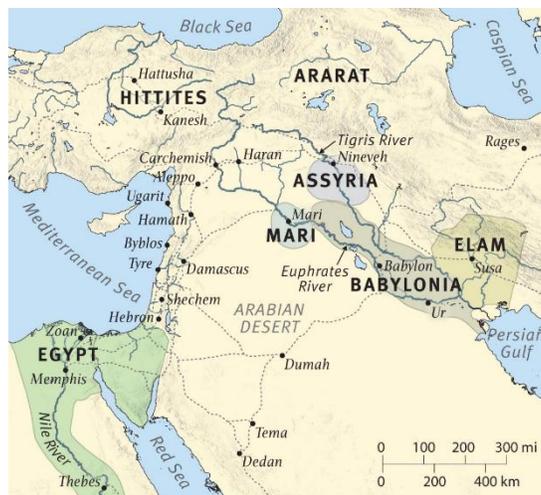
If the story of the entire Bible can be divided up into four parts: **Creation, Fall, Redemption, and Restoration**, Genesis contains all four elements. Creation occurs in chapters 1-2, the Fall happens in chapter 3, and micro-pictures of redemption and restoration are seen in the characters' lives. The geography includes Mesopotamia, Canaan, and Egypt.

The most important verse and sentence in the book is the first (1:1); it contains seven Hebrew words or ten English words. *“In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth.”* Creating the heavens and the earth out of nothing (ex nihilo) was God’s greatest act of sovereign, omnipotent power. God as the Creator is foundational to His authority and ownership of the earth (Ps 24:1, 1Co 10:26).

The authenticity of the book of Genesis as the Word of God is validated by the number of times Jesus and the authors of the New Testament (NT) reference the text of Genesis. In Matthew 19, Jesus stated that the word of Genesis 2:24 was spoken by God. Adam – as the first man – is authenticated by Luke, Paul, and Jude. Jesus confirmed the historicity of Noah and the flood in Matthew and Luke. There are 72 references to Abraham in the NT. The writers of the NT clearly believed that Genesis was historically reliable as the primary source document for the origin of man.

Listing all that is important in Genesis would be impossible; however, one sees in Genesis:

- God, the Sovereign Creator, and His attributes
- The origin of man, sin, and death
- Humans, male and female, are made in the image of God
- A creation/cultural mandate
- The Proto-Evangelium
- The Noahic and Abrahamic Covenants
- Mysterious characters like Melchizedek and the sons of God
- The origin of the Jewish people and the nation of Israel
- Preincarnate appearances of Christ
- Types and shadows of Jesus
- Two millennia of human history
- Incredible stories of God’s sovereign providence
- Yahweh’s covenant-keeping faithfulness and love
- Judgment for sin, wickedness, and evil



Bergen sums it up well. He writes, “Genesis lays the groundwork for everything else we read and experience in Scripture. Through Genesis, we understand where we came from, how we got into the fallen state we are in, and the beginnings of God’s gracious work on our behalf. Genesis unfolds God’s original purpose for humanity.” (Robert D. Bergen, “Genesis,” in *CSB Study Bible: Notes*, (Nashville, TN: Holman Bible Publishers, 2017), 3.).

## The Big Story of the Bible, Seen First in Genesis

Genesis is the first of 66 books in the Bible. Initially, the reader of the Bible may find himself thinking these books and stories are not connected. However, a closer look reveals one continuous story from the Tree of Life in Genesis 2 to the Tree of Life in Revelation 22. The narrative begins in the paradise of Eden, with God dwelling with Adam and Eve, and the story ends in a new paradise with God dwelling with his people in perfect harmony and peace forever. The Bible's meta-narrative (big story) has four major movements: Creation, Fall, Redemption, and New Creation. The first two occur in Genesis, and micro-examples of the other two appear in the Genesis account.

### Creation (the origin of the world and humanity)

The details of God creating the heavens and the earth are presented in Genesis 1 and then presented again with more specifics in Chapter 2. The first three days are devoted primarily to separating, while the remaining days are focused on filling the sea, sky, and land with the sun, moon, and stars and then the earth with fish, birds, and animals. On day six, God creates domestic animals, wildlife, and humans. Males and females are made in His image, and He gives them two mandates. First, be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth, and second, subdue the earth and have dominion over every living thing that moves on the earth. In Chapter 2, God put Adam in the garden to begin subduing it, and he exercised dominion over all living creatures first by naming them. Finally, God gave Adam and Eve a moral choice in the Garden.

### The Fall of Man (paradise lost)

With only one prohibitive commandment, "But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat" (Gen 2:17), Adam and Eve disobeyed God and fell from their state of innocence. Neither had ever sinned. They were created in perfection, in the image of God, but they were not robots programmed only to obey. God gave them a moral choice: to obey or not to obey. Deceived by the serpent's words, Eve ate, Adam ate, and both were instantly aware of good and evil. Their evil was the knowledge that they had disobeyed God's one commandment. In an instant, sin entered the world, and death through sin spread through the whole human race. (Rom 5:12). In Genesis 4, Cain kills Abel out of jealousy and envy, and Lamech promises to be more sinful than Cain. The fall worsens. Other "falls" can be seen when righteous Noah gets drunk, and something ungodly happens in his tent (Gen 9), or when all of humanity was not filling the earth, instead they were building a tower to the heavens (Gen 11), or Abram when was telling half-truths about Sarai being his sister (Gen 12). "All have sinned and [all] fall short of the glory of God" (Rom 3:23). The need for redemption is an ever-present reality.

### Redemption (salvation from sin and the second death)

The reader of Genesis sees redemption, or being saved from sin, for the first time when Yahweh sheds the blood of an animal so Adam and Eve's nakedness can be covered (Gen 3:21). Awareness of nakedness was one of the first consequences of their sin. Then God saved eight souls from his global judgment of sin in an ark (Gen 7). In Genesis 22, the angel of the LORD saves Isaac's life with a ram caught in a thicket that gives its life, and Isaac is saved. The ram dying instead of Isaac serves as a type and foreshadowing of the substitutionary death of the Son of God for the sins of the whole world. Jesus of Nazareth is both "Isaac" and the "Ram." He is the ultimate son of Abraham through whom the covenant will be fulfilled. He is the Lamb of God (John 1:29), offering Himself to save humanity from the bondage of sin and death. In Jerusalem, the Christ (Yahweh's Messiah) was crucified, buried, and rose again on the third day to redeem all who believe in Him for their salvation from sin and the second death (1Co 15:1-4; Gal 3:13, 4:5; Rev 20:14, 21:8).

### New Creation (paradise restored)

The final movement is consummation and restoration. Genesis 6-9 presents a micro-example of "new creation." God ends all life on this earth (Gen 7:23) and starts over with a "new" earth with only those saved in the ark. The global destruction of the earth by means of a flood foreshadows the eventual end – an end that doesn't happen because of global warming, a meteor strike, or a nuclear war. God has already determined the end (Isa 46:10). Having secured the redemption of all who will be saved, Christ Jesus returns to the earth to bring this story to an end and start a new one. He will destroy Satan, the Anti-Christ, the false prophet, and all His enemies, raise the dead (the saved and the lost) (Acts 24:15), and judge all of humanity (Rev 20). The lost are sentenced to an eternity in the Lake of Fire. At the same time, the redeemed are given glorious bodies (Phi 3:20) and granted entrance to the eternal kingdom on this new earth, magnificently recreated with King Jesus ruling on His Father's throne for all eternity (2Pe 1:11, 3:13; Rev 21). The Ancient Serpent is defeated once and for all. And everything that the Fall lost will be restored, even better, in and through Christ.

## The LORD God, the Creator

God, the Creator, is the first subject introduced in Genesis. Genesis 1:1 presents God's existence without any backstory. Three simple words introduce God – "in the beginning." We are immediately told that God is the responsible agent for the creation of the heavens and the earth. The Hebrew word for God in Genesis 1:1 is Elohim and used 2000x in the OT. The word Elohim is a plural masculine noun, yet the verb "created" is in its singular form in Hebrew. Are these two words "God created" providing the reader the first hint at the triune nature of God? Is this the reason God says let "us" make man in "our" image in v. 26, but in v. 27, man is made in "his" image? Is the Spirit of God in 1:2 the Holy Spirit? Later the reader will meet the "angel of the LORD," who is God (Gen 16, 22:11-15). Is this the Son of God?

Genesis provides no hints as to God's origin, but it reveals much about God's character, nature, and attributes. We know nothing of where He came from or how He came to exist. But He exists. God promises to reward those who believe He exists and seek to know Him (Heb 11:6). In Genesis 2:4, the God who created the heavens and the earth is the LORD God. The Hebrew behind the English word LORD (notice the small caps) is YHWH, pronounced Yahweh or Jehovah. Yahweh is used over 6500x in the Hebrew Bible (the Tanakh) and points to His present-tense existence. It is literally "to be." When Moses asks God for His name, "I am that I am," is what God tells him. And this is what God's proper name Yahweh is built upon (Exo 3:14). He is the self-existing One. Because of the reverence associated with the proper name of God – YHWH, Jews would address the LORD as Lord. Again, notice the small caps v. lowercase. This Hebrew word is 'ādōnāy, translated Lord (master). It was used by Jews to address YHWH without saying Yahweh.

Yahweh is the supreme Being who spoke creation into existence – with words like "let there be light," and there was light. Who can do that? This is a level of power that is incomprehensible. He is omnipotent (all-powerful). He doesn't modify preexisting matter like an ice sculptor who starts with a block of ice and creates something beautiful – He makes His own block of ice and then crafts it into something beautiful. He doesn't get a piece of clay and turn it into a bowl. He made the clay and the bowl. He "calls into existence the things that do not exist" (Rom 4:17).

Next, we see God communicates, as He called the light "day." He directs humans to be "fruitful and multiply." He prohibits eating from a particular tree in chapter 2. He calls out to Adam and Eve, asking, "Where are you?" in chapter 3. He isn't asking a question because He doesn't know the answer. He asks because questions often start conversations like the one He had with Cain in chapter 4. Bergen writes in the CSB Study Bible, "He is the subject [God] of the first verb [created] in the Bible (in fact, He is the subject of more verbs than any other character) and performs a wider variety of activities than any other being in the Bible"<sup>1</sup> Throughout Genesis, God never ceases to be the main character in the story, actively involved in what is happening. In Genesis 18, God and Abraham are the main characters, fully engaged in negotiating for the lives of residents of Sodom. God exists, communicates, and has chosen to preserve this communication in the Bible.

In Genesis, the reader sees God issuing judgments (curses) (Gen 3:14-17) and making and keeping promises (Gen 3:15). This is of great significance because both the decisions and promises continue throughout the rest of the Bible. In Genesis 6, God declares that He will destroy the world. In chapter 18, Abraham says that God is the just judge. These promises are sometimes called covenants – like the covenant God made with Noah or the one He made with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. These promises are so significant that God subsequently refers to Himself as the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob (Exo 3:6). God's love for humanity is seen in His refusal to abandon the human race despite man's disobedience, sin, rebellion, unbelief, and outright wickedness. He fulfills these promises often in spite of man.

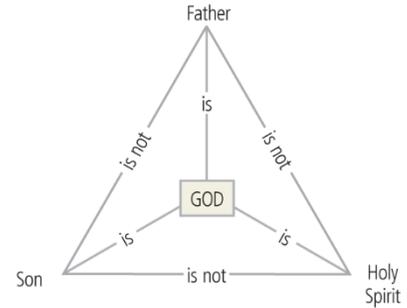
Finally, throughout Genesis, God is described in anthropomorphic ways. God is given human characteristics, emotions, and behaviors. This happens first with the word "formed" and when God "breathed" into Adam's nostrils the breath of life (2:7). God doesn't have hands to form and lungs to breathe like a human. In chapter 3, God is heard walking in the Garden, yet God is spirit (John 4:24). He doesn't walk. He is omnipresent. In chapter six, God sees wickedness and has regret and is grieved. In chapter 11, Yahweh comes down to see the city. These descriptions are the only way mere mortals can grasp an incomprehensible God. Yahweh Elohim is God Most High (14:18-22), God Almighty (17:1), and the Everlasting God (21:33). Even with all these anthropomorphic descriptions, comprehending an infinite God is impossible.

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<sup>1</sup> Robert D. Bergen, "Genesis," in *CSB Study Bible: Notes*, (Nashville, TN: Holman Bible Publishers, 2017), 5.

## The Triune God of the Bible

The “God” the reader of Genesis meets after the words “In the beginning” is triune. Triune is preferred over Trinity because the “u-n-e” reminds the reader of God’s unity; while the “t-r-i” directs the focus on three. Three Persons, the Father, the Son, and the Spirit, perfectly united as the One true and living God of the Universe and beyond. The first hint of “tri” is seen in the Hebrew word Elohim which is a plural masculine noun. One would expect the word to be singular like Yahweh (the LORD) in Genesis 2:4. Next, the reader hears God say, “Let us make...”, the plural pronoun doesn’t seem to fit. Is this another hint? We use the word hint because we cannot be dogmatic this early in the Bible. An Orthodox Jew would not agree that the “us” and “our” image of 1:26 points to plurality or tri-unity. Is the “Spirit of God” in Genesis 1:2 the third Person of the Triune God?



The triunity of God becomes much clearer in the NT. In Matthew 28:19, baptisms are to be done in the name (singular) of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Notice the command isn’t “baptize in the names” (plural). God is one, yet believers are baptized in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. At the baptism of Christ, Jesus is standing in the Jordan River, the heavens open and the Spirit of God descends like a dove and rests on Christ, while simultaneously a voice from heaven says, “This is my beloved Son” (Matt 3:13-17). The voice is in heaven, calling the man in the water His Son—this must be His Father. Paul ends his second letter to the church at Corinth with this benediction: “The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all” (2Co 3:14). In John 14:10, Jesus says, “I am in the Father and the Father is in me.” The unity in the Godhead is so connected that both Paul and Peter refer to the Holy Spirit as the Spirit of Christ (Rom 8:9, 1Pe 1:11). The Trinity makes this possible (see the diagram above and the Triune God chart from the ESV Study Bible, Crossway, 2008).

Four Tenants of Truth Concerning the Triune God	
1.	There is one and only One true and living God.
2.	This one God eternally exists in 3 persons—God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit.
3.	These three Persons are completely equal in attributes, each with the same divine nature.
4.	While each Person is fully and completely God, the three Persons are not identical.

The words Father and Son speak to how the Persons of the Triune God relate to one another. The Son is not the Father or the Spirit. The same can be said for the Spirit—who is not the Son or the Father. Throughout John, Jesus emphasizes that the Father sent Him (5:27). The Father anointed Jesus with the Holy Spirit (Acts 10:28). The Son does the will of His Father even to the point of the cross (Luke 22:42). Yet, sometimes the Bible blurs these lines of division. In Romans 8, Paul says the Holy Spirit raised Christ from the dead, but in Galatians 1:1, Paul says God did it. Yet in John 2, Jesus says, He will raise up the temple of His body (2:19). Only Christ died for the sins of the whole world, yet Paul speaks of God as the Savior. Consider 1 Timothy 1:1: “Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by command of God our Savior and of Christ Jesus our hope.” We are not expecting God to be the Savior, yet Paul can call the “Father our Savior” because of the unity in Being, purpose, objectives, will, and intent.

The God of the Bible, the God of Christianity, is monotheistic. The prefix mono means one, while theism deals with belief in the existence of a God or gods. (See the chart below as it relates to three major views of God). Deuteronomy 6:4 plainly states “Hear, O Israel! Yahweh is our God, Yahweh is one!” (LSB). Yet Islam and Judaism charge Christianity with not being monotheistic. This is because others do not understand the unity, the oneness, of the Triune God of the Bible. In 1 Timothy 2:5, Paul agrees that there is one God, yet he separates the Son of God from the Father as the one mediator between God and man. Paul affirms monotheism while presenting distinctions found in roles and responsibilities—like Jesus is the one mediator between God and man. The Father is not the mediator, and the Spirit is not the mediator. Christ is the one making intercession (Heb 7:25). Is He interceding for you before His Father?

Religious Worldviews*	God	Creation	Major Religions
Theism	A Person God	God Made it All	Christianity, Judaism, Islam
Pantheism	Impersonal God	God is All	Zen, Buddhism, Hinduism, New Age
Atheism	No God	No God at All	Religious Humanism

\*Geisler, Norman L., Frank Turek, *I Don’t Have Enough Faith to be an Atheist*, Wheaton, Ill, Crossway, 2004.

## The Creation

(Genesis 1:1-2:3)

Genesis 1:1 is the single most important sentence in the Bible and the greatest demonstration of God’s Sovereign, omnipotent power. If God can speak the Heavens and Earth into existence from nothing, then nothing is impossible for God. In the Hebrew, the first sentence is seven words in length (the number of perfection). In the English, it is ten words. The first verse is either a summary of the six days of creation or God’s first act of creating prior to day one.

### In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth. (Genesis 1:1)

Genesis 1:2 describes the earth prior to the first day of creation and makes special reference to the presence of the Spirit of God, which could be a reference to God who exists as a Spirit (John 4:24) or a special reference to the third Person of the Triune God—the Holy Spirit.

There are six days of creation, and each day begins with, “And God said” and ends with, “and there was evening and there was morning.” This very particular language is why conservative Bible scholars insist upon six 24-hour days of creation. Special attention must be given to the reality that God is speaking matter into existence out of nothing (*ex nihilo*, Latin) (Rom 4:17). Everything God makes is described as good (6x) and ultimately very good (a 7<sup>th</sup> time) (1:31).

Genesis 1:3-1:26 are devoted to describing the six days of creation, beginning with the first act of separating light from darkness and culminating with God creating man in His image.

God creates by separating (used 5x)		God fills the earth by creating	
<b>Day 1</b>	Creates light “day” and separates it from darkness “night.” Thus, God creates time.	<b>Day 4</b>	Fills the expanse of the sky from day 2 with the sun, moon, and stars.
<b>Day 2</b>	Creates an expanse “the sky” which separates water from water.	<b>Day 5</b>	Fills the water with all that lives in the water and the sky above with birds and instructs them both to be fruitful and multiply.
<b>Day 3</b>	Creates dry land, separates the land from the water, and creates vegetation on the dry land.	<b>Day 6</b>	Fills the land from day 3 with livestock, creeping things, and beasts (wildlife), and creates Adam (the Hebrew word for man).
At the end of day six, God declares that everything He has made is “very good.” Thus, the heavens and the earth and everything in them were finished. (1:31-2:1)			
<b>Day 7</b>	God rested and set the 7 <sup>th</sup> day apart as holy. Thus, He ends by separating the 7 <sup>th</sup> day from the other six.		

**Gen 1:26-27** God makes man in the image and likeness of God (*us & our*, plural pronouns used) both male and female.

**Gen 1:28** Man is blessed by God and commanded to procreate and fill the earth with image-bearers of God. Man is to subdue the earth and have dominion over the fish, birds, and every living thing on the earth. (Read the articles titled “Made in the Image of God to Worship Him” and “The Creation/Cultural Mandate.”)

**Gen 1:29-30** At this time, the human diet is limited to plants yielding seed, fruit with seeds, and green plants. This will change after the flood.

The chapter 2 break is quite unfortunate. The narration continues with the statement that God is finished (2:1) at which point He can rest from His work of creating. God was not weary or tired from the work of creation (Isa 40:28). Instead, God is providing an example for man. Man is to do his work in six days and then rest for a day like God did (Exo 20:9-11). Genesis 2:4 introduces the first of ten *toledoths* (Hb) in the book. (This is where the chapter break should have been.) The English word is “generations” in the ESV. The first *toledoth* is the human generation that comes from the union of the heavens (the breath of life) and the earth (dust from the ground) (2:7). (See the “Ten Toledoths” of Genesis chart.)

## Made in the Image of God to Worship Him

**Then God said, “Let us make man in our image, after our likeness. (Genesis 1:26)**

It is impossible in a short essay to communicate the totality of the significance that God chose to make human beings, male and female, in His own image and likeness. It is God Himself who said, “Let us make man [humans] in our image, after our likeness” (1:26). And then, in order to set apart the extraordinary significance of this statement, the author of Genesis repeats the truth in a poetic way. In Genesis 1:27, the text seems to be set apart as we read,

**So God created man in His own image, in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them. (Genesis 1:27)**

Humans, not animals, are made in the image and likeness of the Creator God, who spoke the universe into existence by the word of His power and made them. Being made in the image of God means that humans are like God, represent him, and have a special relationship with God that animals do not. If something is an image of another thing, it is not the thing, but it reflects what the other thing looks like. To list the number of ways man is like God would be nearly impossible. God loves; man loves. God hates; man hates. God thinks, designs, and creates, and so do men and women. God is grieved, and man is grieved. And on and on. Adam was the first image-bearer of God, and God gave him dominion over the earth. Humans create other image-bearers of God by fulfilling the mandate to be fruitful and multiply, filling the earth with potential worshippers of God (Gen 1:28). And the Father wants these people to worship Him (John 4:23).

Creating humans in God's image and likeness sets humans apart from every other created thing. One does not think twice when he crushes a cockroach under his shoe. But humans are not insects – they are beings who bear God's image, both male and female. Because of this truth, all humans – without regard to their apparent value to society – are to be treated with dignity and respect. In Genesis 9:5-6, God institutes capital punishment, “by man shall his blood be shed” for those who take human life because “God made man in His own image” (v. 6). When humans treat fellow humans like God would treat them, they are reflecting God's image and glorifying God. Inasmuch as humans are image-bearers of God, their goal should be at all times to be, say, and do what God would be, say, and do, and thus reflect His image. If you deny that humans are made in God's image, then you are free to do what is right in your own eyes. Humans can murder, rape, kidnap, assault one another, etc., as the stronger sees fit.

When Adam sinned, he was no longer a perfect representative of God. The image of God was marred or distorted but not lost. There were still many ways in which Adam was like God, and at any given moment, if he chose to be, say or do what God would be, say or do, he could reflect God's image to others. The more one is like God, the more one reflects His image to others. The less one is like God, the less one reflects God's image. God is gracious, tender, merciful, compassionate, understanding, patient, loving, kind, etc. These are all attributes of God humans can reflect as image bearers. But sin and man's sinful nature often interfere with our ability to reflect God's image and thus worship God. When humans reflect God's image to others, it is God-glorifying and is a form/act of worship (Rev 15:4).

When sin entered the world, sin was like an enemy crouching at man's every decision point, influencing them contrary to the will of God. But God instructed man to rule over sin (4:7). Cain failed to rule over sin and murdered Abel. Since then, no human has been capable of ruling over sin entirely until Jesus did it. Jesus ruled over sin and death so that those who have been born again (John 3) through faith in the gospel can rule over sin in the power of His Spirit. Death and sin no longer rule over the believer. Christ's victory in the resurrection demonstrated His defeat of sin and death. Christ made it possible for followers to reflect God's image to others more perfectly.

When Christ saves a person from the wrath of God through faith in the gospel (1Co 15:1-4), the Holy Spirit begins a good work of transforming the believer into the image of Jesus (Rom 8:29, Phi 1:6). This is a slow progressive process of helping followers of Christ restore what Adam lost in the Garden of Eden (1Co 15:49). This process is called sanctification and means growing in Christlikeness. When the Holy Spirit works in the life of a Christian, the Spirit restores what sin damaged in bearing God's image. Christians diligently seek to make disciples of Jesus (Mat 28:19) so that more people reflect God's image on the earth such that the world is filled with worshippers of the one true and living God. Again, the Father is seeking this (John 4:23). Ultimately, the new heaven and new earth will be filled with worshippers who perfectly reflect God's image and likeness for all eternity (Rev 21-22).

## Only Two Genders

**So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them. (Genesis 1:27)**

Male and female, God created them. That is what the Bible says; Scripture gives no room for anything else. A person is either a male or a female. Males are distinct and different from females. Except in extremely rare situations, a baby is born with particular reproductive organs that make the infant's gender or sex abundantly clear. And for the last six thousand years of human history, this was understood to be true regardless of one's belief in God, gods, or no god.

Today (2023), the world has changed in rebellion to Genesis 1:27. No longer do humans believe that a person is either a male or a female. Now people speak of males trapped in female bodies and females trapped in male bodies. That is, a person thinks their gender is different from the reality their body presents biologically. A mistake has been made. The inner self is female, and the outer self is male. Is gender fluid? This strange new world has assigned a name for this condition: gender dysphoria. The inner person is uncomfortable or uneasy with the body they received at birth.

This condition involves a lack of contentment. A biological mistake has been made. In 1993, the US FDA approved puberty-blocking drugs. The original purpose of these powerful drugs was to temporarily delay the onslaught of puberty in a child's body. The drugs worked so well that doctors realized they could be used to impact the natural development of biological sex. Girls could be kept from developing breasts and on and on. This changed everything. No longer would a person need to conform their thinking to the sex assigned at birth. Instead, the body could be changed. In addition to hormone therapy (an ironic word choice), a doctor's ability to surgically fix "mistakes" radically improved. Males could receive breast implants. Massive surgeries can recreate male organs on a female's body. Previous generations could never have imagined science would evolve so much so that the outer person would be surgically conformed to the inner self. Yet God's law prohibits the mutilation of genitals (Deu 23:1), and cross-dressing is strictly prohibited (Deu 22:5). One's gender matters to God. He is the originator of both genders.

When a person meets a "flat earther", that is, a person who is convinced the earth is flat, they feel like they have met someone wholly disconnected from reality. The earth is not flat; boys are not girls, and girls are not boys. There are objective truths in the world. Up is not down. And down is not up. There are four cardinal directions on a compass. And that fact is not up for debate. One foot has 12 inches. The point is that the entire world operates on the basis of objective truths. Two plus two is four – not three or five. This is the world God created. Never before has humanity messed with objective reality like it is with children. Doctors are mutilating children intending to fix what God got wrong.

But what should be done with children who are struggling with gender discontentment or confusion? First, the child needs to be graciously and patiently taught that God made them a boy or God made them a girl. Children grow and mature. A boy found playing with dolls doesn't mean he is a girl trapped in a male body. A girl who likes boys' toys more than girls' toys doesn't mean the opposite. Natural maturation is a wonderful thing. Children outgrow many things. Parents and other influencers need to continue to reinforce objective truth. You are a girl. You are a boy. Because of the outside pressure from secularists, the Christian family must protect the child from the influence of those seeking to change the external reality. There is no need for a new name or different clothing. Parents, God gave you a boy, or God gave you a girl. Parents may need to remove their children from a progressive school. A doctor who suggests therapy or medical treatment should not be revisited. Parents and guardians must wisely protect children from those who seek to correct biological sex to match the perceived inner gender.

And what about the person experiencing gender confusion (dysphoria)? Gender dysphoria is a result of the fall of man. The woman, Eve, knew she was not like Adam, and Adam knew the woman God gave him was not like himself. There was no confusion in the Adam/Eve household. Those like mom were females, and those like dad were males. Children and adults must learn to be content with God's sovereign choices. Males and females understand their race/ethnicity was chosen for them and cannot be changed – therefore, they must be content to live with the skin God gave them. The same can be said for gender. While that may sound ridiculously simplistic, the reality is that post-modern humanity has manufactured a dichotomy. The issue is not with the body God gave the person; the problem is with the fallen mind that repeatedly needs to be corrected by biblical truth. God made you a male, or God made you a female (Gen 5:2).

## The Creation/Cultural Mandate

**Genesis 1:28 (CSB) - God blessed them, and God said to them, “Be fruitful, multiply, fill the earth, and subdue it. Rule the fish of the sea, the birds of the sky, and every creature that crawls on the earth.”**

**Genesis 1:28 (ESV) - And God blessed them. And God said to them, “Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and subdue it, and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over every living thing that moves on the earth.”**

**Genesis 2:15 (ESV) - The LORD God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to work it and keep it.**

### Glossary<sup>1</sup>

**Create:** to bring into existence

**Cultural:** cultivation, tillage | the customary beliefs, social norms, and material traits of a racial, religious, or social group | to improve by labor, care, or study

**Fill:** to make full

**God:** The one true and living being who created all things and rules over the Universe as the Sovereign.

**Mandate:** an authoritative command

**Multiply:** increase in number

**Rule:** the exercise of authority or control

**Subdue:** to conquer and bring into subjection | to bring under cultivation – cultivate

### ESV Study Bible

**1:28** As God had blessed the sea and sky creatures (v. 22), so too He blesses humanity. **Be fruitful and multiply.** This theme recurs throughout Genesis in association with divine blessing (see 9:1, 7; 17:20; 28:3; 35:11; 48:4) and serves as the basis of the biblical view that raising faithful children is a part of God’s creation plan for mankind. God’s creation plan is that the whole earth should be populated by those who know Him and who serve wisely as His vice-regents or representatives. **subdue it and have dominion.** The term “subdue” (Hb. *kabash*) elsewhere means to bring a people or a land into subjection so that it will yield service to the one subduing it (Num 32:22, 29). Here the idea is that the man and woman are to make the earth’s resources beneficial for themselves, which implies that they would investigate and develop the earth’s resources to make them useful for human beings generally. This command provides a foundation for wise scientific and technological development; the evil uses to which people have put their dominion come as a result of Genesis 3. **over every living thing.** As God’s representatives, human beings are to rule over every living thing on the earth. These commands are not, however, a mandate to exploit the earth and its creatures to satisfy human greed, for the fact that Adam and Eve were “in the image of God” (1:27) implies God’s expectation that human beings will use the earth wisely and govern it with the same sense of responsibility and care that God has toward the whole of His creation.<sup>2</sup>

### NET Bible

**Subdue:** The general meaning of the verb appears to be “to bring under one’s control for one’s advantage.” In Gen 1:28 one might paraphrase it as follows: “harness its potential and use its resources for your benefit.” In an ancient Israelite context, this would suggest cultivating its fields, mining its mineral riches, using its trees for construction, and domesticating its animals.<sup>3</sup>

### The Creation/Cultural Mandate

This mandate has two parts: **Procreate and Cultivate**

The creation/cultural mandate is the command from God, the Creator, to humanity to procreate with sufficient numbers to fill the earth with image-bearers of God who cultivate and conquer (subdue) the earth’s natural resources and righteously rule over the whole world to God’s glory and the betterment of society.

<sup>1</sup> Inc Merriam-Webster, *Merriam-Webster’s Collegiate Dictionary* (Springfield, MA: Merriam-Webster, 1996).

<sup>2</sup> Crossway Bibles, *The ESV Study Bible* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles, 2008), 51–52.

<sup>3</sup> Biblical Studies Press, *The NET Bible First Edition; Bible. English. NET Bible.; The NET Bible* (Biblical Studies Press, 2005).

## Conservation and Stewardship

(Genesis 1:22, 24; Leviticus 25:4)

Is the idea of the conservation of natural resources and wildlife in the Bible? Genesis communicates that the earth was created for mankind, including the birds, fish, livestock, and wildlife (Gen 1), but is there an implied mandate of stewardship? Merriam-Webster defines conservation as the "careful preservation and protection of something, especially: planned management of a natural resource." Stewardship is "the careful and responsible management of something entrusted to one's care." The purpose of this article is to show how mankind is charged with a responsibility to appropriately conserve and steward what God has created for humanity's consumption, use, and enjoyment.

In Genesis 1:22, God blessed the birds and fish He created and directed that they "be fruitful and multiply and **fill** the waters in the seas, and let birds **multiply** on the earth." That which God created is supposed to be fruitful, multiply and **fill** the water and multiply on the earth. God's desire and directive is more, NOT less. All the waters are to be filled with fish. In verse 24, the earth is to produce living creatures according to their kinds. "The earth" represents all the natural ways God has ordained for the quantity of living creatures to increase. Animals need each other and ecosystems to survive and, more importantly, thrive. So, while man has been given dominion over all living creatures and the authority to subdue the earth's natural resources, this must be kept in check with God's fill and multiply directives in v. 22 and 24.

Simple examples can illustrate and teach the balance between dominion and conservation and subduing and stewardship. From the beginning, man has enjoyed fish as a part of his diet. As mankind developed better ways of catching fish, the probability of catching too many fish became more and more of a reality. Is it possible to harvest fish to the point of extinction? Absolutely. Thus, there is a need for conservation and stewardship. Man must see himself as God's steward. Humans have been given the responsibility to properly manage the global fish population such that no kind of fish ceases to exist and fish **fill** the waters of the earth. The same can be said for domestic and wild animals.

Aquaculture is the industry that combines the cultural mandate to cultivate with exercising dominion over fish. Fish farming combines dominion and stewardship. Fish are bred, reared, and harvested much like chickens, pigs, or cattle. Farmers create controlled environments where the best conditions improve the harvest. This is pleasing to God. God created fish to be eaten by all generations. However, conservation is necessary in environments where mankind is not controlling the conditions, like oceans, lakes, and other bodies of water. Conservation agencies and officers are charged with the responsibility to ensure the catching of fish does not eliminate a species. God ordained that fish **fill** the waters. Conservation laws are required because of the sinful nature of mankind. Laws that limit the number and size of the catch are important to ensure fish can naturally sustain their population. Dates for prohibited fishing are established to protect the fish during breeding periods. Fishermen must possess a license to fish legally; money from the cost of the license is reinvested into sustaining the fish population, education programs, and the preservation of the environment.

Consider the paper industry. Society has benefited beyond imagination from the invention of paper. The global distribution of the Bible was made possible by the invention of economic paper. This very article was printed on paper for your knowledge and edification. Yet the paper industry needs millions of tons of virgin pulp (from trees) to satisfy the global demand for paper, as in toilet paper, paper towels, wrapping paper, paper packaging, paper bags, paper for printing, paper for writing, etc. The production of paper is a matter of stewardship and conservation. For every tree harvested, multiple seedlings must be planted and grown to the point of being ready for harvesting. The world does not have enough trees grown naturally to meet the demand. Wise stewardship is vital to meet the growing demand.

In Leviticus 25:4, Yahweh required that the land be given a complete rest every seventh year from planting and harvesting. This is both stewardship and conservation. The land was God's, not Israel's. Since it was God's, He could and did give man directives concerning the land. Humans were stewards; God was the owner. The principle of conservation is also present in ensuring the value of the land is preserved. In the same way, man should not empty a lake of fish; the land must not be emptied of its nutrients. If Israel were to continually plant the same crops year after year, the dirt could completely lose its ability to produce a crop—like animals ceasing to exist—the soil would cease to be able to produce crops. Today, crop rotation and the ability to rejuvenate the soil negate the need for land to lay fallow. Still, the biblical principles of the ongoing conservation and stewardship of the earth and its resources must be followed for mankind to thrive in a way that glorifies God. What must you steward better?

## Sabbath

(Genesis 2:2-4, Exodus 20:8-11, Mark 2)

After six days of separating and filling, God's work of creation ends. God saw everything that He had made, and it was very good (Gen 1:31). "And on the seventh day God finished his work that he had done, and he **rested** on the seventh day from all his work that he had done" (2:2). Then God "blessed the seventh day and made it holy" (2:3). The seventh day was set apart from the other six days for humanity because, on the seventh day, God rested. God's deliberate act of resting on the seventh day is the foundation for the biblical concept of the Sabbath. That includes sabbath for both those under the Mosaic law and the new covenant believer.

The verb translated rested in Genesis 2:3 and 4 is שָׁבַת or šāḇaṭ and means to cease, desist, or rest. It is the root word for the noun Sabbath, as in the special day set aside to rest in devotion to God. This is the fourth commandment in the Ten Commandments. In the ESV, it reads,

<sup>8</sup> Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy. <sup>9</sup> Six days you shall labor, and do all your work, <sup>10</sup> but the seventh day is a **Sabbath** to the LORD your God. On it you shall not do any work, you, or your son, or your daughter, your male servant, or your female servant, or your livestock, or the sojourner who is within your gates. <sup>11</sup> For in six days the LORD made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that is in them, and rested on the seventh day. Therefore the LORD blessed **the Sabbath day** and made it holy. (Exo 20:8–11)

The foundation for the fourth commandment is the example Yahweh provided in Genesis 2. He worked for six days and then rested, and all of Israel must follow God's example. This commandment remains in force all the way to the days of Jesus on the earth in Judea. This commandment is for man's good. Notice the commandment is not limited to just Israelites – everyone needs a day of rest, including the livestock. In fact, even the land gets a year of sabbath or rest. Leviticus 25:3-4 reads, "For six years you shall sow your field, and for six years you shall prune your vineyard and gather in its fruits, <sup>4</sup> but in the seventh year there shall be a Sabbath of **solemn rest** for the land." If dirt needs rest, how much more do living creatures need periods of rest?

By the time Jesus, the Son of God, arrived on the planet (about 1400 years later), the Jews had made keeping the Sabbath a chore to Israel. There were rules on top of rules concerning what was and wasn't working on this day of rest. In Mark 2, Jesus confronts the religious establishment with the manner in which the Sabbath was burdensome. He says, "The Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath" (v. 27). He then declares Himself the LORD of the Sabbath. These words provide incredible clarity. The Sabbath was a gift from God to humanity. The human body needs physical and mental rest. The Sabbath set Israel apart from its neighboring countries. Israelites were not to buy, trade, or conduct business on the seventh day of the week. Essentially, their economy was closed every seventh day.

Although today's follower of Jesus is not under the law of Moses, the principle behind a day of rest remains valid and applicable. Humans do better when they make rest a part of their week. Humans need nightly rest. Challenges due to sleep deprivation are real. God did not need to rest. God doesn't sleep or become weary. Resting on the seventh day was how God deliberately chose to provide an example for His creation. Jesus was accused of not keeping the Sabbath, but Jesus kept the Sabbath in the way God intended for it to be kept. He did what was necessary and good to be done on the Sabbath. To use a modern example, Jesus would change a flat tire on the Sabbath but not rebuild a transmission. Jesus healed on the Sabbath, but that doesn't mean a doctor should open their medical practice seven days a week. But hospitals are open 24/7; therefore, doctors, nurses, support staff, etc., must work on the seventh day.

First, today's Christians must remember they are not under the law of Moses. These Old Testament laws are studied and applicable as their principles are applied. Second, the nurse who must work on Sundays needs another day of the week devoted to God and rest. If he or she must work seven, eight, or even ten days in a row because of the demands of the job – the principle of needed rest remains in force. This person might need two days of sabbath after such a grueling schedule. Third, God set the seventh day apart as holy. All Christians need purposeful times and mechanisms to take them back to their God – their Creator. For many or most, Sundays can serve as that day. A combination of rest from work and an intentional focus on worship, prayer, the Word of God, and the people of God is good and pleasing to the LORD of the Sabbath. Is practicing sabbath a deliberate part of your life?

## The Toledoth (Hb) (תּוֹלְדוֹת) or Ten Family Records of Genesis

The Hebrew word *toledoth* refers to the account of men and their descendants, often translated ‘generations’. The author (God) uses the word *toledoth* to organize the narrative into ten sections. Four of the accounts are short genealogies while six of them are extended narratives of God making and keeping promises and working out His plan of redemption through the lives of men and women of faith.

### 1. Genesis 2:4 – The *toledoth* of the heavens and earth – the creation of humans: Adam and Eve

- The breath of life unites with the dust of the earth and man becomes a living being – an image bearer of God
- One man; two trees; four rivers; animals to name but no helper for Adam; the first marriage; work in the Garden of Eden
- The serpent; the fall; the consequences of sin; God covers Adam and Eve’s nakedness and the first of many exiles
- The protoevangelium (3:15); God’s expectation that man must rule over sin; Cain murders Abel; Seth is born

### 2. Genesis 5:1 – The *toledoth* of Adam – Seth’s descendants all the way to Noah

- The sons of God take the daughters of mankind as wives; man’s wickedness grieves God to the point of regret
- God decrees that He will wipe mankind off of the face of the earth except for Noah, Shem, Ham, and Japheth (and wives)

### 3. Genesis 6:9 – The *toledoth* of Noah – a preacher of righteousness and ark builder

- Noah finds favor in Yahweh’s eyes. He walked with God, was righteous and blameless; by faith, he built the ark
- Salvation from judgment is found in the ark alone (a type of Christ) and God starts over with Noah
- God enters a covenant with man to never again destroy all flesh with a global flood; the sign of this covenant is the rainbow

### 4. Genesis 10:1 – The *toledoth* of the sons of Noah: Shem, Ham, and Japheth

- The Table of Nations: Japheth’s sons, Ham’s sons, and Shem’s sons and where they lived
- The Tower of Babylon (the city of man) and the scattering of the nations (ethnicities)

### 5. Genesis 11:10 – The *toledoth* of Shem – a short list of Shem’s descendants all the way to Terah

### 6. Genesis 11:27 – The *toledoth* of Terah, the father of Abram – the patriarch of the Jews

- Yahweh starts over again with one man, Abram, with a 5-part covenant including descendants, but Sarai is barren
- Melchizedek, a king & priest (like Christ), blesses Abram; the angel of Yahweh tells Hagar she will give birth to Ishmael
- Abram is declared righteous by faith (15:6) and becomes Abraham; the sign of this covenant is circumcision
- Abraham pleads for the rescue of the righteous (esp. Lot) in the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah; Lot is saved
- At 90, Sarah gives birth to Isaac, and then God tests Abraham through the sacrifice of Isaac, his only son – a type of Christ
- Sarah dies; the marriage of Isaac and Rebekah and the death of Father Abraham

### 7. Genesis 25:12 – The *toledoth* of Ishmael – a short list of Ishmael’s descendants

### 8. Genesis 25:19 – The *toledoth* of Isaac, the son of promise, and father of twin sons: Esau and Jacob (Israel)

- Esau sells his birthright; Yahweh reaffirms the Abrahamic covenant with Isaac; Jacob deceives Isaac for the blessing
- Esau’s anger drives Jacob to flee for his life and, in Jacob’s first night away, Jacob dreams about a stairway to heaven
- Yahweh promises Jacob land in all directions and descendants like the dust of the earth
- Jacob is sent to Laban for a wife, gets tricked by Laban, and must marry two women: Leah and Rachel (his true love)
- Four women give Jacob 12 sons starting with Reuben (1); Jacob wrestles with God until he gets a blessing and a new name
- Jacob reconciles with Esau; Simeon (2) and Levi (3) avenge the raping of their sister with a bloodbath of terror
- Jacob returns to Bethel, the place where he first met God; Rachel dies followed by the death of Isaac

### 9. Genesis 36:1 – The *toledoth* of Esau – a short list of Esau’s descendants (the Edomites)

### 10. Genesis 37:2 – The *toledoth* of Jacob, the father of Joseph – a type of Christ

- Joseph (11), the firstborn to Rachel, loved by his father (the coat) and hated by his brothers, except Benjamin (12)
- Judah’s (4) sin; Tamar’s deception and the birth of Perez, the son of Judah in the bloodline of Jesus
- Six dreams: beginning with 2 dreams that cause great envy and the eventual interpretation of 4 more dreams
- Joseph’s life: left to die, sold into slavery, sold again to Potiphar, thrown in prison, and made Pharaoh’s prime minister
- Preparing for famine; the testing of the brothers; the great reveal and reunion; salvation from a famine
- Jacob’s 70 migrate to Egypt; Jacob meets Joseph’s gentile bride and two sons: Ephraim and Manasseh
- Jacob’s last words include a promise that the scepter and staff will not depart from Judah (King David’s tribe)
- Israel dies; Joseph’s incredible understanding of God’s sovereignty and providence (50:20) and his death in Egypt

# Adam, the First Man

(Genesis 1-5)

Adam is the Hebrew word for man. It may have been pronounced aw-dam'. Sometimes the word is used to refer specifically to Adam the first human but the vast majority of references are to man or mankind. The origin of the Hebrew word is the word for the color red. As the first created man it is only fitting that he would be called Man.

## Adam

- The original image bearer of God; created without a nature inclined to sin
- Given the mandate to be fruitful and multiply and to subdue and have dominion over the earth
- Formed out of the dust of the earth and received the breath of life from the LORD (YAHWEH) God
- Placed in the garden in Eden (the garden of God, Eze 28:13) to work and keep (or watch) over it
- Commanded not to eat of the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil—creating for Adam a moral choice
- Responsible to steward the Garden of Eden
- God's man to name all the animals, exercising dominion over every living creature
- Lost a rib so that a woman could be created for him by God
- Received a female helper from God because it was not good that Adam be alone
- Identified that the woman was bone of his bone and flesh of his flesh (he was in love)
- Husband to Eve, meaning the mother of the living
- Became one flesh with Eve yet felt no shame in their nakedness
- Failed to lead his wife to reject the deception of the Serpent (Satan) in the garden
- Participated in the sin of eating from the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil and immediately experienced an awareness of nakedness
- Made clothing from fig leaves to cover the shame of being naked (an entirely new emotion for Adam and Eve)
- Hid from the presence and voice of God for the very first time
- Blamed God for giving him the woman who gave him the fruit; who in turn blamed the serpent
- Received from God the following consequences for his sin:
  - The ground he had been told to tend would be cursed
  - Labor would be painful
  - Gardens would now have thorns and thistles
  - Sweat would be required to plant and harvest
  - Adam would return to the dust of the earth in his physical death
- Clothed by God from animal skins that gave their lives so that their nakedness (sin) could be covered
- Expelled from the Garden of Eden as a consequence of his disobedience so that they would not eat of the Tree of Life and be forever held in a state of sin
- Fathered two sons Cain and Abel:
  - Cain worked the ground (farmer)
  - Abel was a keeper of sheep (shepherd)
  - In the course of time, both presented offerings to Yahweh (the LORD)
  - God accepted Abel's firstborn and fat portion offering but rejected Cain's fruit of the ground offering
  - The rejection was too much for Cain; he was angry, but God told him the rejection was not permanent
  - Cain could do well but he would have to rule over sin to be accepted by God; sin was crouching at Cain's door and sin's desire was contrary to Cain's best interest
  - Cain failed to rule over sin. He murdered his brother and was cursed by God
- Lost two sons on that day: one was dead and the other left his father and mother and lived in the land of Nod
- Fathered Seth, who fathered Enosh
  - At which time, people began to worship Yahweh [the LORD] (Gen 4:26, NET)
  - Enosh fathered Kenan, who fathered Mahalalel, who fathered Jared, who fathered Enoch, who walked with God and was taken by God such that he did not experience death
  - Enoch fathered Methuselah, who fathered Lamech, who fathered Noah, the father of Shem, Ham, and Japheth
  - Thus, there are 10 generations between Adam and Noah
- Adam fathered other sons and daughters and died at 930 years old

## The Helper

**Then the LORD God said, "It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him a helper fit for him." (Genesis 2:18)**

In Genesis 2, God states that "it is not good that man should be alone," and God makes an *‘ezer* for Adam. The Hebrew word *‘ezer* is translated as 'helper' in the ESV or 'help meet' in the KJV. The word is used twice in the chapter and then throughout the Old Testament to refer to God as Israel's helper. And in most cases, it is God who helps deliver the people of God from their enemies (Exo 18:4). In Hosea 13:9, God describes Himself as Israel's helper. Nothing is demeaning about being described as a helper when Yahweh, Himself, is the primary helper. The word does not carry the baggage of inferiority or subservience. There are no negative connotations associated with *‘ezer* in Hebrew. Psalm 146:5 says, "How blessed is the one whose helper is the God of Jacob" (NET).

Help is to give assistance or support. For Adam, there needed to be someone to assist or support him, who complements him. Thus, God put Adam into a deep sleep and formed the first woman from a rib from Adam's side. At this point, God has created one man and one woman: two genders. Everything that is needed to be fruitful and multiply is present in these two. The woman complements the man; she will be Adam's lifetime helper. She is the wife God chose for Adam. Women marry men, and men marry women. The helper God made for Adam was not another male. When Adam saw Eve, he knew without any instruction from God that she was perfect for him. She was bone of his bone, flesh of his flesh, yet she wasn't a man, but she was from the man. This one was from a man but utterly different. This one should be called woman (2:23). Adam was in love.

It is not until chapter 3 that the woman is called Eve. The name Eve highlights explicitly the fact that the woman is a mother (3:20). Eve is a woman, Adam's wife, and in chapter 4, she is pregnant with Cain. Wife and mother highlight two essential roles women play in a flourishing society – but not the only roles. The description of the ideal wife in Proverbs 31:10-31 is incredible. She helps her husband, children, and neighbors. She is a provider and protector. She is brilliant, wise, thrifty, and industrious. "She considers a field and buys it; from her own income, she plants a vineyard" (v. 16, NET). The woman has a life in her household and outside of it. Judges 4:4 describes Deborah as a prophetess, a wife, and a judge of Israel.

In the New Testament, women have instrumental roles in the ministry of Christ. If the Son of God is going to hang on a tree for the sins of humans, He must be a human, requiring that He be born of a woman. Women serve as helpers in Jesus' adult ministry. Luke 8:3 records that Joanna and Susanna helped Jesus financially while being wives and probably mothers. Matthew 27:55-56 records that "There were also many women there, looking on from a distance, who had followed Jesus from Galilee, ministering to him, among whom were Mary Magdalene and Mary the mother of James and Joseph and the mother of the sons of Zebedee." The words 'ministering to him' describe helping Jesus. They were Jesus' helpers. These helpers were the first to see the empty tomb and to hear the message that Christ rose from the grave (Luke 28).

Women help their husbands, their children, each other, their church, their neighbors, and society as a whole. Adam was alone, and it was not good. So, God made a helper complementing him. In John 14, Jesus is prepping the disciples for His imminent departure from the earth, and He lets them know He will not leave them alone. They will not be orphans. Jesus is going to ask the Father to give the disciples a *paraklētos* (Greek). Both the ESV and NASB translate this word as "helper". The Strong's Greek Lexicon states that the word *paraklētos*, in the broadest sense, is a "helper, succorer, aider, and assistant." The Holy Spirit is to the disciple of Christ what the woman is to the husband, the family, the church, and society.

Acts 18:26 records that when Priscilla and Aquila heard Apollos, "they took him aside and explained to him the way of God more accurately." Priscilla helped her husband disciple Apollos. Women help in the church in a myriad of roles except for the office of elder and deacon (1Ti 3). Nothing in the Bible prohibits women from working outside of the home, and nothing in Scripture specifically identifies occupations and careers women, in particular, cannot pursue. Truly the man who "finds a wife finds a good thing and obtains favor from the LORD" (Pro 18:22).

## Marriage and Family

**Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife, and they shall become one flesh. (Genesis 2:24)**

In Genesis 1-2, the reader sees God creating marriage and family. God is the officiant at the first marriage (2:22). God is the One who gave the commandment for humans to procreate (1:28). God is the One who creates one person as a male, and another as a female. God created only two genders – everything else is a distortion from the Fall. God is the One who designed procreation in such a way that a child has a father and a mother. The father is the male. The mother is the one who carries and delivers the child into the world (or a woman, such as a surrogate, who assumes the same role in the child's life.) Women are different from males, and what sets them apart from males is the biological capacity to give birth. Heterosexual marriage is God's plan. God-designed families are the foundation of a flourishing civilization.

It is God Himself who said, "It is not good that the man [Adam] should be alone; I will make him a helper fit for him" (2:18). Men and women do better in opposite-sex monogamous relationships. Polygamy is a result of the Fall. Children flourish when their biological father and mother raise them. Endless studies have proven this. (This is not to say that children can't do well in other situations.) Adoption is good and necessary because of the fallen nature of a sinful world. Having created the woman, God "brought her to the man" (2:22). Marriage is God's idea. God brought Eve to the altar, and God is the One who said a man "must hold fast [unite or bond] to his wife" (2:24).

The woman is the helper "fit for him." This simple sentence is packed with implications. "Fit for him" is, at first, a biological statement. Men and women fit each other in the ONLY one flesh relationship that produces children, which is being fruitful and multiplying. If humanity ceases to engage in procreation, it will eventually cease to exist. Based on the current mortality rates (2023), a nation-state needs a birthrate of 2.1 children per female to maintain a stable population. Some cannot get pregnant; others refuse. There is a need for some women to give birth to 3 or 4 children to offset those who don't give birth and children who die prematurely. None of this suggests that giving birth is the only role of women. Beginning with His birth into the world, women were very involved in Christ's ministry on this earth. Deborah led Israel in Judges; Paul recognizes Phoebe for her help to the church as a servant (Rom 16:1).

But, a helper "fit for him" is much more than biological. God made the woman in such a way that she completes the male. The male is incomplete without his helper. Helper is not a demeaning or derogatory description. It does not imply less. God made both males and females in His image. Hebrews 13:6 describes Yahweh as our helper. The ESV describes the Holy Spirit as the believer's "Helper" (John 14, 15, 16). The Holy Spirit comes alongside the believer and does life with them. Husbands and wives come alongside each other and help one another. Sometimes there are exceptions. The Apostle Paul speaks of singleness being a gift from God for a life dedicated to advancing the gospel and the kingdom of God (1Co 7). But for those who have not been given this gift of celibacy, God's plan is marriage. The wife brings into the marriage emotional insight, wisdom, and fulfillment that the man cannot gain from a same-sex relationship.

God's plan, according to Genesis 2:24, is for young men and women to grow up, leave their birth families, and start new families. The man and his wife can be naked, united, and unashamed in the marriage covenant. Hebrews 13:4 tells us to hold marriage in high esteem. Honor opposite-sex marriage. Celebrate opposite-sex marriages. Jesus performed His first miracle at a wedding party. Expect children from married couples. Verse 4 instructs us to "keep the marriage bed undefiled for God will judge sexual immorality and adultery." God's solution for the natural desires He has built into males and females is to find a person of the opposite sex, examine them for their faith in Christ, and fall in love. And then, unite with a promise to be the wife or husband God expects for the other until death separates one from the other. Sometimes divorce separates husbands and wives, but this is a necessary evil because of the hardness of the human heart (Mat 19). Neither divorce nor polygamy was ever part of God's plan from the beginning.

Finally, the Fall of man brought difficulty into marriage. Genesis 3:16 reveals that a woman's desire is sometimes contrary to her husband's. Simply put, they don't always get along. She will feel like his leadership is more like ruling, and he will feel like she is being contrary. Both must recognize this is part of the curse and work together to eliminate the consequences of the Fall in their marriage. This will require the grace of God to forgive and the hard work of applying what the Holy Spirit convicts and reveals concerning sin and what glorifies God in the Gospel and His Word.

## The Ancient Serpent

(Genesis 3, Revelation 12)

In the first line of Genesis 3, the text introduces the antagonist, the serpent, who is more crafty or cunning than any of the other animals in the Garden. At this point, the origin of the serpent is just as mysterious as the origin of God. However, the rest of the Bible will fill in much of the serpent's backstory. He is a spiritual being who fell from being created perfectly to a rebel. The rebellion – the sin – happened after Genesis 1:31, where God describes everything He made as "very good".

The serpent asks the woman: "Did God actually say, 'You shall not eat of any tree in the garden?'" The woman responds that they can eat the fruit of any tree except one. But she adds, "neither shall you touch it lest you die" (v. 3). Eve is right concerning eating and dying but wrong concerning touching the fruit of the tree. The serpent immediately exploits this with a lie. He says, "You will not surely die. For God knows that when you eat of it, your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God..." (v. 4-5). His lie is quite ironic. They were already in God's image and likeness (1:26). The serpent deceived the woman, and she took the fruit and ate it. She also gave some to Adam, and he ate. At that moment, sin entered the world, and Adam and Eve died spiritually (separated from God) and would eventually die physically (Rom 5:12).

Isaiah 14:12-15 may describe Satan's sin where the text talks about a "Day Star" (Lucifer, KJV) who said in his heart, "I will ascend to heaven" and "I will set my throne on high" and "I will make myself like the Most High." Ezekiel 28:11-19 may also allude to Satan's fall. In Ezekiel, pride is the culpable reason for the fall. In Luke 10:18, Jesus said, "I beheld Satan's fall like lightning from heaven." Is there a relationship between the "Day Star" and "like lightning" falling from heaven? Yes.

Jesus assigns the devil responsibility for Adam and Eve's death in John 8:44. He said, "You are of your father the devil...He was a murderer from the beginning [referring to Gen 3] and does not stand in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks out of his own character, for he is a liar and the father of lies." The serpent is the devil – a liar and murderer. In Revelation 12:9, we learn that the ancient serpent is the devil, that is, "the accuser"; the Satan, or literally "the adversary"; and the deceiver of the whole world. He was Adam and Eve's adversary and has been the adversary of God, the Son, and the people of God from the beginning. We also learn that he is an angelic being and a leader of other angels who rebelled against God's rule. These fallen angels are called demons and distinguished from "holy angels" (Mark 8:58). Peter writes about angels that sinned (2Pe 2:4). In Jude 6, there is a description of angels that did not keep their proper place. Ten times the NT calls the devil the "evil one" (Mat 13:19).

### The Ancient Serpent

- Is cursed by God; he must now crawl on his belly; evidently, he didn't crawl before the curse
- Promised to have his head bruised (crushed, Merriam-Webster) by the offspring of Eve – namely Jesus Christ
- Rebelled against God's rule and reign; he is the originator of sin
- Led other angels to follow in a rebellion against God, essentially becoming the enemy of God and humans
- Deceives and is the deceiver of the whole world; he lies and is the father of lies
- Is the Devil, the accuser of the people of God like Job or Joshua, the high priest
- Is "the Satan", the slanderer, the adversary of the people of God
- Provoked David to sin against God in numbering the people
- Is the tempter, as in the temptation of Christ, and a murderer from the beginning, according to Jesus
- Beelzebul, another name for Satan – the ruler or prince of the demons (unclean spirits) (evil angels)
- Is the evil one who snatches away the Word of God from the hearts of people
- The one who entered Judas Iscariot, the LORD's betrayer
- Is the god (ruler) of this world who blinds the eyes of those who do not believe the Gospel of Jesus
- The prince (ruler) of the power of the air and can disguise himself as an angel of light
- Hindered Paul from getting somewhere and like a roaring lion, seeks someone to devour
- Will spend eternity in hell, a lake of fire, prepared for him and his evil angels (demons)

### Final Thoughts

Submit to God; resist the devil, and he will flee from you (Jam 4:7). His lies must be identified and rejected at all costs. Do not allow the evil one to steal God's Word from your heart. Pray daily not to be led into temptation. Satan and his demons are the enemies of truth and your enemy. Do not allow Satan to deceive you into believing the Bible isn't true.

## The Fall (Genesis 3)

In Genesis 1-2, God created the heavens and the earth, including Adam and Eve. In chapter 2, “the LORD [Yahweh] God commanded the man, saying, ‘You may surely eat of every tree of the garden, but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die’” (v. 16-18). The presence of this tree and the oral commandment not to eat from it created a moral choice for both Adam and Eve – to obey or not to obey. That was the question until the serpent asked Eve another question.

In Genesis 3, the reader meets a talking serpent described as the most cunning of all the animals. At this point, neither Adam nor Eve nor the reader knows that the serpent is Satan – the arch-enemy of God. Revelation 12:9 describes him as “the great dragon [that] was thrown down, that ancient serpent, who is called the devil and Satan, the deceiver of the whole world – he was thrown down to the earth, and his angels were thrown down with him.” Satan and “his angels” suggest that God created Satan as an angel and that he fell from a position of innocence to guilt.

When Satan fell is up for debate. This author believes it happened in the Garden of Eden when Satan saw Adam, the creation God made in God’s image and likeness – the being that God gave dominion over the earth. Adam occupied the position of authority that Satan desired, and Satan sought to dethrone Adam – God’s image-bearer on the planet.

A study of Satan's tactics to bring humanity down with him in a state of disobedience is helpful. First, the serpent asked Eve, not Adam, “did God really say you can’t eat from any tree?” The serpent said, “any tree.” Actually, God said they could eat from any tree except one. God had yet to create Eve when He gave the commandment not to eat from the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil. Perhaps Satan went after Eve because she did not hear the commandment directly from God. Genesis 2:16 reads “the man”, not the “man and woman” or both. Eve added to what God had said, she told the serpent they were not to “touch it” (v. 3). But God did not say anything about not touching it. Next, the serpent lied (John 8:44). Eve said they would die if they ate or touched the fruit from the tree in the middle of the garden. The serpent preyed on this confusion and said, “you will not surely die” (v.4). This bold lie created a choice for Eve: trust what God said or believe Satan’s lie. The serpent said eating the forbidden fruit would make her like God, but Adam and Eve were already like God – they each were made in His image, both male and female (1:27). Eve chose to believe a lie – she was deceived (1Ti 2:14). When Eve touched the fruit and did not die, as she thought, the conditions were set for her to eat it. Eve thought that eating it would bring wisdom and knowledge beyond what she and Adam presently had. They would now know both good and evil. Eve shared the fruit with Adam, and he ate it. Both of them fell from a state of innocence before God to a position of being guilty of violating the single dietary restriction He gave them.

The fall of man brought consequences – sin and death entered the world (Rom 5:12). Both would need to be defeated to restore man’s relationship with God. God had not lied, and now Man would have to die. The eyes of Adam and Eve were opened to evil, and they knew they were naked. They felt shame and guilt and hid from God among the trees of the garden. The serpent’s mission was complete. The beings that perfectly reflected and represented God in the garden were no longer perfect. They each were culpable for their individual choice. In this state of disobedience, God came calling – asking, “where are you?” (v. 9). God knew where they were. His voice brought accountability; they would need to answer for their sin. Each played the blame game. Adam blamed Eve; Eve blamed the serpent. To this day, humans default to the blame game. They seldom take full responsibility for their moral choices and behavior.

The fall changed everything. Would humans forever be making coverings for their nakedness? Would they always hide from the presence of God in a state of guilt? Immediately, God decreed consequences for the Serpent, Eve, and Adam. The serpent was cursed (v.14). There would be hostility between him and the woman and their offspring. Childbearing would forever be painful, and the husband-wife relationship would be fraught with difficulties and struggles. The good ground that God made was now cursed. Working it would require painful labor. It would produce thorns and thistles. Man would live by the sweat of his brow and eventually return to the dust he was created from (2:7, 3:19). But the same God that issued judgment showed mercy. Adam and Eve were exiled from the garden to keep them from eating from the Tree of Life and living forever in this fallen state. Before God banished them to the cursed world, He clothed them with skins that would endure the harsh world and gave them a promise of hope. Someday an offspring of Eve would attack the head of Satan (v. 15b). This promise of good news is called the **Proto-Evangelium**.

## Sin's Consequences

(Genesis 3:7-4:7)

The first recorded consequence of Adam and Eve's sin was an awareness of their nakedness, but that was only the first consequence of many to follow. Eating the forbidden fruit was a transgression of God's law for them. Genesis 3:7 reads, "Then the eyes of both were opened, and they knew that they were naked." This awareness of nakedness resulted in an attempt to solve the problem that their disobedience (sin) created. "And they sewed fig leaves together and made themselves loincloths" (Gen 3:7). Their action symbolically represents the good works people do to bring themselves into a "right relationship" with God.

The next consequence we see in the narrative is separation from God. They hid among the trees from the presence of God (Gen 3:8). After a short time of interaction between God and man, angels escorted Adam and Eve out of the garden of God (Eze 28:13). They could never return (Gen 3:23-24). Angels were posted as sentinels outside the entrance to ensure that Adam and Eve did not eat of the Tree of Life. Evidently, and we can't be sure, eating from the Tree of Life would have meant the two lived forever in a fallen world.

After calling for and confronting the transgressors, Yahweh God pronounces a series of curses in Genesis 3:14-19. But the most significant consequence had already been communicated to Adam in chapter 2 – death. Yahweh God commanded the man, saying, "You may surely eat of every tree of the garden, but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die" (Gen 2:16-17). But they didn't die. Or did they? Man is both a physical and spiritual being; Adam and Eve died spiritually that day and needed a Savior. They required the Savior that God promised in Genesis 3:15, namely, the one who would crush the head of the serpent. (See the Proto-Evangelium article.)

In Romans 5:12, Paul explains this reality. "Therefore, just as sin came into the world through one man, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men because all sinned." Paul teaches us that man is born dead. Neither Adam nor Eve were dead when God created them. Their death resulted from sinning against God's single prohibition to them. Subsequently, all other humans, including the first human born, Cain, are born dead. Ephesians 2:1 describes man as "dead in trespasses and sins." When God saves a person, He doesn't keep them from the grave's physical death. Instead, through Christ Jesus, God saves man from spiritual death and the second death. Paul describes this in Colossians 2:13: "And you, who were dead in your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, God made alive together with him, having forgiven us all our trespasses, by canceling the record of debt that stood against us with its legal demands. This he set aside, nailing it to the cross." Notice they were spiritually dead and now are spiritually alive.

Not only does Christ Jesus save man spiritually, but the Bible describes a second death after the physical death. In Revelation chapters 20 and 21, the apostle John communicates that the eternal lake of fire is the destiny of the unsaved. John writes, "Death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire. This is the second death, the lake of fire." (Rev 20:14). But as for those whom Christ has saved, the second death has no power over them (Rev 20:6). The believer in Christ is saved spiritually while on this earth and has two resurrections to anticipate. The first resurrection occurs when the body dies; the LORD doesn't leave man's spirit in the grave. He brings it to himself in heaven. In heaven, the believer waits for the second resurrection from the grave, where God unites their spirit/soul with their resurrected body. Then believers live forever with God in spiritually glorified bodies (1Co 15, Rev 20:5-6). Will you live forever with God?

**The chart below outlines the other consequences of the fall of man and the sin in the garden:**

<b>Serpent</b> Gen 3:14-15a	The serpent will now crawl on the ground, and there will be permanent hostility between the serpent (the Adversary) and the woman's offspring.
<b>Woman</b> Gen 3:16	The woman receives pain in childbirth and conflict in the marital relationship. Man will rule (dominate) in the marriage, but often not in a good way. Yet her desire will be to be married.
<b>Adam</b> Gen 3:17	Man will now have to work a cursed ground to remain alive. He will live by the sweat of his brow. Man will contend with natural disasters, extreme weather, pestilence, wild beasts and dinosaurs, poisonous plants and animals, and bacteria and viruses. All that is miserable can be traced to the fall of man.

## The Proto-Evangelium

**I will put enmity [hostility] between you and the woman, and between your offspring and her offspring; He shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise his heel.” (Genesis 3:15)**

Genesis 3:15 is the first promise of redemption (salvation) in the Bible. After Adam and Eve’s disobedience, God cursed the serpent for his role in the deception and temptation of our first parents. The serpent will “eat dust all the days of his life” (v.14) “Eat dust” is figurative language for God’s judgment against the serpent. Then God promises the serpent that “her offspring” (Eve’s) would strike (bruise) his head. Promises and covenants like this are why the Bible is full of genealogies. Genealogies track descendants. In Genesis, one can trace Eve’s descendants from her son Seth to Noah to Abraham to Jacob to his son Judah and Judah’s son by Tamar – Perez.

Perez is in the genealogy of Jesus in Matthew 1 and Luke 3. Born of Mary, Jesus is the One whom God chose to inflict the deadly blow to the head of the serpent (Gal 4:4). Revelation 20:2 makes it clear that the ancient serpent of Genesis 3 is the devil, Satan. Thus, we understand that the offspring of the serpent of Genesis 3 is Satan and the offspring of Eve is Jesus. Jesus is the descendant of David of the tribe of Judah, the son of Jacob, the son of Isaac, the son of Abraham, the son of Terah, the descendant of Shem, the son of Noah, the descendant of Seth, the son of Eve.

This promise is called the proto-evangelium because it is the *proto*, the **first**, announcement of good news. It is good news that a son of Eve will punish the serpent. Satan is the culpable agent for the fall of man. But both Adam and Eve made a choice to disobey God which is why they were exiled from the garden of God. The Greek word εὐαγγέλιον, transliterated *euangelion*, is literally “good news” translated “gospel”. Thus Genesis 3:15 is called the first announcement of the gospel.

On the cross, Satan attempted to strike the head of Jesus, but in the end, it was merely a heel injury. Satan entered Judas Iscariot (Luke 22:3) and orchestrated the crucifixion of Jesus. How could Jesus save anyone if He were dead? Early in Jesus’s life, Satan attempted to kill baby Jesus through Herod (Mat 2). Then as an adult, Satan tempted Jesus to sin, but He resisted all temptations to sin and remained without sin. In both cases, Jesus won. The crucifixion was Satan’s final attempt to defeat the Son of God. And were it not for Christ’s resurrection on the third day, the promise looked as though Satan reversed it. But Christ defeated His archenemy when He overcame death and rose from the grave. Christ paid for sin on the cross. The victory was secured. Christ, the lamb of God, died for the world’s sins. Jesus made it possible for all who put their faith in His death, burial, and resurrection as payment for their sins to be saved (1Co 15). No longer would sin separate believers from God, like sin separated Adam and Eve from fellowship with God. What Satan meant for the defeat of God’s plan of salvation turned out to be his own defeat. He suffered a head injury.

Although Satan is still the “god of this world” (2Co 4:4, 1Jo 5:19), he cannot keep humans from believing the gospel. His power to keep the nations deceived like he deceived Eve has been curtailed or restrained (Rev 20:3). Christ entered his world and bound him. Thus, he is a “bound” “roaring lion seeking whom he may devour” (1Pe 5:8). Jesus asked, “how can someone enter a strong man’s house and plunder his goods unless he first binds the strong man? Then indeed he may plunder his house” (Mat 12:29). Jesus entered Satan’s house (this earth) and for three years He plundered his goods. Those who were demon-possessed were set free. Those who lived in deception now believed that Jesus was the Messiah. Satan desired to sift Peter like wheat, but Christ prayed for Peter’s faith not to fail. And it did not! Peter did not stay in a state of unbelief after Christ’s death. Peter believed that Jesus rose from the grave and went on to preach to the saving of 3000 souls in Acts 2. And today, each time a sinner turns to God with faith in the gospel of Christ, Satan’s goods are plundered, and another soul is saved.

Finally, the Bible promises that God will end Satan’s constrained reign of terror when he is thrown into the lake of fire where he, the beast, the false prophet, and all unbelievers will be tormented forever and ever (Rev 20:10). At this point, followers of Christ will spend eternity with their God in a new heaven and on a new earth. All pain, sorrow, grief, crying, and death will be no more. God’s people will freely eat from the tree of life, and there will “no longer be any curse” (Rev 22:2-3). Humans will once again dwell with God like Adam and Eve did before sin entered the world (Rom 5:12; Rev 21). God promised that this redemption would happen in Genesis 3:15, just a few verses after sin entered the world.

## The Gospel

**Now I would remind you, brothers, of the gospel I preached to you, which you received, in which you stand, and by which you are being saved, if you hold fast to the word I preached to you—unless you believed in vain. For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received: that Christ died for our sins in accordance with the Scriptures, that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures, (1 Corinthians 15:1-4).**

The word gospel (1Co 15:1) comes from the Greek word εὐαγγέλιον *euangelion* pronounced u-on-gel-le-on, and it literally means an announcement or proclamation of good news. Thus, the word is not always used in the context of the salvation Christ brings those who believe. For example, in Matthew 4:23, Jesus is proclaiming the good news (the gospel) of the arrival of the kingdom (the rule and reign) of Jesus. And the first four books of the New Testament are called the Gospels because they each tell a story of good news concerning the birth, life, death, and resurrection of Jesus. The reader of the NT must pay special attention to the context of how Matthew, Mark, and Luke are using the word or its associated verb. Consider Luke 9:6, “And they departed and went through the villages, preaching the gospel and healing everywhere.” The disciples were not preaching the same gospel Paul would preach in Acts or write about in his letters.

The gospel proclaimed in Acts is the narrative of Christ Jesus’ death, burial, and resurrection as God’s Lamb (John 1:29) atoning for the world’s sins (1Jo 2:2) for all who will believe (trust in or depend upon) this truth. The heart of the gospel is the narrow focus on Christ’s death, burial, and resurrection. In the most concise sense, the gospel is the good news that Jesus died for your sins! Sin is what separated our first parents from their Creator in the Garden of Eden, and sin still separates sinners from their Holy Creator today. (Sin is not obeying God’s commandments.) Yet God has made a way for sinners to be reconciled (Rom 5:10) to their Creator. Through Christ’s atoning sacrificial and substitutionary death, the hostility between those God loves and Himself is eliminated if one believes in Christ and what He did for them. Jesus did not die for His own sins—He never sinned. God made the One who never sinned sin (2Co 5:21). He died for us (Rom 5:9). We describe His death as substitutionary because He died in the place of others. Peter writes, “He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree.” The tree is the cross the Romans used to put Jesus to death between two criminals on a hill outside the city. Christ died so you and I do not have to experience the second death (Rev 21:8).

John, the human author of the Revelation of Jesus Christ, the last book of the NT, writes about a second death. “Second” sets this death apart from the first physical death all will eventually experience. The second death is God’s punishment for those who sin, remain in unbelief, and do not trust in Christ and His cross-work for their salvation from God’s wrath.

**But as for the cowardly, the faithless, the detestable, as for murderers, the sexually immoral, sorcerers, idolaters, and all liars, their portion will be in the lake that burns with fire and sulfur, which is the second death.” (Rev 21:8)**

Faithless is the description John uses for those who do not believe there is a Creator God who has a Son, Jesus, who came to this earth and lived a sinless life so He could be crucified. Faithless is another way of describing unbelievers. In 1 Corinthians 4:4, Paul writes, “The god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelievers, to keep them from seeing the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God.” In this way, all people can be sub-divided into two categories: believers and unbelievers. The gospel must be believed to be individually efficacious. By “efficacious”, we mean it impacts and benefits you personally. Your sins are forgiven (Col 1:24), and God gives you eternal life (John 3:15). The gospel promises salvation from sin’s penalty, power, and presence (Rom 1:1, 16) to all who believe. If I promise to buy you an ice cream cone after dinner, you don’t have to ask me for the ice cream. If I keep my promises, I will take you to DQ and buy you a cone. God always keeps His promises (covenants). We trust Him to keep His word.

Followers of Christ believe in all the promises associated with the Gospel. They believe that 2000 years ago, in Jerusalem, Jesus of Nazareth was crucified on a tree. They believe the tomb is empty because Jesus rose from the dead on that first “Resurrection” Sunday (Easter). “He is not here, for he has risen,” is what the angel told those looking for the dead body of Jesus. They believe Jesus is with God in heaven, mediating (1Ti 2:5, Heb 9:15) on their behalf. Finally, true Christians do not believe the gospel for a minute or a season of their lives, like “When I was a child, I believed.” Paul admonishes us to “continue in the faith, stable and steadfast, not shifting from the hope of the gospel” (Col 1:23). Are you depending on Christ for your salvation from the wrath of God against your sin?

## Spiritual Death and Regeneration

(Genesis 2:17; John 3:3, Titus 3:5)

In Genesis 2, Yahweh (the LORD) God placed Adam and Eve in a Garden with a tree from which they were prohibited from eating the fruit – the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil. In verse 17, He told them that if they ate from the tree they would "certainly die." In Chapter 3, both ate and did not immediately die physically. Instead, their immediate consequence was a spiritual death. This is not specified in the text, however, it is seen. Both are cast out of the Garden of Eden and separated from intimate personal fellowship with God. The New Testament Apostle Paul, author of Ephesians, describes this death as: "You were dead in the trespasses and sins" (Eph 2:1). Adam and Eve sinned – they did not obey God. And the immediate result of their sin was they died inside. In Genesis 3, Adam and Eve did what they had never done before – they hid from Yahweh God.

Hiding themselves from God was the evidence that an internal death had occurred. This is often described as a spiritual death because man is both a biological body and a spirit. The Bible presents man as more than a container of oxygen, hydrogen, nitrogen, carbon, calcium, and phosphorus. Man is a spirit; he has a soul. Jesus said, "Fear him who can destroy both soul and body in hell" (Mat 10:28b). In John 3:6, Jesus told Nicodemus, "That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit." Paul writes about "our spirit" (Rom 8:16), and he writes about our spirit and soul in 1 Thessalonians 5:23. "And may your whole spirit and soul and body be kept blameless at the coming of our LORD Jesus Christ". Man is commanded to love God with his heart, mind, soul, and strength. Verses like this emphasize the complexity of the composition of man. The point is clear: there is a physical aspect to man and a spiritual aspect.

God is the One who orchestrates the birth of all humans. He is our Creator. Psalm 139 describes God creating humans in the womb of their mother. And the same God is the One who gives humans a second birth or makes them spiritually alive. Jesus told Nicodemus you must be born again. Nicodemus needed what Adam and Eve needed. He was born spiritually dead, and in this state of being spiritually dead, Nicodemus could not see or enter the kingdom of God. Without a birth from God – a second birth – Nicodemus will die and go to hell. All humans are born spiritually dead. Again, Paul writes about this:

**But God, who is rich in mercy, because of His great love that He had for us, made us alive with Christ even though we were dead in trespasses. (Eph 2:4–5 CSB)**

Paul calls making a believer alive "regeneration" in Titus 3:5. "God saved us, not because of works done by us in righteousness, but according to his own mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewal of the Holy Spirit." Merriam-Webster defines "regenerate" as "spiritually reborn or converted." Spiritually reborn is what Jesus tells Nicodemus he must be. "Washing of regeneration" refers to the cleansing of the believer that occurs when someone is reborn. Renewal is another way of saying to make new spiritually. All this is the work of the Holy Spirit according to Jesus in John 3 and Paul in Titus 3.

From Adam to Nicodemus, all who desire to be with God, to be in right standing with God, to see and enter His eternal kingdom must be born again and from above. The NET Bible reads, "You must be born from above." They need a birth that comes from above, which is another way of saying from God. The reason "again" and "above" can be used interchangeably is the Greek word in John 3:3 and v.7 for "again" is *anōthen*. This word has a double meaning: "above" and "again." "Above" emphasizes this comes from God; "again" emphasizes this is a second birth. This regeneration is described in the OT as the circumcision of the heart. In Leviticus 26:41 hearts are uncircumcised; in Deuteronomy 30:6, God will circumcise your heart. Uncircumcised ears and hearts are ways of describing the spiritually dead. In Romans 2, Paul explains that a true Jew is more than biological. A true Jew is one who inwardly had their heart circumcised (Rom 2:28-29) or has been regenerated or born of God, anew, again, and from above.

Adam and Eve had to be regenerated before they could return to fellowship with God and inherit eternal life when they died. And, so do you. Jesus said without this regeneration, one remains in a state of being spiritually dead – there is no alternative. Before the death of Christ, OT saints (people regenerated) believed the promises God revealed to them. For Adam and Eve, it was the promise of Genesis 3:15; for Noah, it was the promise of salvation in the ark. For Abraham, it was the promise of offspring (Gen 15:6). Today, under the New Covenant, faith in the LORD Jesus Christ, the Son of God, and His death, burial, and resurrection for one's own sins is necessary to be born again.

# Absolute Truths from the Beginning

## (Genesis 1-3)

1. Genesis 1:1 contains the most fundamental and foundational truth for life in the Bible. God created the heavens and the earth and everything therein out of nothing (*ex nihilo*) (Rom 4:17) by the word of His power, establishing God as the supreme Sovereign over all that exists (1:1-26). The everlasting God is the Creator of the whole earth (Isa 40:28).
2. God created only two genders: male and female. Both were made in the image and likeness of God (1:27). Being made in the image of God gives humans value without regard to their contribution to their family or society. Males are the sex that impregnates females. Women are the sex that produces the eggs males fertilize and can give birth. The union of both is needed to procreate. Gender confusion and sexual immorality are a result of the fall of man.
3. The first mandate (command) communicated in the Bible, known as the Creation Mandate, is to be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth (1:28). God expects humans to procreate.
4. After the Creation Mandate, God gave humans the Cultural Mandate. Humans are to subdue the earth's natural resources and have dominion over every living thing that moves on the planet (1:28) for the betterment of societies. Adam's first act of exercising dominion was naming all the animals God created (2:19-20).
5. "When God saw everything He had made...it was very good" (1:31). This means everything and every spiritual being, including Satan (before he fell from perfection), and Adam and Eve, were good when initially created.
6. In Genesis 1, God established our seven-day week: six days to work and one day to rest, called the Sabbath (2:2).
7. The way God created Adam communicates the special relationship between heaven and earth (2:7). God took "dust from the ground and breathed into his nostrils, the breath of life," symbolically communicating a bond between heaven and earth. God created both Adam and Eve on day six of the creation week.
8. Work is NOT a result of the fall of man; work is part of being a human. Work gives humans purpose (2:15).
9. God said, "It is not good that man should be alone; I will make him a helper fit for him." God specifically created the woman to be man's helper. The first marriage was an opposite-sex marriage (2:18). "Fit for him" describes the biological compatibility for reproduction and the emotional and spiritual bond husbands and wives share and experience.
10. God created Eve from Adam and brought Eve to Adam to communicate the especially unique relationship that belongs to married men and women (2:21). Opposite-sex individuals in the covenant of marriage can be naked with one another and not be ashamed. God expects men (and, by implication, women) to leave their families of origin and start new families. God united Adam and his wife in the relationship we call marriage (2:22b & 24).
11. The enemy of God and man is the ancient serpent, Satan. Jesus called him a liar and murderer from the beginning (John 8:44). He focuses on getting humans to question the truth of what God said (3:1). He lied to Eve and is culpable for their death because he tempted Eve to eat the forbidden fruit. He is the antagonist in the biblical narrative.
12. Sin (although not called sin until Gen 4:7) has consequences; the disobedience of Adam and Eve created the fallen world we live in today (3:16-19). Sin separates man from God's presence (3:23-24). This was the Fall from innocence.
13. Genesis 3:15 contains a promise of hope that the ancient Serpent will someday be defeated by One born of a woman. This promise is known as the proto-evangelium – the first Gospel.
14. Physical and spiritual death is a consequence of sin and ordained by God (3:19).
15. God clothing Adam and Eve with animal skins was intended to foreshadow the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus, the eternal Son of God, to save humans and to clothe believers (Christians) in His righteousness (3:21, Isa 61:10).

## Sin and Its Desire

**If you do well, will you not be accepted? And if you do not do well, sin is crouching at the door. Its desire is contrary to you, but you must rule over it. (Genesis 4:7)**

Genesis 4:7 introduces the reader to the word sin personified. "Sin is crouching at the door." It has a desire, and that desire "is contrary to you." Sin is an enemy. But what is sin? What is its origin? Why must I rule over it? What are the consequences of failing to rule over it? The Bible has the answer to these questions beginning in Genesis.

In the context of Genesis 4:7, sin is not doing well. Cain was angry with God and his brother Abel. Both presented offerings of worship to God. But God rejected Cain's offering while accepting Abel's. Scripture hints at why the LORD had no regard for Cain's offering. Abel's offering is described as being the firstborn of the flock and having the fat portions. But Cain brought the "fruit of the ground," not the best of firstfruits (Exo 23:19).

The issue was not that one was a blood sacrifice and the other a fruit offering. Both types of offerings were acceptable ways to express worship and thanksgiving. The issue is Cain did not give God his best. The LORD asked Cain, "Why are you angry? If you do well, will you not be accepted? And if you do not do well, sin is crouching at the door. Its desire is contrary to you, but you must rule over it." Cain must do well. Doing well is God's expectation for His people. "Do" describes the behavior, and "well" is an adverb meaning good or a proper manner, justly, or rightly. Cain can repent – he can turn this around and present God with an offering that God will regard. But will he? God tells him that sin is present and desires to rule over Cain. He must rule over sin by ceasing to be angry and doing what pleases the LORD. If he doesn't, evil wins!

Before Adam and Eve sinned, an angel or angels sinned. Scripture seems to hint that the first sinner was the serpent who deceived Eve in the Garden. We cannot be sure where the first sin occurred (in heaven or on the earth), but the serpent sinned, angels sinned, Eve and Adam sinned, and sin entered the perfect world God made. But sin was not alone – sin brought death (Rom 5:12). Sin separates man from God. Romans 6:23 states that "the wages of sin is death." But what is sin? Sin is a transgression of the Law or lawlessness (1Jo 3:4). Law, in this sense, describes what God the Sovereign has communicated as required or prohibited for His creation. God told Adam not to eat from the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil. This prohibition gave them a moral (right or wrong) choice. Now Cain has a choice. Sin is living as though there is no law. A person doesn't stop at a red light, speeds, drives on the wrong side of the road, or doesn't yield to pedestrians. She is operating as though there are no laws for driving. Today it is common to call sin a mistake like "mistakes were made" when referring to sexual immorality. It is a mistake to type the wrong phone number on a form. But sin is different. Sin is a failure to do what one knows is morally or ethically right (Jam 4:17).

Sin continues to be a problem throughout Genesis. In chapters 1-11, there are seven different sin stories clearly illustrating that man can't perfectly rule over sin. Even Noah, a man described as righteous and blameless, could not rule over the sin of being drunk after the flood. The conduct of the men of Sodom and Gomorrah is a "very grave sin" (18:20). In Genesis 31, Jacob asked Laban, "What is my great sin?" Joseph asked Potiphar's wife, "How then can I do this great wickedness and sin against God?" And Reuben answered them, "Did I not tell you not to sin against the boy? But you did not listen. So now there comes a reckoning for his blood" (42:22). Joseph understood that lying with a man's wife was a sin against God. Reuben understood that what they did to Joseph was wrong – it was sin. And Reuben understood that there must be a reckoning. Sin cannot go unpunished. No one wants to live in a world in which there are no consequences for sin. Reckoning is the same language God used in Genesis 9 when He established capital punishment as the consequence of murder. God said, "And for your lifeblood I will require a reckoning: from every beast I will require it and from man. From his fellow man I will require a reckoning for the life of man. Whoever sheds the blood of man, by man shall his blood be shed, for God made man in His own image" (9:5-6). A reckoning is an accounting – it is a settling of a debt. You killed someone, thus you deserve to die for taking someone else's life. God's holiness prevents Him from ignoring sin and sinners. Someday everyone will give an account for their life at the judgment (Heb 9:27).

Jesus said, "If your right eye causes you to sin, tear it out and throw it away. For it is better that you lose one of your members than that your whole body be thrown into hell" (Mat 5:29). Could Jesus have used stronger language to communicate the problem of sinning? No. All sin. But there is good news in the death of the resurrected Jesus.

## God's Natural Law of Morality in Genesis

**For when Gentiles, who do not have the law [of Moses], by nature do what the law requires, they are a law to themselves, even though they do not have the law. They show that the work of the law [revealing right from wrong] is written on their hearts, while their conscience also bears witness. (Romans 2:14–15)**

As you study the first book of the Bible, you will see a moral code of ethical conduct is present and understood by nearly all. In Genesis, we can see God's code of morality from Genesis 4 to 50. Although the word "law" does not appear anywhere in Genesis, there is plenty of evidence of the presence of God's law (a code of good and evil). We see this in two ways. First, moral judgments or confessions are made throughout the text. Second, actions, decisions, choices, and behaviors are described as sin or evil. Genesis records no less than 2000 years of human history before Moses. During those millennia of years, humans knew right from wrong. Sin existed in Genesis 4, thousands of years before God gave Israel the law on Mt. Sinai. The Apostle Paul teaches in Romans that without the law, he would not know what sin is (7:7). In Genesis 42:21, Joseph's brothers say, "We are guilty." God's inner law convicted them of their guilt. Examples of this inner moral law foreshadowing the Law of Moses are easily seen in Genesis. Here are four examples.

**You shall not murder.** In Genesis 9, God institutes capital punishment for murder. Anyone who takes another person's life must lose their own life. Genesis 9:5b, "If someone murders a fellow human, I will require that person's life" (CSB). Murder is so egregious of a crime against society that the guilty party must be put to death.

**You shall not commit adultery.** In Genesis 39, Joseph's master's wife wants to break her marital vows by sleeping with this young man. Joseph declares she is his master's wife. This is of no concern to her—she wants to lie with him. Joseph refuses to succumb to the temptation. He asks, "How then can I do this great wickedness and sin against God?" (v. 9). "Sin against God," but there is nothing recorded in Genesis that states it is wrong to sleep with another man's wife. Chapters 21 and 26 both contain narratives about Abimelech rebuking Abraham and, subsequently, Isaac for nearly causing adultery to happen through their half-truths.

**You shall not steal.** While Rachel's father was away shearing the sheep, the Scripture says, "Rachel stole her father's household gods" (31:19). In Genesis 23, Abraham does not take for himself a burial plot of land for his wife, Sarah. Instead, he pays someone else four hundred standard shekels of silver for the land. Just two chapters earlier, Abraham and Abimelech are in a dispute over a well. Abraham argues that his servants dug the well, and all must acknowledge his ownership of the well. Abimelech's servants must stop stealing his water.

**You shall not bear false witness.** The serpent of Genesis lied to Eve. She tells God, "The serpent deceived me" (3:13). Fast forward to Jacob deceiving his dad for the blessing in Genesis 27. Old Isaac asks Jacob, "Are you really my son Esau?" And Jacob replied, "I am." Turn a few pages in the book to chapter 29, and Jacob is furious with Laban. He exclaims, "Why then have you deceived me?" Jacob, the hypocrite, knows that lying to someone is wrong. He is like the thief who has been gone all night breaking into homes only to come home to find his own home has been burglarized. Angry and frustrated, he calls 911 to report a crime. He knows stealing is wrong for all people everywhere.

Well before Deuteronomy 22, Lot asks the city's men not to "do evil" with the two men he is sheltering in his home (19). How does he know men raping men is evil without the law of Moses? God's pre-Moses moral law is the answer. When Shechem rapes Dinah, her biological brothers are outraged, indignant, and very angry. They plainly state that what Shechem did "must not be done" (34:7). With that judgment, they show a moral compass is present and functioning. A code of morality was written on the hearts of Adam and Eve when they ate the fruit from the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil. From that moment forward, all the sons and daughters of our first parents were born with God's natural (moral) law written on the heart (Rom 2:15). Even without a codified law given like the one of Mt. Sinai, God tells Cain he must rule over sin (4:7). Sin predated the Mosaic Law because God's natural law of morality for all people everywhere was the standard for right and wrong the moment Eve ate of the forbidden fruit. A non-codified moral law existed for all people everywhere long before God gave Israel the Ten Commandments on Mt. Sinai. It is this law that makes all people everywhere guilty before God, even without the knowledge of the Law of Moses or the Law of Christ.

## Worship in Genesis

**At that time people began to call upon the name of the LORD. (Genesis 4:26)**

What does it mean to “call upon the name of Yahweh”? LORD is the English translation for Yahweh. Yahweh is actually 4 Hebrew letters YHWH with no vowels and is sometimes translated as Jehovah as well. The variance occurs because of the absence of vowels in the Hebrew language and the fact that we don’t know how ancient Jews pronounced YHWH. Yahweh is the personal name of the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. The God of Israel. But what we do know is that they worshipped YHWH as their God – the Creator. The phrase “to call upon” is translated as “worshipped” in the NET Bible with a special note that explains that worship included prayers to God and the offering of sacrifices. In Genesis, the reader sees Cain, Abel, Noah, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob all presenting offerings to Yahweh as acts of worship. From chapters 4 to 46, worshipping Yahweh through burnt offerings and the giving of offerings is part of the narrative (see below). What is worship? The Hebrew word for worship is literally to bow down or prostrate oneself before another, in this case, Yahweh, the one true and living God of Israel.

In the narrative of Cain and Abel, both present an offering to Yahweh as an act of worship. However, Cain’s offering was rejected. But why? Some suggest the reason was it wasn’t an animal sacrifice, but this doesn’t work with the rest of the Torah where grain offerings are required and acceptable. We read Abel brought the “firstborn from his flock” and the “fat portions,” which are pictures of our first and best, but did Cain bring the firstfruits (Exo 23:19)? Gen 4:3 says Cain brought “an offering of the fruit” —but it doesn’t say anything like “the firstborn” and “fat portions”, all words that emphasize that this was the best Abel had and he was giving it to Yahweh. Cain’s offering was rejected because Cain didn’t give God his best. It is repulsive to offer to our Creator the leftovers of anything as an act of worship. God is worthy of our first and best.

Ch	Descriptions of Acts of Worship
4	Cain & Abel gave offering to God; men began to worship Yahweh
8	Noah built an altar to Yahweh and offered burnt offerings
12	Abraham made an altar and called/worshipped Yahweh
13	Abraham made an altar and there worshipped Yahweh
21	Abraham worshipped Yahweh, the Everlasting God
22	Abraham offered Isaac to Yahweh as the ultimate act of worship
24	Abraham’s servant bowed his head and worshiped with words
26	Isaac built an altar there and worshipped Yahweh
28	Jacob, after his ladder (stairway) dream, placed a memorial stone and poured oil over it
31	Jacob offered a sacrifice in the hill country
35	Jacob poured out a drink offering
46	Jacob offered sacrifices to the God of his father Isaac

In Genesis 22:5, Abraham specifically says that he and Isaac are going to Mt. Moriah to worship. Yet, the reader knows that Abraham is taking Isaac to the mountain to offer him as a burnt offering to Yahweh. This is the first text to specifically tie presenting offerings on an altar to worship. In chapter 24, Abraham’s unnamed servant bowed his head and worshiped Yahweh by expressing words of praise and thanksgiving. The New Testament brings an end to God’s people – followers of Christ – offering animals to Yahweh. In the NT, all Christians are priests worshipping God. The chart below illustrates how the NT uses OT imagery to describe worship. In fact, Jesus said, “the hour is coming, and is now here, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for the Father is seeking such people to worship him” (John 4:23). Do you worship like this? Does God get your firstfruits and fat portions or the leftovers?

Reference	Descriptions of Worship in the New Testament using Old Testament Language
Rom 12:1	I appeal to you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, <b>to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship.</b>
Rom 15:16	To be a minister of Christ Jesus to the Gentiles in <b>the priestly service of the gospel of God</b> , so that the <b>offering of the Gentiles</b> may be acceptable, sanctified by the Holy Spirit.
Phi 4:18	I have received full payment, and more. I am well supplied, having received from Epaphroditus the gifts you sent, <b>a fragrant offering, a sacrifice acceptable and pleasing to God.</b>
2Ti 4:6	For I am already being <b>poured out as a drink offering</b> , and the time of my departure has come.
1Pe 2:5	You yourselves like living stones are being built up as a spiritual house, to be a holy priesthood, <b>to offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.</b>
Heb 13:15	Let us continually <b>offer up a sacrifice of praise to God</b> , that is, the <b>fruit</b> of lips that acknowledge His name.

## The Making of the Nephilim in the Days of Moses

**When man began to multiply on the face of the land and daughters were born to them, the sons of God saw that the daughters of man were attractive. And they took as their wives any they chose. Then the LORD said, "My Spirit shall not abide in man forever, for he is flesh: his days shall be 120 years." The Nephilim were on the earth in those days, and also afterward, when the sons of God came in to the daughters of man and they bore children to them. These were the mighty men who were of old, the men of renown. (Genesis 6:1–4)**

Why are these four verses in Genesis? Who are "the sons of God"? Who are the Nephilim? In Genesis 4:26, men began to call upon the LORD; in chapter 5:2, God blessed humanity. However, in chapter 6:6, God regretted making man on earth. What happened? In chapter 5, Adam lived to be 930 years old, but in chapter 17, Abraham believed he was too old to father children at 100. What moved God to say, "My Spirit shall not abide in man forever, for he is flesh: his days shall be 120 years"? What moved God to destroy the entire earth with a global flood? Genesis 6:1-4 and v. 5 tell us.

Determining who the "sons of God" are in this passage is the essential exegetical (the process of correctly interpreting the Scripture) task in the text. Are the "sons of God" men or spiritual beings? If the sons of God are humans who marry daughters, this isn't a big deal. Sons have been taking daughters as wives from the beginning. But if the sons of God are fallen spiritual beings taking daughters of men as wives, we have something bizarre happening. In Job 38:7, "the sons of God shouted for joy" when God created the earth. Verse 7 is our first clue as to the identity of the sons of God. Job calls these sons of God "morning stars". Throughout the OT, stars are often angelic beings (Psa 148:2-3). In Isaiah 14:13, we read about "the stars of God." Job 1 and 2 present two more references to "sons of God" that cannot be humans.

In Deuteronomy 32:8, we read about God fixing national boundaries according to "the sons of God" (ESV). The translators of the Septuagint (LXX) understood these "sons of God" to be ἄγγελος, that is, angels. The NET Bible agrees that "the sons of God" are not humans and translates the Hebrew text as "heavenly assembly." The CSB has a footnote on v. 8 referring the reader to the LXX that translated the Hebrew as "sons of God." Does the NT provide any help?

Both Jude, 2 Peter, and the noncanonical book of Enoch (written before the birth of Christ) provide solid evidence that angels were sexually immoral. Jude 6 describes angels who did not keep their proper dwelling place and are then compared to Sodom and Gomorrah, who likewise committed sexual immorality and perversion. Jude then references Enoch in v. 14. Is this a cryptic reference to the book of Enoch? Enoch 6:1-2 reads: "And it happened that when the sons of men multiplied in those days, they begat good and beautiful daughters. And the angels, the sons of heaven, saw them and longed for them and said to one another, 'Come let us choose for ourselves women from among the people and bring forth for ourselves children.'" Study 2 Peter 2:4-10. See how Peter moves from fallen "angels kept in chains" (v.4) to Noah, to Sodom and Gomorrah, to "those [angels and humans] who indulge in the lust of defiling passion and despise authority" (v. 10). Evidently, some angelic beings rebelled against God's authority and engaged in sexual relations with attractive women who gave birth to "Nephilim."

Again, we ask why Moses wrote v. 1-4? Verse 4 provides more help. Verse 4 explains to the people of Israel the origin of the giants in the promised land. Numbers 13:33 references "Nephilim" just like verse 4. Moses explains that the Nephilim are the product of the union of fallen angels and the daughters of man. He says Nephilim were in the land both "in those days," that is, before the flood and "afterward." That is after the flood. Nephilim is a transliteration, not a translation, of נְפִילִים which is a masculine noun. We know they were giants because the Israelite spies said they were like grasshoppers compared to the Nephilim. Like all the land's inhabitants, the Nephilim must be destroyed (Deu 20).

The first people to read the book of Genesis would have been the Israelites charged by God to conquer the Canaanites, including the giants in the land. These verses explain God's change in disposition to humanity (He regrets creating man) and why God now chooses to limit humanity's days on earth to 120 years. Additionally, it explains that the Nephilim did not survive the flood. Instead, they are the byproduct of an unholy union between angelic beings and women, and the Israelites must destroy them. While it is unwise to be dogmatic that this is the only correct interpretation of the text, both Old and New Testament texts support this conclusion well. And it fits exceptionally well with the context of Genesis and the book's first readers (the Israelite generation who now knew the origin of the giants in the Promised Land).

## Noah, A Preacher of Righteousness

**But [God] protected Noah, a preacher of righteousness, and seven others, when he brought the flood on the world of the ungodly (2 Peter 2:5, CSB)**

The toledoth (Hb.) (generations) of Noah begins in Genesis 6:9, and his story ends in 9:29. Along with Adam, he is one of the two central characters of Genesis 1-11. Noah is described as righteous, blameless, and a man who walked with God, yet he is still a sinner in need of God's grace. Noah's story is one of extraordinary faith in and obedience to God.

- Noah is the son of Lamech, a descendent of Seth, the third son of Eve, the wife of Adam
- There are ten generations between Adam and Noah
- Methuselah, the oldest man in the Bible, was Noah's grandfather
- Enoch, the man God took to heaven without dying, was Noah's great-grandfather
- The name of Noah's wife is not recorded in the Bible; his three sons were Shem, Ham, and Japheth
- Jesus affirms the historicity of Noah and the global flood in Mat 24:37-38 and Luke 17:26-27
- Ezekiel compares Noah to Daniel and Job; Peter references Noah in 1 & 2 Peter
- It is impossible to conceive of the ridicule Noah experienced, building an ark in the middle of dry ground
- Noah believed God when He told him to build an ark for the salvation of his family from a global flood
- The flood was God's judgment against human wickedness such that every inclination of man was evil all the time
- Yahweh (the LORD) declared that He would wipe humanity and all animals off the face of the earth
- God regretted that He had made humans, but Noah found favor (grace) with Yahweh (6:8)
- We can assume Noah's sons were very involved in the building process
- The Ark was 450 ft long, 75 ft wide, and 45 ft high, made of gopher (or cypress) wood and covered in pitch
- Genesis does not record how long it took Noah to construct the Ark
- God saved the lives of Noah, his wife, their 3 sons, and their wives along with some animals
  - 7 pairs, male and female, of the clean animals; 2 of the animals that were not clean, male and female
  - God instructed Noah to store food in the Ark for his family and the animals
- Twice the narrative records that Noah did all that God commanded him (6:22, 7:5)
- God told Noah to enter the Ark, and God shut the door of the Ark
- The flood was caused by continuous rain for 40 days and 40 nights
- Noah was 600 years old when the flood covered the earth and was in the Ark for approx. 370 days
- Eventually, the Ark came to rest on the mountains of Ararat in modern-day Turkey (8:4)
- When Noah thought the flood was over, he sent out a raven and then used a dove to confirm it was safe
- The dove returns with an olive leaf in its beak;
- From this text, the image of a dove with an olive branch has become a universal symbol of peace
- After the flood was over, Noah built an altar and offered clean animals and birds as a burnt offering to Yahweh
- God guarantees that seasons, day and night, cold and heat, will continue for as long as the earth does
- Yahweh now permits eating meat without blood in it and reissues the mandate to be fruitful and multiply
- Yahweh institutes capital punishment and God reminds all that humans are made in His image
- God promises never again to destroy all life through a flood
- The rainbow is the sign of this everlasting covenant with Noah and humanity (9:16)
- After the flood, Noah got drunk and lay naked; thus, sin entered the post-flood world all over again
- Ham, the father of the Canaanites, saw the nakedness and then dishonored Noah by reporting it to his brothers
- Shem and Japheth covered the nakedness without seeing it and were blessed for their actions
- The descendants of Ham, the Canaanites, were cursed
- Noah died at 950 years old (9:29)

Noah's Ark is a picture of salvation in Christ Jesus. The flood represents God's judgment against sin. Those outside the Ark were not saved from God's wrath. Those who believed the Ark could save them from death during the flood got into the Ark. Noah believed God concerning the promise of impending judgment, built the Ark, got into it, and waited for God to shut the door. And Noah remained in the Ark until he knew it was safe. Faith without works is dead (Jam 2:17). Noah proved his faith was genuine through his actions. Those whose faith is in Christ as their Savior will also be saved from the wrath of God and will be characterized as having both a life of obedience to God and faith, like Noah.

## Capital Punishment—the Death Penalty

In Genesis 8:21, Yahweh promises to never “again strike down every living creature as I have done.” After such a gracious promise, Yahweh institutes a change in judicial (the part of government responsible for justice) punishment for all of humanity. The death penalty is called “capital punishment” because it is the ultimate punishment—you lose your life. God’s plan for mitigating violence on the earth is those who take life lose their own. They are humanely put to death.

The language in Genesis 9:5 is not easily understood, and if you are not careful, you will run right over it as you read the chapter. The CSB translation helps clarify precisely what the Hebrew is saying with this sentence. “If someone murders a fellow human, I [God] will require that person’s life” (Gen 9:5b). Then verse 6 states why whoever murders someone must also lose their own life. “Whoever sheds human blood, by humans his blood will be shed, for God made humans in his image” is God’s explanation of why the death penalty is now the law of the earth. Humans are different and set apart—they, male and female, are made in God’s image. Humans are not animals. Animals kill animals—that is just the reality of nature. Human life is sacred.

This is a new mandate for all of humanity. Remember, God has not communicated the Ten Commandments to Israel by this time. Let’s read verse 5 in its entirety:

**And for your lifeblood, I will require a reckoning:  
from every beast I will require it and from man.  
From his fellow man, I will require a reckoning for the life of man.**

The blood is the source of life. The shedding of blood is the death of a person; it is not describing bleeding. Human life is so set apart, so sacred, that if an animal kills a human, the animal must be put to death. And the same thing holds for a fellow man. If a man kills a man, God will require a reckoning. What is a reckoning? It is accountability. God now commands governing authorities to hold individuals accountable when the life of a human is taken from them.

Should a person be able to intentionally and willfully take an innocent life and remain alive?

Leviticus 24:17 answers the question. “Whoever takes a human life shall surely be put to death.” Exodus 21:23–25 communicates the same idea with greater specificity. “But if there is harm, then you shall pay life for life, <sup>24</sup>eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot, <sup>25</sup>burn for burn, wound for wound, stripe for stripe.” God is pro-life! The impartial and consistent application of an “eye for eye” and “life for life” is supposed to deter the shedding of innocent life. In Ezekiel 13, we read about God’s indictment of Israel’s failed justice system. Yahweh condemns Israel for “putting to death souls who should not die and keeping alive souls who should not live.”

The apostle Paul reinforces this in Romans 13. He writes the governing authorities do not bear the sword in vain (v. 4). But what does that mean? A person’s life is ended with a sword. The governing authorities do not carry a sword for no reason. When the government fails to put to death those guilty of murder, they are bearing the sword in vain. The person who loses his life for murdering someone else can never take another life.

In the United States, 23 states do not have the death penalty. In those states, the punishment is often, but not always, life in prison. Americans and Christians are divided in their support of capital punishment. There are several reasons why even Christians struggle with supporting the death penalty. The first is sometimes juries (judges) convict innocent men of murder. In those cases, an innocent person could be put to death wrongfully. Second, many Christians oppose it because of the sanctity of the life of the guilty person. Other reasons for opposition are the death penalty does not deter violent crimes and does not deal with the root causes of social injustices like poverty.

Christians are not enthusiastically pro-death penalty. Their support of the death penalty is rooted in support for the sanctity of innocent lives, the desire to deter violent crimes, and obedience to the word of God. A deep dive into the Bible and capital punishment reveals the mandate from God before the Mosaic Law (Gen 9), the Law of Moses, and the New Testament all supporting the death penalty.

## Noah's Fall and Salvation

**By faith Noah, being warned by God concerning events as yet unseen, in reverent fear constructed an ark for the saving of his household. By this he condemned the world and became an heir of the righteousness that comes by faith. (Hebrews 11:7)**

How did people in Genesis get saved? We know in the New Testament that genuine faith in the gospel of Jesus Christ results in salvation. One amazing example of this is found in Acts 16:25ff. After a great earthquake and a little bit of dialogue, we read: "Then he [the jailer] brought them [Paul and Silas] out and said, 'Sirs, what must I do to be saved?' And they said, "Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved, you and your household." Verse 32 continues with Paul and Silas sharing more about the Lord to the household and we have a record that the jailer's household believed and was baptized. But what about Noah and his household?

Before we talk about Noah's salvation, let's talk about his fall. In Genesis 6-9, Noah becomes Adam 2.0. God starts over with Noah. Noah is righteous, blameless, and he walks with God. This is why God chose him to be the father of humanity who would be saved from the necessary cleansing of the earth through a global flood that would result in the death of everything living "that was on the face of the earth, man and animals" (Gen 7:23). But not Noah. God preserved Noah's life. God would start over with a new Adam (Noah) and his three sons: Shem, Ham, and Japheth.

According to Answers in Genesis (a website and ministry dedicated to teaching the truths found in Genesis), Noah probably spent 55 to 75 years building the ark. This is based on the years his sons were born and the time it would take for them to grow up and marry. Remember, Noah's wife and the wives of the sons are on the ark as well. Think about the faith and perseverance it would take to dedicate 55 to 75 years of your life to building a boat for a flood that no one had ever experienced. "By faith Noah being warned by God concerning" a flood God would bring "in reverent fear constructed an ark for the saving of his household" (Heb 11:7). Then, after over a year on this ark, which had to be utterly miserable beyond comprehension, Noah was saved from the flood. The ark landed, and all are safe. The water abated, and God tells Noah to go out onto the dry land. The first thing Noah does is worship Yahweh with burnt offerings (Gen 8:20). Noah, our righteous father, still believes. God has saved him and his household, and He is worthy of worship. After some post-flood instructions from God described in chapter 9, Noah, Adam 2.0, falls hard. Adam and Eve fell in the Garden of Eden, and now Noah has fallen. This is not to suggest Noah was innocent or perfect prior to his time on the ark. Instead, let the reader see Noah as Adam, and God starting over with the most righteous man alive. And yet, our Adam 2.0, our patriarch, experiences a fall.

Consider the parallels between Adam and Noah. They are too intentional not to communicate that Noah can't do what Adam also couldn't do. The earth needs a new Adam—a Son of God who can keep God's law perfectly.

Adam's Fall (Gen 3)	Noah's Post-Flood Fall (Gen 9)
Cultivated the ground* in the garden	A man of the soil* who planted a vineyard
Ate of fruit from the wrong tree	Found drunk from the fruit of the vine
Painfully aware of his nakedness	Needed someone to cover his nakedness
*The Hebrew [Strong's H127] is identical between Gen 2:5 and 9:20. Noah's occupation after the flood is the same as Adam's in the Garden.	

Let's reiterate the concept of righteousness by faith as a gift from God. Despite being described as righteous, Noah was still a sinner in need of a Savior. His personal righteousness was not sufficient—it was found to be wholly inadequate. He was drunk and naked. How then could Noah be saved prior to Jesus? Hebrews 11:7 tells us. Noah by faith received a righteousness, NOT his own, described as "the righteousness that comes by faith." Notice the word "heir." Noah was an heir of "the righteousness." Like a person who inherits someone else's money, Noah was an heir of a righteousness that was not his own. Noah believed what God told him concerning an impending judgment by water and built an ark as evidence of the authenticity of his faith. And God counted Noah's faith in Him as righteousness just like Abraham's (see Gen 15:6). "The righteousness" that comes by faith is a gift from God. One could imagine our unrighteousness as a filthy, nasty, smelly jacket, like one you might see on a destitute person, and the righteousness of Christ as a brand new, top-of-the-line jacket never worn by anyone. God took Noah's nasty jacket off and clothed him with a perfectly fitting, immaculate jacket from Christ. And God will do the same for you—if you believe the gospel—like the jailor in Acts 16.

## The Tower of Babel and the Toledoth of Noah's Sons

(Genesis 10-11)

Genesis 10 and 11:10-26 contain the genealogies of 1) Japheth, 2) Ham, 3) Shem's sons who are not the descendants that lead to Abraham, and 4) the descendants of Shem that lead to Terah's three sons: Abram, Nahor, and Haran. The genealogies or *toledoths* (Hebrew) prove that Noah's sons and their sons obeyed Yahweh's commandment to be fruitful and multiply. Strategically placed after 3) but before 4) is the narrative of the Tower of Babel. The Tower of Babel (or Babylon) narrative reveals that partial obedience is never acceptable to Yahweh, who twice communicated after the flood that humanity was to fill the earth (9:1). And, "As for you, be fruitful and multiply; Populate the earth abundantly and multiply in it" (9:7, NASB95). The reader should pause for a moment and remember that the rebuilding of the entire world's population began near the mountains of Ararat (8:4). Noah's sons received the same commandment that Adam received: be fruitful, multiply, and fill the earth. God desired that His image-bearers occupy all of His good earth.

According to the chronological order, the Tower of Babel rebellion must have occurred before Genesis 10:5. It states, "From these the coastland peoples spread in their lands, each with his own language, by their clans, in their nations." Notice the words "own language" and "nations" referring to ethnicities. This becomes evident when reading the verse in the Septuagint (the Greek translation of the Hebrew Bible, our Old Testament). In the Septuagint, the word for nations is *ethnos*. This is the Greek word from which we get ethnicities or races. The confusion of languages by God (or the creation of multiple languages) led to the formation of numerous nations or ethnicities. Nation, in this case, is not like the United States of America or even the modern state of Israel. God is the Author of the ethnicities we see today, including the Jews. This holds true for all ethnicities, as each traces its origin back to Noah and ultimately to Adam, the first image-bearer of God.

The narrative of Genesis 11:1-9, typically titled "The Tower of Babel," can be summed up in a single word: rebellion. In a unified act of defiance, the people of the earth chose to disregard Yahweh's command to populate the entire land. Instead of moving and occupying all corners of the earth, they decided to stay together and build a city for their glory, not God's. The reader can see this in the repeated use of 'us' and 'ourselves' in verses 3 and 5. This city, Babylon, is a city of man where God's mandates are not welcome. In some sense, this is the third fall in Genesis, following the falls in Genesis 3 and 9:20. The Tower of Babel was an attempt by humanity to reach the heavens, where the *elohim* (Hebrew, gods) reside.

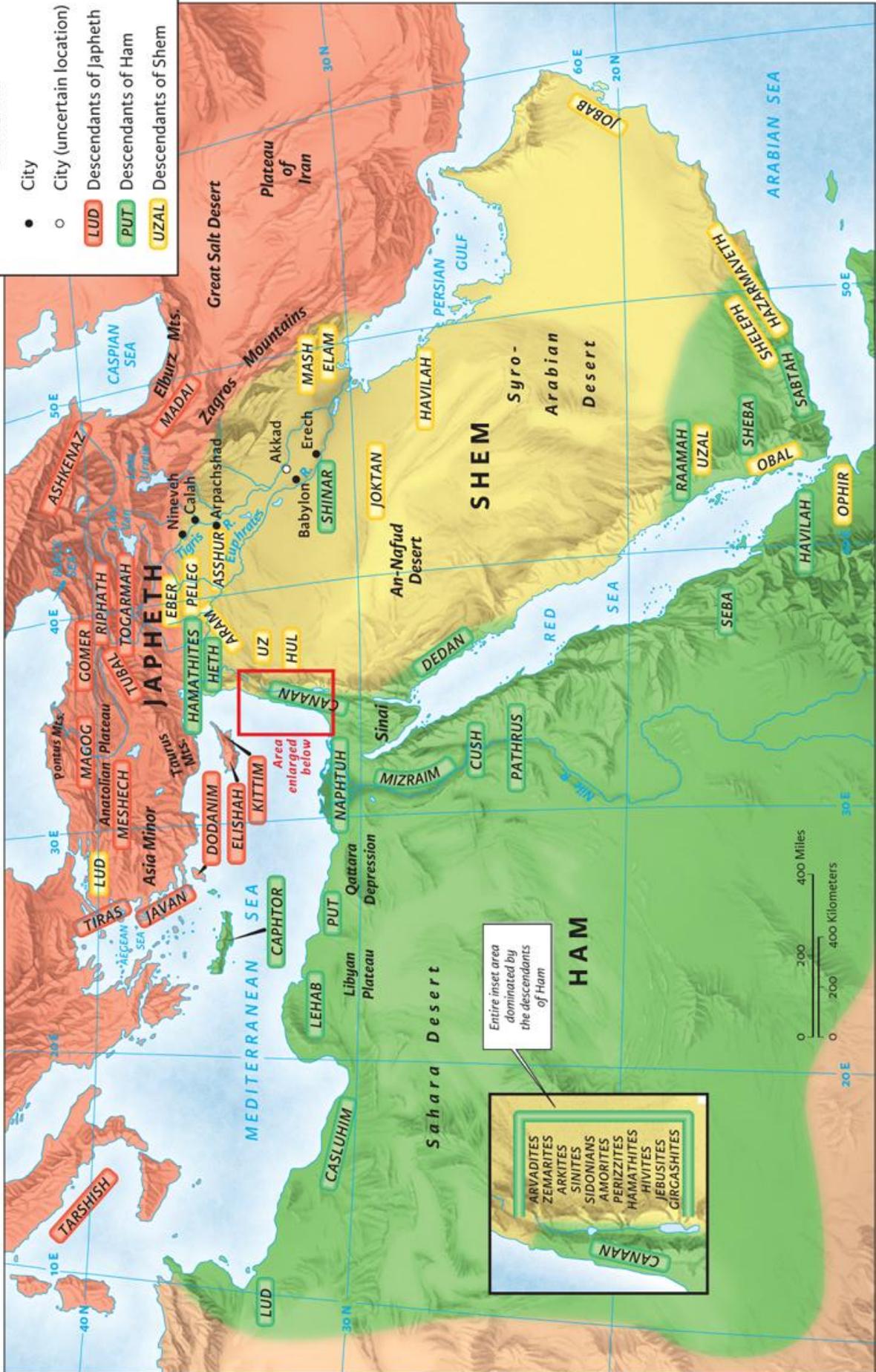
With a bit of irony or sarcasm, verse 5 records that Yahweh had to "come down to see the city and the tower" that humanity had built to reach God. The tower man built was so insignificant that God could not see it. (Obviously, God sees everything.) This tower is just as inadequate to reach the throne of God as the fig leaves were to cover nakedness. After their fall, Adam and Eve were exiled from the Garden of Eden, and in a similar fashion, Yahweh confused the people with language and created different ethnicities to exile (a forced absence) them from this city of man. The name Babel or Babylon comes directly from the verb to confuse. Throughout the rest of the narrative of the Bible, and especially in Revelation—the name Babylon represents an archetype of the city of man.

Earlier, we discussed this narrative's strategic placement just before Shem's descendants, leading to Terah. The rebellion at the Tower of Babylon is the backdrop for why Yahweh finds a new Adam, namely Abram, (subsequently named Abraham) from whom He will build a new great nation. The people exiled from the city of man are rebels. Yahweh is looking for a man who will follow Him, a disciple. Perhaps from a man committed to following Yahweh, Yahweh can build a holy nation (Exo 19:6) that will be a blessing to the nations forsaken, but not forgotten, at the Tower of Babel.

In Genesis 12, Yahweh calls Abram to go to a land that He would show him (12:1), and verse 4 records, "so Abram went." Yahweh has chosen another "Noah" with a different name in His ongoing commitment to saving the world from the fall. In and through this new holy nation (Israel), Yahweh will "bless all the families of the earth" (12:3) previously scattered (11:8). But what is this blessing? And how will it be given to the nations forsaken, but not forgotten, in the exile of the nations in Genesis 11? Yahweh's continued commitment to recovering what was lost at the Tower of Babel is ultimately seen in the commission (the mandate) His Son Jesus gave the church to make disciples in all the nations (Matt 28:19).

**THE TABLE OF NATIONS**  
GENESIS 10

- City
- City (uncertain location)
- LUD Descendants of Japheth
- PUT Descendants of Ham
- UZAL Descendants of Shem



The Table of Nations shows that the Bible is firmly based on historical events. It provides the historical context for understanding Abraham, whose family became a nation through whom God would bless all peoples of the earth. (CSB Study Bible, p. 24, Holman Bible Publishers, 2020.)

## The Scattering and Subsequent Gathering of the Nations

(Genesis 11:8-9)

In Genesis 11:8-9, we read, “<sup>8</sup> So the Lord dispersed [lit. scattered] them from there over the face of all the earth, and they left off building the city. <sup>9</sup> Therefore its name was called Babel because there the Lord confused the language of all the earth. And from there, the Lord dispersed [lit. scattered] them over the face of all the earth.” Twice previously, Yahweh instructed humanity to fill the earth; before and after the flood. However, in the land of Shinar, all the people of the earth gathered together to build a tower to the heavens instead of filling the earth as God had commanded. When someone hears the words “Tower of Babel”, they normally think only about God confusing the language of the people. However, His action of scattering the people is just as consequential as confusing their languages.

In Genesis 9, Yahweh promised He would never again judge all the earth by flood. He now judges the earth for sin in two other ways. First, He confuses the people by changing their native tongue. Second, He scatters humanity over the face of the whole earth. According to Deuteronomy 32:8, this is when ethnic (national) divisions occur – “Yahweh divided mankind.” The dispersing or scattering is Yahweh’s doing.

Then, in Genesis 12, Yahweh starts over for a third time with Abram. In Genesis 12:2, Yahweh promises to make a great nation from Abram. Previously, this nation did not exist. Yahweh is creating this new nation by means of a descendant of Abram. Through a miraculous birth, Sarai (Abram’s wife) will give birth to Isaac. Isaac’s wife, Rebekah, will give birth to twin sons, Esau and Jacob. A nation will come from each son. However, Yahweh chooses Jacob over Esau and gives Jacob the new name Israel. Israel will be Yahweh’s nation.

But what about all the other nations from Genesis 9? Has Yahweh forgotten them? No. In the same promise about a nation coming from Abram, Yahweh promises that in Abram, all the families of the earth will be blessed. Then, in Genesis 17, Yahweh changes Abram’s name to Abraham because he will be the father of a multitude of nations. How will Abraham become the father of the ethnicities (nations) scattered before his birth in Genesis 11? Even after scattering – or dispersing in the ESV’s language – the nations over the face of the whole earth, Yahweh has not forgotten the non-Israelites (sometimes translated Gentiles) whom He created.

Fast forward 2,000 years to the days of Christ on the earth. In John 10:16, Jesus mentions other sheep He has that are not of this fold. He says, “And I have other sheep that are not of this fold. I must bring them also, and they will listen to my voice. So there will be one flock, one shepherd.” In Acts 18:10, Jesus tells Paul He has “many in this city who are His people.” Yet the gospel has yet to come to Corinth. Christ is talking about His elect who have yet to come to faith in Him. In John 11:51-52 we read:

**He [Caiaphas] did not say this of his own accord, but being high priest that year he prophesied that Jesus would die for the nation [Israel], and not for the nation only, but also to gather into one the children of God who are scattered abroad. (John 11:51-52)**

Did you see it? Christ is not dying for only the nation of Israel. He died to “gather into **one** the children of God who are scattered abroad.” This scattered abroad language establishes a clear connection all the way back to Genesis 11. Wow! Christ’s death on the cross is the means by which Yahweh is going to gather His children, whom the New Testament calls Gentiles. The mission Christ gave us, His disciples – called the Great Commission (Mat 28:19-20) – is how lost sheep (children of God) are gathered into the one flock of God; the body of Christ.

We proclaim Christ and His gospel to the nations – those children who were scattered abroad—so that those whom God has elected unto salvation will repent and believe the gospel. Since we have no idea who God’s elect are, we proclaim Christ to everyone. According to 1 John 2:2, Jesus Himself “is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only, but also for *those of the whole world*”. We proclaim Christ and His gospel to the nations, knowing that this is how God is regathering the nations He previously scattered abroad in Genesis 11.

## Seven Sin Stories in Genesis 1-11

### 1. Genesis 3:4

The serpent lied to Eve saying, “You will not surely die.”

### 2. Genesis 3:6

Eve, followed by Adam, ate of the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil – the tree that God said, “you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die” (Gen 2:17)

### 3. Genesis 4:6-8

Cain was angry over God’s failure to regard his offering in the same way he accepted Abel’s offering and Cain killed Abel.

### 4. Genesis 4:19-23

Lamech, a descendant of Cain, took two wives and killed a man for wounding him.

### 5. Genesis 6:1-7

The sons of God took the daughters of man for wives. This was so displeasing to God that Yahweh limited human’s days to 120 years.

### 6. Genesis 9:20-21

Noah got drunk and lay uncovered in his tent. Ham failed to cover his father’s nakedness.

### 7. Genesis 11:4

Humanity congregated in one city and refused to fill the earth as God had commanded in Genesis 9:1.

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In each of these stories, man failed to rule over sin as God commanded in Genesis 4:7. Sin is a transgression of, or failure to obey, what God has mandated either orally or after His word was given in the Bible. After five sin stories, God starts over with Noah. Then Noah sins and humanity as a whole is found guilty of not fulfilling the mandate to fill the earth at the Tower of Babylon so God starts over with Abraham in Genesis 12.

**Now the LORD said to Abram, “Go from your country and your kindred and your father’s house to the land that I will show you. <sup>2</sup> And I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless you and make your name great, so that you will be a blessing. <sup>3</sup> I will bless those who bless you, and him who dishonors you I will curse, and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed.” (Genesis 12:1–3)**

## Genesis Part I Summary - Chapters 1-11

### Genesis 1 (God)

God the Sovereign Creator of Everything (Compare to John 1:1-3)

Creating out of nothing (Rom 4:17)

The seeming plurality of God found in God (**‘ēlōhîm**), the Spirit of God, and the pronouns: ‘us’ and ‘our’

Creation in six days: evening and morning

Man made in the image of God; both male and female

Creation and Cultural mandates

3 Q’s: Is there a God? Does He communicate? Where is this communication found?

### Genesis 2 (Adam [man])

The need for rest: the first Sabbath (the Sabbath controversy) (Exo 20:8-11)

Work in the Garden of Eden: Adam is the garden’s steward

The roles between man and woman (the helper)

The first marriage ordained and sanctioned by God

The Tree of Life and the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil

Leave & Cleave: the one-flesh union (Mat 19:1-6)

### Genesis 3 (Serpent & Eve [mother of the living])

Meet Satan the Serpent (Rev 12:9)

The serpent creates doubt concerning what God said (John 8:44)

The Fall of Man and the consequences of disobeying God: the first exile (Creation, Fall, Redemption, Restoration)

Individual accountability for disobedience

The promise of redemption v. 15 (protoevangelium [first gospel])

Mankind now knows good and evil revealed in the shame of nakedness

Work outside the Garden is now harder

Fig leaves v. skins from the LORD God to clothe them (clothed in Christ’s righteousness) (Zec 3:3-4)

### Genesis 4 (Cain [& Lamech] Abel & Seth)

Cain’s lack of ‘first fruits’ offering may be why it was rejected

Why are you angry? Do well. Rule over sin!

The murder of Abel

Lamech & two wives

The birth of Seth

Calling on the name of the LORD (Rom 10:13, 1Co 1:1-2)

### Genesis 5 (Enoch, Noah: Shem, Ham & Japheth)

Made in the likeness of God and only two genders 2.0

The genealogy of Seth (Luke 3:38)

Enoch walked with God and God took him home without dying

## Genesis 6

The sons of God wed the daughters of man, producing Nephilim  
Man is corrupt and wickedness was widespread with every inclination of man toward evil  
The decree of global judgment except for 8 people and sufficient animals to start over  
Noah finds favor with the LORD: Noah was righteous, blameless among his peers, and walked with God  
The first mention of God establishing a “covenant” with man  
The construction of the Ark

## Genesis 7

Entering the Ark (a picture of salvation) and the Flood (God’s judgment on the world) (Mat 24:36-37)  
Clean (7 each) and unclean (2 each) male & female animals

## Genesis 8

The Flood recedes; exiting the Ark after 370 days  
Animals are fruitful and multiply again  
God promises never to strike down every living creature again and seasons will continue  
Anthropomorphism: God smelled

## Genesis 9

Meat is now part of the diet  
The divine institution of capital punishment  
Humans commanded to be fruitful and multiply and spread out!  
God’s covenant with all of mankind with the rainbow as the sign is to never destroy the earth by flood  
Noah’s drunken nakedness  
Canaan is cursed; Shem’s God is YHWH

## Genesis 10

The Table of Nations (see map)  
This chapter follows the Tower of Babylon event in Ch. 11  
Adam to Seth to Noah to Shem

## Genesis 11 (Abram & Sarai)

The construction of a tower to heaven  
Babylon: the city of man (confused languages) (Rev 18)  
The confusion of language causes man to spread out  
Adam to Seth to Noah to Shem to Terah to Abram: the importance of genealogies

## Part II – Outlining Genesis using the Major Characters and Covenants

### Part II: Abraham to Machir, the grandson of Joseph ( Ch 11:27-50)

#### A. God starts over with Abram (Abraham) and Sarai (Sarah); Terah's *toledoth*, (11:27) the life of Abram

1. Yahweh calls Abram to the land of Canaan and promises him land, seed, and blessing (12:3)
2. Abram and Lot (Abram's nephew) separate; subsequently, in a local battle, Lot is taken captive (14:12)
3. Abram rescues Lot from captivity; afterward, Abram meets Melchizedek, and he blesses Abram
  - a. Melchizedek is the king of Salem and priest of God most High, and he blesses Abram
  - b. Both break bread and wine together; Abram gives Melchizedek a tenth of the spoils of war (14:20)
4. God made a covenant with Abram, and He counted his faith in the covenant as righteousness (15:6)
5. Abram sleeps with Hagar (Sarai's slave), and she gives birth to Ishmael (16:16)
6. Yahweh institutes circumcision as the sign of the covenant and gives him a new name, Abraham (17:5)
7. Heavenly visitors promise Sarah a son, Isaac, and they confer with Abraham about Sodom and Gomorrah
8. After rescuing Lot, God destroys Sodom and Gomorrah for the sin of sexual immorality (19:24)
9. Isaac, the child of promise, is born (21:2), and Abraham almost ends his life until Yahweh's Angel stops him
  - a. In obedience to God, Abraham takes Isaac to Moriah to offer him to God (22)
  - b. The Angel of the Lord stops Abraham before he ends Isaac's life, and a ram dies instead of Isaac (22:13)
10. Sarah dies and is buried in a special tomb bought from the Hittites (23)
11. Abraham's servant must find a wife for Isaac; Rebecca, the sister of Laban, becomes Isaac's wife (24:67)
12. Abraham dies at a good old age (25:8), fulfilling Yahweh's promise to him

#### B. Ishmael's very brief *toledoth* (25:12)

#### C. Isaac's *toledoth* (25:19): Esau and Jacob's Bitter Rivalry

1. God hears Isaac's prayer concerning Rebecca's barrenness; she conceives and gives birth to Esau and Jacob
2. Esau sells his birthright to the Abrahamic covenant to Jacob (25:29)
2. Jacob steals the blessing from Esau by means of deceit and flees from the wrath of Esau
3. Jacob loves Rachel (29:18), is deceived by her father, Laban, and starts his family in Laban's household
4. After leaving Laban, Jacob wrestles with God for a blessing and gets a new name—Israel (32:28)
5. Jacob and Esau are reconciled but remain geographically separated (33)
6. Jacob's and Leah's (Jacob's 1<sup>st</sup> wife) daughter Dinah is defiled by a Hivite (34)
7. Rachel (Jacob's second wife but first love) dies, giving birth to Jacob's 12th son Benjamin (35:18)

#### D. Esau's one-chapter *toledoth* (36)

#### E. Jacob (Israel) and Joseph's Forced Separation and Glorious Reunion; Jacob's *toledoth*

1. Jacob's sons, save Benjamin, hate Joseph for his status and dreams (37)
2. Joseph is sold into slavery in Egypt
3. Judah sleeps with Tamar (38)
4. Joseph serves in Potiphar's House until his wife falsely accuses him, and he is thrown in prison
5. In prison, Joseph interpreted two dreams and then Pharaoh's dreams concerning an impending famine
6. Pharaoh promoted Joseph to second in charge to prepare Egypt for the famine (41:41)
7. Jacob hears that there is grain in Egypt and sends his sons to Egypt for food
8. Two trips to Egypt for grain: the first without Benjamin and the second with Joseph's beloved brother
  - a. Initially, Joseph accuses the brothers of being spies (42:9) and imprisons them
  - b. Joseph's brothers return a second time; he tests them and then relents and reveals himself to them (45:3)
9. Jacob and Joseph are reunited after no less than 20 years of separation (46:30)
10. Jacob moves his clan to Egypt and settles in Goshen (47)
11. Jacob blesses Joseph's sons—Ephraim and Manasseh
12. Jacob's last prophetic words concerning the future of his son (49)
  - a. Reuben, Simeon, and Levi are set aside
  - b. Judah will be the son from whom the royal lineage of Christ the King will descend (49:10)
13. Jacob dies (49:33), followed by an elaborate funeral and burial with Abraham in Canaan
14. Joseph forgives his brothers; 54 years later, Joseph died in Egypt (50:26)

# Abraham, the Father of the Jews, Physical and Spiritual

(Genesis 11:27-25:8)

Abraham is the patriarch (father) of the Jews and the nation Israel, a friend of God (Jam 2:23), and, more importantly, the spiritual father of all who walk by faith in the promises of God (Rom 4, Gal 3:9, Heb 11:8-19).

## Abraham's Life

- After the Tower of Babel debacle, God starts over with one man – **Abram**, the son of **Terah** (11:27)
- Called by Yahweh to the land of Canaan from the Ur of the Chaldeans, in faith, Abram obeys God (Heb 11:8)
- Married to **Sarai (Sarah)**, his half-sister, who was barren (unable to conceive all her life)
- Yahweh, God established a covenant with Abraham (12:1-3) (see [Understanding the Abrahamic Covenant](#))
  - Yahweh promised him 1) land, 2) to be made into a great nation, 3) a great name, 4) he will bless those who bless Abraham and curse those who dishonor him, and 5) in Abram all the families of the earth will be blessed
- At 75 years old, Abram left his father in Haran and traveled to Canaan, the land God promised him
- Routinely, Abram built altars and worshipped (called upon) Yahweh (12:8)
- A famine in the land forced Abram to travel to Egypt, where he lied about Sarai being his sister, in fear for his life
- In Egypt, God blessed Abram with flocks, herds, donkeys, camels, and male and female servants
- **Lot**, his nephew, traveled with Abram until the land was not large enough for both of their livestock (13)
- After Lot and Abram separate, Yahweh reiterated the land promise and offspring as the dust of the earth to Abram
- Lot was captured during a local battle between tribal warriors, and Abram's 318-man army rescued him (14)
- **Melchizedek** blessed Abram, and Abram gave a tenth of the spoils of battle to him (see [Melchizedek](#))
- Again, Yahweh promised Abram he would have offspring, this time like the stars of the sky
- Abram's faith in God's promise of offspring is counted to him as righteousness (15:6) (see [Justification by Faith](#))
- At 86 years old, Abram slept with **Hagar**, and she bore **Ishmael**, outside of the promise (16) (Gal 4:21-28)
- At 99 years old, God Almighty told Abram to "walk before me," and God promised him Canaan for the third time
- Yahweh changed Abram's name to **Abraham** because he would be "the father of a multitude of nations" (17:5)
- Abraham, and every male among him, must be circumcised (17:10) (see [Circumcision](#))
- Laughter was Abraham's reaction to God's promise that Sarah would give him a son – to be named **Isaac**
- God promised to make Ishmael a great nation; it is not known if Ishmael is the father of today's Arabs (17:20)
- Yahweh personally promised **Sarah** she would give birth to Isaac, and she also laughed at the promise (18:12)
- Abraham interceded on behalf of the righteous residents, including Lot of Sodom and Gomorrah (18-19)
  - Yahweh planned to destroy Sodom and Gomorrah because their sin was very grave (sexual immorality, Jude 7)
  - Abraham pleaded with Yahweh not to destroy the cities if 50 righteous people could be found in the city
  - Beginning with 50, Abraham negotiated God all the way down to only 10 righteous people
  - Yahweh promised not to destroy either city if ten righteous people were present
  - Ten were not found, so God sent angels to rescue Lot, his wife, and two daughters
  - God destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah with sulfur and fire from the sky (Luke 17:9, 2Pe 2:6)
- Abraham once again lied about Sarah being his sister for fear of King Abimelech (20)
- Yahweh declared that Abraham was a prophet (20:7), and Abimelech blessed them with livestock and silver
- After waiting for 25 years, Yahweh visited Sarah (at 90 years old); she conceived and gave birth to Isaac (21)
- God tested Abraham's fear of God and love for his son (22)
  - Abraham must sacrifice Isaac as a burnt offering at Moriah (2Ch 3:1)
  - In obedience, Abraham made the trip to sacrifice Isaac, confident that God would resurrect his son (Rom 4:17)
  - At the moment when Abraham was ready to end Isaac's life, the Angel of the LORD stopped him
  - Instead, a ram caught in the thicket was sacrificed (see [Substitutionary Atonement](#))
  - Yahweh promised Abraham offspring as many as the sand on the seashore (22:17)
- At 127 years old, Sarah died, and Abraham (137) buried her in a tomb bought from the Hittites (23)
- At an old age, Abraham sent his servant to find a wife for Isaac, the child of promise (Gal 4:28)
- Isaac married **Rebekah**, the sister of Laban, the daughter of Bethuel, a descendant of Terah (24)
- Abraham took **Keturah** to be his wife, with whom he had other children, yet Isaac was the only heir (25:5)
- At 175 years old, Abraham died and was gathered to his people, looking for God's city (25:8, Heb 11:10)

## Abraham, Our Spiritual Father

**Abraham received the sign of circumcision as a seal of the righteousness that he had by faith while he was still uncircumcised. The purpose was to make him the father of all who believe without being circumcised (Rom 4:11).**

Abraham is the father of Ishmael by way of Hagar, Isaac by way of Sarah, and many other sons by way of Keturah. Still, none of those biological sons is why Abraham is “the father of us all” in Romans 4:16. What does the Apostle Paul mean by “of us all”? Who is the “all” of Romans 4:11? In Genesis 17:5, Yahweh changed Abram’s name to Abraham because Yahweh would make him the father of a multitude of nations. How can this descendant of Terah become the father of a multitude of families, peoples, and nations (Gen 12:3)? The word “nation” is used in two ways in the OT. Sometimes, it means a particular people with a shared leader in a land with boundaries. At other times, it means ethnicities or non-Jewish people (Gentiles). Abraham is the father of all who believe in Christ and all who believe in His promises without regard to ethnicity or national origin. Asian, Hispanic, German, and British believers all have Abraham as their spiritual father.

Paul communicates this truth in Galatians 3:6-7, “just as Abraham ‘believed God, and it was counted to him as righteousness’? <sup>7</sup>Know then that it is those of faith who are the sons [and daughters] of Abraham.” Those of faith are the spiritual sons and daughters of Abraham. Abraham believed in God’s promises to him (Gen 15:6), and all who believe in God’s promise of salvation in Christ are Abraham’s spiritual offspring. (This is how Abraham will have offspring like the dust of the earth and stars of the sky [Gen 13:16, 15:5]). Describing these sons and daughters as “spiritual” is necessary to make the distinction from Abraham’s biological offspring. Jesus was the first to make this distinction.

In John 8:33, a group of Jews said they were “descendants of Abraham.” To this, Jesus replied, “I know you are descendants of Abraham” (37). Jesus acknowledged the reality of biological descent but challenged the Jews when they said, “Our father is Abraham” (39). Jesus said, “If you were Abraham’s children...” implying they were not (40). Notice closely the distinction Jesus communicates. These Jews are the biological offspring of Abraham, but they are also not Abraham’s children. Jesus went on to nail down this distinction with the words, “You are of your father the devil” (44). God was not their father—the devil was their father. Abraham was not their spiritual father.

Paul reinforces this critical distinction between offspring by blood and spiritual offspring in Romans 2:28-29. He writes, “For a person is not a Jew who is one outwardly, and true circumcision is not something visible in the flesh. <sup>29</sup>On the contrary, a person is a Jew who is one inwardly, and circumcision is of the heart—by the Spirit, not the letter” (CSB). Notice the words “by the Spirit.” Paul wants his readers to understand the difference between a Jew and a Jew. In Genesis 17, Abraham was physically circumcised—this physical circumcision set Jews apart from Gentiles. But Romans 2:29 describes an inward circumcision of the heart by the Holy Spirit. These are the true Jews—the sons and daughters of Abraham whose spiritual hearts have been circumcised by God’s Spirit.

Moses prophesied about this circumcision of the heart in Deuteronomy 30:6. He predicted a time when Yahweh would circumcise their hearts, and with this new heart, they would love Yahweh with their hearts and souls. In Ezekiel 36, Yahweh promises, “I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you; I will remove your heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh” (26). I cannot give myself a new heart any more than I can make myself a child of Abraham. This is the inner transformative work of the Holy Spirit described by Jesus in John 3:5 as being born of water and the Spirit. In Ezekiel 36:25, the verse before, “I will remove your heart of stone,” Yahweh says He will use water to cleanse and give the people He cleanses a new heart. Water is a metaphor for an agent of cleaning. Titus 3:5 also describes “a washing [the same water metaphor] of regeneration and renewal by the Holy Spirit.”

Together, regeneration and renewal describe the Holy Spirit’s transformative work on the person being saved. He or she becomes a new creation, a new (spiritual) man (2Co 5:17, Eph 2:15) in the New Covenant Christ established by His sacrificial death (Jer 31:33, Luke 22:20, 1Co 11:25, 2Co 3:6, Heb 8-9). Colossians 2:11 describes a circumcision without hands. This is because the Spirit does not have hands, and this circumcision of the non-biological heart is not physical. It is the internal spiritual work God does to the one He is saving. Paradoxically, one cannot believe the gospel until this spiritual surgery occurs (born again or born from above [John 3:3-8]), and the Triune Divine Surgeon does His work only on those who believe. By faith, we believe our hearts need this surgery from above, and we know only God can change our hearts to love and obey Him, our Lord and Savior. So, we believe. Do you?

## Abraham's Four Seeds (Offspring)

**Now the promises were made to Abraham and to his offspring. It does not say, "And to offsprings," referring to many, but referring to one, "And to your offspring," who is Christ. (Galatians 3:16)**

Yahweh, Himself, is the one who gave Abram the name Abraham because Yahweh promised to make him the father of a multitude of nations (ethnicities) (Gen 17:5). Father Abraham's seed (offspring or descendants) must be organized into four categories to make sense of the totality of what the Bible teaches concerning his sons and daughters (Gal 3:7). They are: 1) biological/physical, 2) national/ethnic, 3) singular, and 4) spiritual (see chart below). Abraham's first offspring promise is found in Genesis 12:3. Paul provides the final revelation concerning Abraham's seed in Galatians 3 and 4. In Genesis 13:16, Yahweh promises to make Abraham's offspring as plentiful as the earth's dust. In Galatians 3:16, the Apostle Paul interprets that Abraham's offspring is singular. Abraham's offspring are plural when Yahweh refers to them as "the dust of the earth" and singular when he refers to them as "one."

Type	Scripture	Explanation
Biological/ Physical	Gen 16:15 Gen 21:3 Gen 25:1-2	Biological are all the sons born through Abraham's sperm (seed). This includes Ishmael, Isaac, and all the sons of Keturah.
National/Ethnic	Gen 12:3	National offspring are ALL the sons of Abraham that will make up the nation Israel.
Singular	Gal 3:16	Singular is the Christ; Jesus our Lord and Savior. Jesus is the one true, unique seed of Abraham. He is a descendant of Abraham but is in a category all to Himself as the divine Son of God.
Spiritual	Gen 15:6 Gen 17:5 Gal 3:6-9	Spiritual are the sons and daughters who share in Abraham's justifying faith in the promises of God. All those who believe the gospel of Christ for their salvation are spiritual sons and daughters of Christ and, by extension, Abraham. This is the true Israel of God.

Now, consider a few of Abraham's sons for clarity concerning his four offspring types. Hagar bore Abraham a son, Ishmael (Gen 16). He is a circumcised biological son, but God did not include him in the promise of being part of the great nation, Israel (Gen 17:15ff). Moreover, the OT provides no Scriptural evidence that Ishmael believed like his father, Abraham. He was a biological son but not a Jew.

Sarah bore Isaac to Abraham. He, the Child of Promise, was a circumcised biological son, like Ishmael, yet God included him in the covenant, while Ishmael is not. In Genesis 17:21, Yahweh says, "I will establish my covenant with Isaac." Isaac is the father of Jacob, who will get the new name, Israel. So, Jacob, Isaac, and Abraham are the fathers of the nation Israel. The author of Hebrews writes about Isaac's faith in Yahweh and the covenant promises (11:20). Therefore, Isaac is a biological, national, *and* spiritual son of Abraham.

Isaac married Rebekah, and she bore him two sons, Esau and Jacob. In Genesis 25:23, Yahweh tells Rebekah two nations are in her womb. Before the sons were born, Yahweh had already chosen Jacob to be the father of the nation Israel. Esau was a biological offspring (Abraham was his grandfather), yet he forfeited the covenant promises.

On both Mary's and Joseph's sides, the lineage of Christ is traced back to Abraham (Mat 1:17, Luk 3:34), making Him a biological and ethnic or national son of Abraham. However, Paul does not appeal to that when he establishes Jesus as the Son of Abraham. Jesus is *the* seed (singular). He is the one and only Son of God who makes possible the blessing of being justified, declared righteous (remember the doctrine of Justification by Faith). God forgives the sins of individuals who believe in Christ and His work on the cross for their sins, declaring them to be righteous. Read Galatians 3:7-8 to better understand who Abraham's spiritual sons and daughters are.

In John 8, Jesus affirms the distinctions found in the chart above. Jesus tells a group of Jews that their father is the devil (8:44) and simultaneously confirms that Abraham is their father. He says, "If you were Abraham's children...you would do what Abraham did" (8:39). He also refers to Abraham as their father, stating in John 8:56 that Abraham is their father biologically and ethnically. Yet, spiritually, Abraham is not their father because God is not their Father. Jews who reject Christ are biological and national sons but not spiritual sons. Spiritual sons have experienced the birth from above. They believe in Christ and are the true sons of the Israel of God (Rom 2:9, 9:6; Gal 6:16).

## Understanding the Abrahamic Covenant

**Just as Abraham “believed God, and it was counted to him as righteousness”? Know then that it is those of faith who are the sons of Abraham. And the Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, preached the gospel beforehand to Abraham, saying, “In you shall all the nations be blessed.” So then, those who are of faith are blessed along with Abraham, the man of faith. (Galatians 3:6–9)**

- First referenced in Gen 12, 15, 17, 18, 26, and 28 with the words: promise, covenant, oath, and everlasting (Gen 17:17)
- Made with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob and by extension the nation of Israel (Exo 6:5)

### 5 Aspects of the Abrahamic Covenant Promises

- 1. Land:** God promises land to Abram, Isaac, and Jacob and then gives the entire nation of Israel the promised land of Canaan to live upon, provided they remain faithful to the Mosaic Covenant. In the land, Israel struggles with idolatry and sexual sins with the pagans. When they fail to obey the Law of Moses, God scatters them, and when they cry out for mercy, God brings them back. This cycle continues throughout the entire Old Testament. Eventually, the true people of God will inherit the new earth as an everlasting possession in the ultimate fulfillment of this promise (2Pe 3:13).
- 2. Great Nation (offspring):** Initially Abram is promised to be made into a great nation without a son or daughter. God solves this problem with the miraculous birth of Isaac who will father Jacob who will be renamed Israel as the father of the 12 tribes of Israel. In Exodus, these tribes will become the great nation of Israel. Eventually, kings will rule Israel until God brings the dynasty of David to an end, in anticipation of King Jesus. A component of the “nation” promise is the promise to provide descendants who will number like the stars of the sky and dust of the earth. Ultimately, God fulfills this amazing promise with spiritual descendants of Abraham. In Galatians 3, Paul explains how every person who has faith in Christ, and faith in the promises of the gospel, is a son or daughter of Abraham, the man of faith. Thus, the entire body of Christ can be described as offspring of Abraham. In 1 Peter 2:9, all those who are saved, the true people of God, are described as a chosen race and holy nation. The “great nation” promise continues with the Jews and Gentiles who are Jews inwardly, by faith in Christ and the gospel, and are citizens of the true Israel of God (Gal 6).
- 3. Great Name:** It goes without saying, God made Abraham’s name great (John 8:53). Four thousand years after his death Christians, Jews, and even Muslims are still talking about the patriarch Abraham. He is referenced over 70 times in the NT. Isaiah 41:8 describes him as a friend of God.
- 4. Bless and Curse:** As the narrative of Genesis and the Old Testament is unpacked, the reader notices that those who take care of Abraham and his descendants are blessed by a sovereign God, and those who dishonor Israel are cursed by the same God. This notion of “bless those who bless” is seen throughout Joseph’s life (Gen 37ff) and the notion of “curse those who curse” is seen in Exodus in the destruction of Pharaoh for the way he treated God’s covenant people.
- 5. All the families of the earth shall be blessed:** In Genesis 18:18, 22:18, and 26:4 this promise is expanded to “in you all the nations [lit. ethnicities] of the earth shall be blessed.” In Galatians 3, Paul explains that the blessing the nations receive is the good news that both Jews and all ethnicities can be declared righteous, justified, or in a legal state of right standing with God, by faith in the gospel of Jesus Christ. Jesus commissioned His apostles to preach the gospel to the nations and make disciples of all nations (Mark 16:15-18, Mat 28:19-20). Every disciple of Christ is a son or daughter of Abraham and receives the amazing blessing of exchanging their sin for the righteousness of Christ through faith in Christ and His gospel. They also receive the promise of the Holy Spirit indwelling the believer as a seal of their right standing with God – the record of their sin has been canceled (Col 2:14).

### Sign of the Covenant

Physical circumcision of the foreskin was replaced by the circumcision of the heart, spiritual conversion or regeneration, by God’s Spirit (Rom 2:29). This work of the Spirit makes it possible for the believer to love and obey God (Deu 30:9, Eze 36:26). The heart of a human, biblically speaking, is who they are at their very core. A believer’s flesh/sin nature stays with them until death, but after this circumcision, they are no longer enslaved to it or to sin.

## Melchizedek

**And Melchizedek king of Salem brought out bread and wine. (He was priest of God Most High.) And he blessed him and said, "Blessed be Abram by God Most High, Possessor of heaven and earth; and blessed be God Most High, who has delivered your enemies into your hand!" And Abram gave him a tenth of everything. (Genesis 14:18–20)**

Melchizedek (Gen 14:18), the most mysterious man in the Bible, appears in the *toledoth* (Hb.) of Terah (starting in Gen 11:27), in the story of father Abraham, out of nowhere. The reader has no knowledge of his ancestry – he has "neither beginning nor end of life" (Heb 7:3). Nothing is said about him before or after chapter 14 until Psalm 110:4 and then again in Hebrews 5-7. This priestly king appears after the battle where Abram rescued Lot with bread and wine (perhaps a feast) to celebrate and give the same God glory for the victory in battle. Melchizedek plainly states that God Most High "has handed over your enemies to you" (Gen 14:20). And Melchizedek pronounces a blessing upon Abram from God Most High at which point Abram gives a tenth of everything from the spoils of war to Melchizedek. The writer of Hebrews makes much of the greatness of this priest and king since the patriarch Abram "gave a tenth of the plunder to him" (Heb 7:4). Nothing in the narrative of Genesis would indicate that Abram and Melchizedek knew each other before the battle or ever met again after this brief encounter. Two worshippers of the same God met in the middle of a hot afternoon in Canaan, celebrated the feast of the LORD's Supper together, worshipped, prayed, and departed, perhaps never to meet again until eternity.

### Melchizedek

- His name means king of righteousness (Heb 7:2)
- King of Salem (lit. "king of peace) (perhaps Jerusalem) (Psa 76:2)
- Priest of God Most High (Gen 14: 18, 19, 20)
- First person to be called a priest in the Bible
- Worshipped the same God as Abram, Yahweh, God Most High, Possessor of heaven and earth
- Perhaps a descendent of Shem, but nothing is said of his origin in the Bible

The student of the Bible does not understand Melchizedek's importance until the revelation of Jesus – the eternal Son of God, who is also both a priest and king. Jesus, the son of King David, the descendent of the tribe of Judah, and the son of Abraham cannot also be a descendent of Aaron, the first high priest, a descendent of the third son of Jacob – Levi. (Jesus cannot be the son of the 3rd and 4th son of Jacob.) Yet Jesus is as much a priest as he is a king. Priests offered sacrifices to God on behalf of their people for their sin. Jesus offered Himself as the ultimate sacrifice – "the lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world" (John 1:29). Jesus' royal lineage came from King David and the tribe of Judah (Gen 49:10), but what about Jesus' priestly lineage – where did that come from? It could not come from Levi or Aaron. Those priests offered sacrifices that temporarily atoned for sin. But Jesus, the ultimate high priest (Heb 3:10) of the new covenant, needed a priestly lineage that was eternal and superior to Aaron's in every regard. Thus, God Most High orchestrated the introduction of this mysterious man, a priest, and king, so that Jesus could be a king after the tribe of Judah and a priest forever after the order of Melchizedek, priest of God Most High. If Aaron's priesthood could have perfected people, there would be no need for Jesus to be identified six different times as:

- Jesus, a priest forever after the order of Melchizedek (Psa 110:4; Heb 5:6,10; 6:20; 7:11,17)

Jesus the priest, who is also the king of righteousness, the king of peace, and the king of Jerusalem, is a priest forever after the order Melchizedek, and the ultimate sacrifice. Whereas the priests after Levi and Aaron only offered temporary animal sacrifices, and all died. Concerning the origin of Melchizedek, there are two possibilities:

- Melchizedek was a pre-incarnate appearance of Christ; thus, Abram met Jesus
- The Holy Spirit intentionally omitted the details of his lineage (but he had one—perhaps Shem) to create the mystery and establish a foundation for Jesus' role as the high priest of the new covenant (Heb 9:15)

## Justification by Faith

**And he [Abram] believed the LORD, and he [Yahweh] counted it to him as righteousness. (Genesis 15:6)**

Genesis 15:6 is quoted four times in the New Testament as the foundation for the Christian doctrine of “justification by faith.” Justification is the “state of being justified” and justify is “to judge, regard, or treat as righteous and worthy of salvation.”<sup>1</sup> The Scripture says Abraham believed the LORD concerning the covenant promise of having a son from his own body and offspring as the stars in the sky. And God counted this faith in the promise to him as righteousness. The word “counted” is also translated as credited, accounted, reckoned, and imputed. Righteousness is the state of being righteous – this is more than free of guilt. The word “counted” is a judicial term and suggests a declarative act of making one righteous. God, the judge of the universe, is the one who declares the believer to be just or righteous.

Wayne Grudem writes, “Justification is an instantaneous legal act of God in which He (1) thinks of our sins as forgiven and Christ’s righteousness as belonging to us, and (2) declares us to be righteous in His sight.”<sup>2</sup>

The apostle Paul writes:

- For by works of the law no human being **will be justified** in His [God’s] sight... (Rom 3:20)
- It was to show his righteousness at the present time, so that He [God] might be **just and the justifier** of the one who has faith in Jesus. (Rom 3:26)
- Yet we know that a person **is not justified** by works of the law but through faith in Jesus Christ, so we also have believed in Christ Jesus, in order to be **justified by faith** in Christ and not by works of the law, because by works of the law no one will **be justified**. (Gal 2:16)
- So then, the law was our guardian until Christ came, in order that we might **be justified by faith**. (Gal 3:24)

How then can one be justified or declared to be righteous by God today? Abraham believed in a promise from God, but what must a person believe in to be justified now? Anyone can move from a state of being guilty before God to one of being righteous through genuine faith in the promise of the gospel of Jesus Christ (Rom 1:1-2).

What must a person believe concerning the gospel of Jesus Christ?

- He or she must believe that there is a God and they are not righteous or in a right standing with God. “No one is righteous not even one” (Rom 3:10). They must see their need for an alien or external righteousness because they know internally they are personally guilty of violating God’s law. They are sinners.
- They must believe that Jesus, the sinless Messiah, is the one and only Son of God, was crucified, buried, and rose again on the third day 2000 years ago in Jerusalem for their sins. On the cross, God made Jesus, who never sinned, sin in the place of sinners past, present, and future so that those who believe can receive Christ’s righteousness in exchange for their sin (2Co 5:21). This faith in the promise of forgiveness, righteousness, and the gift of eternal life all from the grace of God can collectively be described as being saved or salvation.

Finally, the apostle James seemingly contradicts all that Paul taught concerning justification by faith in James 2:21, “Was not Abraham our father justified by works when he offered up his son Isaac on the altar?” However, a closer look at all that James taught reveals that although one is saved by faith alone this genuine faith in the gospel is never alone. It always produces evidence of salvation which can be aptly described as works. Like the daily work of surrendering to the lordship of Christ in the life of the believer. Or the work of forgiving others when they sin against us because our sins have been forgiven. Or the work of loving our enemies because God demonstrated His love for us when we were enemies of God. Faith without works is dead faith (Jam 2:17). The believer knows he or she is saved by and through God’s ongoing work of working out the righteousness they received from Jesus in righteous deeds (Rev 19:8) that glorify God and give evidence of being transformed into the likeness and image of their LORD and Savior Jesus Christ.

<sup>1</sup> Merriam-Webster, *Merriam-Webster’s Collegiate Dictionary* (Springfield, MA: Merriam-Webster, 1996).

<sup>2</sup> Wayne Grudem, *Systematic Theology* (Zondervan, Grand Rapids, MI, 1994) p. 723.

## The Angel of the LORD: Yahweh's Divine Messenger

After 15 chapters in Genesis, the reader meets a new and especially significant character in the narrative – “the Angel of the LORD”. The word “LORD”, in small caps, is the English translation of the Hebrew word Yahweh. The story is about Hagar, the Egyptian slave girl Sarai put forth to give Abram and her a child. (Sarai had been barren up to this point in her life). Abram slept with Hagar and she got pregnant to the disdain of Sarai. Having been mistreated by Sarai, Hagar fled to the wilderness to escape. It is in the wilderness, by a spring of water, where “the angel of Yahweh” finds Hagar, and he gives her a message from the LORD (Yahweh) (Gen 16:1-13). Hagar names the LORD that spoke to her “a God of seeing” (16:13). Nothing in the text refutes what Hagar said as not being true. The angel is a God of seeing.

Five chapters later, “the angel of God” shows up again to deliver a message to Hagar. God has heard the voice of Ishmael, and the angel states, “I will make him into a great nation” (21:18). God has heard his voice, but the messenger from God states he will make Ishmael into a great nation. We can call the angel a messenger because the Hebrew word, *mal'āk*, (Hb.), translated as “angel”, is also translated as “messenger” (90+ x) throughout the OT. He is a divine messenger if He can promise to make one man into a great nation. Then, in the next chapter, Yahweh's divine messenger shows up just when Abraham is ready to end Isaac's life. The angel of the LORD called to him from heaven to tell Abraham not to end Isaac's life. Then interestingly, the messenger said, “For now I know that you fear God, seeing you have not withheld your only son from me.” The angel of the LORD calls from heaven a second time, telling Abraham: “By myself I have sworn, declares the LORD, because you have done this [almost sacrificing Isaac] and have not withheld your son, your only son, I will surely bless you, and I will surely multiply your offspring as the stars of heaven and as the sand that is on the seashore. And your offspring shall possess the gate of his enemies, and in your offspring shall all the nations of the earth be blessed, because you have obeyed my voice” (22:16-18). At this point, the angel of the LORD has promised to make Ishmael a great nation and fulfill all the promises Yahweh made to Abraham.

In Genesis 31, this divine messenger communicates to Jacob in a dream that He is the one blessing the mating habits of the flocks to produce striped, spotted, and mottled goats, all of which become Jacob's property. Then the angel of God tells Jacob, “I am the God of Bethel, where you made a vow to me” (31:13). But when you read Jacob's vow in chapter 28, he isn't vowing to the angel. His promise is to Yahweh (“the LORD” v.21). Yet this divine messenger claims to be the God of Bethel, the one Jacob made his vow to at Bethel. The last reference in Genesis to this angel occurs in chapter 48:16, where Jacob gives credit to the angel for redeeming or delivering him from all evil or harm.

Yahweh's divine messenger continues to appear throughout the OT in Exo 3 and 14; Num 22; Jud 2, 5, 6 and 13; 2Sa 14, 19, and 24; 1Ki 19; 2Ki 1 and 19; 1Ch 21; Psa 35; Isa 37 and 63; and Zec 1, 3, and 12. A study of these passages reveals that Yahweh's messenger continues to communicate as God and involves Himself in the affairs of the people of God like Yahweh. Perhaps the most significant passage concerning the potential identity of the angel of God occurs in Zechariah. In chapter 3, the angel of the LORD does three things that associate him with Jesus' work of salvation. First, He removes Joshua's filthy garments; second, He takes away his iniquity; and third, He clothes him with pure vestments (a ceremonial robe). This angelic work beautifully pictures Christ's salvific work of forgiving, justifying, and sanctifying the believer. Then the angel says, “this is what the LORD of hosts says”. In verse seven, He is the LORD of hosts' messenger.

Who is the angel of the LORD? The angel of the LORD is either Yahweh or the Son of God. If “the angel” is a manifestation of Yahweh, God, the Father, they are theophanies. But if the appearances were theophanies, one might expect they would continue into the NT. But they don't. After the birth of Christ, the angel of the LORD ceases to appear in the NT. Moreover, Yahweh can't be His own messenger. A messenger speaks on behalf of someone else. In John 12, Jesus says the words that He speaks are not His own but instead are the Father's words (12:49). Therefore, the soundest theological conclusion is Yahweh's messenger in the OT is the second person of the Triune God, Jesus, and these are pre-birth (or pre-incarnate) appearances of the LORD's Christ (Luke 2:26) often called Christophanies.

The angel of the LORD is Yahweh's deputy. He is his exclusive emissary, his ambassador, and divine messenger. As his Son, the angel speaks on behalf of Yahweh and actively works to accomplish the will of God. In the NT, the Word will reveal Him to be the LORD's Christ, Jesus, the Son of God; but in the OT, he is the LORD's divine messenger.

## Circumcision

(Genesis 17)

In Genesis 9, the sign of the covenant God made with Noah and humanity was the rainbow in the sky. Each time a human sees a rainbow they are reminded that God promised to never again destroy all of humanity by means of a global flood. The rainbow is the sign of the Noahic covenant. In Genesis 17, God established another sign of a covenant – the sign of the covenant God made with Abraham. God said to Abraham, “This is my covenant, which you shall keep, between me and you and your offspring after you: Every male among you shall be circumcised. You shall be circumcised in the flesh of your foreskins, and it shall be a sign of the covenant between me and you.” The sign of the Abrahamic covenant – land, a great nation, Abraham’s name made great, blessing and cursing, and the promise that in Abraham all nations will be blessed – was circumcision.

From that point on, this was not optional in Abraham, Moses, David, or even Jesus’ day. All Jewish boys 8 days old were circumcised as a sign of faith in the covenant God made with Abraham and in obedience to the law, God gave Moses (Lev 12:2). Jesus, Himself, was circumcised in the temple according to the custom (Luke 2:27). In Exodus 4, the LORD, Yahweh, confronted Moses intending to put him to death for his failure to circumcise his son. But Zipporah intervened and cut off her sons’ foreskin. Later, Joshua would lead all the males in Israel who failed to follow this commandment during the years of wandering in the wilderness to circumcise themselves (Jos 5). The physical circumcision was a sign and foreshadowing of a spiritual circumcision promised in Deuteronomy. In chapter 10, Moses commanded the Israelites to circumcise the foreskin of their heart. Obviously, the heart does not have a foreskin. This was no longer physical – this was a spiritual matter. Later, he told the people of God that Yahweh “your God will circumcise your heart and the heart of your offspring so that you will love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul, that you may live” (30:6). Physical circumcision was supposed to be a sign of faith like father Abraham’s faith in the promises of God. It was given before God gave Moses the law. God had always intended for physical circumcision to point to the spiritual circumcision of the heart. The prophet Jeremiah spoke of those in Israel who were uncircumcised in the heart (Jer 9:26). In Ezekiel 11 and 36 the prophet speaks of God removing man’s heart of stone and giving him a heart of flesh. Paul the apostle, in the New Testament, moves circumcision from a physical thing performed by a temple priest to that which is spiritual and done by the Holy Spirit.

Paul writes in Romans, “but a Jew is one inwardly, and circumcision is a matter of the heart, by the Spirit, not by the letter.” What is this spiritual circumcision that Paul is referring to? Biological Jews physically circumcising themselves is no longer the focus in the New Testament. Paul says a true Jew is one who has been circumcised in their heart. In this case, the heart cannot refer to flesh because this is “by the Spirit.” The spiritual circumcision Paul is describing seems to be a change the Holy Spirit makes on a person where the heart they had that did not love God now loves God. This new heart believes the gospel, has faith in the promises of God, and trusts in Christ’s work of atonement.

This spiritual circumcision is a way of describing God’s work on the person who believes unto salvation. He or she is believing with all their heart, and the Spirit of God is working in an invisible, non-physical, and non-biological way. Paul describes the Spirit’s work on the heart of man as a “circumcision made without hands” (Col 2:11). This spiritual work must be what Jesus described as being born-again or born from above in John 3 and what Paul describes as regeneration in Titus 3:5.

In the same way that every lamb sacrificed in the Old Testament pointed to the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world, every circumcision performed on an 8-day-old infant pointed to the ultimate work of circumcision done by God’s Spirit on man’s unbelieving heart of stone. To love God, keep His commandments, and believe the gospel, man needs a new heart (Eze 36:26). Only God’s Spirit can perform this work of circumcision, and the Holy Spirit circumcises the hearts of only those who believe the gospel of Christ. This is a paradox that cannot be explained logically.

Has the Holy Spirit circumcised your heart?

## Sodom and Gomorrah

**Just as Sodom and Gomorrah and the surrounding cities, which likewise indulged in sexual immorality and pursued unnatural desire, serve as an example by undergoing a punishment of eternal fire. (Jude 7)**

The two words “Sodom” and “Gomorrah” are used to immediately create an association with sexual immorality and specifically homosexuality. Merriam-Webster identifies the origin of the word sodomy with “Middle English, from Old French *sodomie*, from Late Latin *Sodoma* Sodom; from the homosexual proclivities of the men of the city in Gen 19:1–11.”<sup>1</sup> Genesis 19 is the reason the words Sodom and Gomorrah formerly brought to mind homosexual immorality. Judging homosexuality as immoral today (2024) is no longer tolerated. In 2015, in the now infamous *Obergefell v. Hodges* case, the Supreme Court declared all state laws prohibiting same-sex marriage to be unconstitutional. The US Federal Government officially removed the societal stigma associated with same-sex attraction. Now it seems as though only conservative Christians who hold to a Biblical worldview condemn homosexuality as sinful and immoral.

Jesus Himself validated the authenticity of the ancient story of judgment found in Genesis 19. He said, “But on the day when Lot went out from Sodom, fire and sulfur rained from heaven and destroyed them all” (Luke 17:29). (Lot was Abraham’s nephew and was rescued before the destruction.) But why were these cities judged so harshly? In Genesis 18, Yahweh said, “Because the outcry against Sodom and Gomorrah is great and their sin is very grave. I will go down to see whether they have done altogether according to the outcry that has come to me.” “The sin is very grave” is also translated as “great” and “grievous”. What is this sin that is so egregious that Yahweh must come down to the earth to confirm the validity of the outcry? Once again, the reader of Genesis is confronted with language that doesn’t quite make sense. The triune God knows everything. He doesn’t need to come down to know anything. This language is for the reader. Yahweh coming down magnifies the gravity (the seriousness) of the sin. But what is the sin?

Jude 7 provides incredible clarity: the residents of the cities “indulged in sexual immorality and pursued unnatural desires.” Genesis 19:4-5 reveals what Jude describes as unnatural desires. “But before they lay down, the men of the city, the men of Sodom, both young and old, all the people to the last man, surrounded the house. And they called to Lot, ‘Where are the men who came to you tonight? Bring them out to us, that we may **know** them.’” Notice the emphasis on biological gender: the men (4x). The NET Bible translation makes what is going on even clearer with these words: “Bring them out to us so we can have **sex** with them!” (19:5). The world no longer thinks it is unnatural for a man to want to have sex with another man. This egregious sin has been normalized. Natural desires are the sexual desires that lead to procreation. The Apostle Paul uses the same “natural relations” language in Romans 1:26-27. “For this reason, God gave them up to dishonorable passions. For their women exchanged natural relations for those that are contrary to nature, and the men likewise gave up natural relations with women and were consumed with passion for one another, men committing shameless acts with men and receiving in themselves the due penalty for their error.”

The church of Jesus Christ is no longer united on what is and isn’t immoral. Some who even describe themselves as Christians disagree with the Apostle Paul and do not believe same-sex relationships are perverted. Yet the narrative of Genesis 19 screams to the contrary. In Genesis 2, God identified that no one was fit for Adam, and He made Eve fit for him. The biological sexual compatibility between Adam and Eve is what God calls “fit.” The compatibility that God made is natural. Again, we must emphasize that the reason for this compatibility is the necessity of procreation. To procreate, Eve needs to get pregnant in order to have children. Women with women never lead to children. And men with men never lead to children. Same-sex relationships are acts of defiance to what God created and ordained. According to Jesus, God the Father said, “Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife, and they shall become one flesh” (Gen 2:24, Mat 19:4-5). Yahweh prescribes two things for the individual with whom a man becomes one flesh: 1) the person must be a woman, and 2) she must be his wife. Leviticus 20:13 states, “If a man lies with a male as with a woman, both of them have committed an abomination; they shall surely be put to death.” Christians do not teach that homosexuals should be put to death. But we know from the Bible just how detestable same-sex sexual immorality is to the triune God who created only two genders and opposite-sex intimacy as the only means of bringing image-bearers into the world. Nothing in the NT even remotely suggests that same-sex attraction or behavior is no longer immoral (see 1Co 6:9-10, 1Ti 1:8-10).

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<sup>1</sup> *Merriam-Webster’s Collegiate Dictionary* (Springfield, MA: Merriam-Webster, 1996).

## Lessons from Lot and His Wife

### Remember Lot's wife. (Luke 17:32)

As early as Genesis 11, the reader of Abraham's story meets Abraham's nephew, Lot. Lot is one of the few individuals from the OT that Jesus himself references by name in Luke 19:28-29. In v. 32, Jesus tells his disciples to "remember Lot's wife." What is that all about? From Genesis 11:27 to chapters 12, 13, 14, and 19, Lot is in and out of Abraham's story. Abraham's brother Haran was Lot's father. A study of Lot's lifestyle is a story about the importance of choices and priorities. Lot was a believer, but his life on this earth did not end well.

In Genesis 13, Lot and Abraham must go their separate ways. Each man has accumulated herds of sheep and goats of sufficient size that "the land could not support both of them dwelling together" (13:6). (These grazing animals need pastures of grass and lots of water.) Abraham defers to his nephew, giving him the choice of land. Abraham said if you choose the left, I will go to the right. The choice is Lot's. In verse 10, we read, "Lot lifted up his eyes and saw that the Jordan valley was watered everywhere like the garden of the Lord, like the land of Egypt." The CSB says, "Lot chose the entire plain of the valley for himself" (v. 11). The language is intentional and pointed. Lot's choice is for himself and himself alone. Lot settles among the cities of the valley "and moved his tent as far as Sodom" (v. 12). (For those not familiar with Sodom, read the article of Sodom and Gomorrah to grasp the significance of v. 13. "Now the men of Sodom were wicked, great sinners against Lord [Yahweh].") Lot set up his tent so that his "front porch" looked over a city of wicked sinners. How can a person remain faithful and righteous when their eyes are always looking at that which isn't?

If you are not paying attention, you might glance right over the move that has taken place in Genesis 14. Lot is now a resident of Sodom (v. 12). He no longer looks at the city from his tent; he lives in the city of sinners. And immediately, this is not good. In a regional war between tribal warriors, Lot is taken captive as a prisoner of war for a brief time. Once alerted, Abraham assembled a band of 318 trained men and orchestrated a very successful rescue of his nephew. Safe and free, we are left wondering what Lot will do now with this new opportunity to choose better. But will he?

Five chapters later, Lot is sitting at the gate of Sodom (19:1). The city gate is a bit like the town hall. Perhaps Lot is part of the city's leadership. At the gate, he greets what he thinks are two visitors. In reality, they are angels. Yahweh is going to destroy all of Sodom, and Abraham has pleaded with God to save the city. Yahweh will not save the city, but He will save Lot on Abraham's behalf. Lot insists these visitors must spend the night at his house. What happens next is nearly inconceivable. The men of the city surround Lot's house. "And they call out to Lot, 'Where are the men who came to you tonight? Bring them out that we may know them.'" (19:5, ESV). Several other translations remove the ambiguity of "know" with the words "have sex with them." The men are lusting sexually over the new men. Remember Genesis 13:13: "The men of Sodom were wicked, great sinners." Lot begs the men not to act so wickedly. Then Lot shocks us when he offers his two virgin daughters to the mob. Stop and read v. 5-11. It is disturbing beyond comprehension. The mob is relentless. The angels blind the crowd and rescue Lot. They tell Lot that Yahweh sent them to destroy the city.

They tell Lot to gather his sons-in-law, daughters, or anyone he cares about in the city. The sons-in-law think Lot is jesting about a coming judgment of the city. Lot is out of his mind. Sulfur and fire don't naturally come out of the sky and destroy cities. In the morning, Lot lingered when the angels urged him to evacuate. So, they took matters into their own hands and "seized him and his wife and his two daughters." And "as they brought him out," they directed them to "escape for your life. Do not look back" (19:16-17). Not looking back was an act of repudiating the wickedness of Sodom. All four should have been exceptionally thankful that Yahweh was showing them grace that no one else in the city was receiving.

Like Noah's family, Lot's family was being saved. Yet Lot's wife's affection for Sodom (the world) was greater than her desire to be saved – she looked back. Jesus said, "Remember Lot's wife." She, too, could have been saved with Lot, but her affection for this world cost her – her life. She became a pillar of salt. God saved Lot physically and eternally (2Pe 2:7). He believed when his wife didn't, but his story did not end well, although it should have! Read Genesis 19:30-38 for one of the more disturbing ends to a person's life in the Bible. Lot, the nephew of Abraham, had it ALL until he didn't.

## Isaac, the Child of Promise

(Genesis 21-35:19; Galatians 4:26, Hebrews 11)

Isaac: the one and only son promised to Abraham and Sarah in fulfillment of the covenant God made with Abraham.

- Second patriarch of the Jews
- Miraculous conception in Sarah’s womb from Yahweh
- Born to Sarah (90 years old)
- Half-brother to Ishmael
- Name means “laughter”
- Only heir of Abraham’s fortune
- Willingly offers himself to God to be a burnt offering
- Nearly sacrificed to death in the testing of Abraham
- Married Rebekah, the sister of Laban, at 40 years old
- Fathered two twin boys: Esau and Jacob
- God confirmed the same covenant promises with Isaac as with Abram
- Lies about wife in Egypt, like his father
- Worships Yahweh, like his father Abraham
- Deceived into blessing Jacob instead of Esau
- Lived to be 180 years old

Sarah, the mother of Isaac	Mary, the mother of Jesus
God promises to bless her	Blessed are you among women
Bear a son	Bear a son
Barren and old	Virgin and young
My husband is old	Does not have a husband
Is anything too hard for Yahweh	Nothing will be impossible with God
Born according to the Spirit (Gal 4:29)	To Mary: The Holy Spirit will come upon you

Old Testament	New Testament
Abraham—the Father	God—the Father
Isaac, heir of the covenant promises	Christ, heir of all things
Israel inherits the covenants, the law, the land, blessing and all the promises (Rom 9:14)	Christ’s church are the heirs of God and joint heirs with Jesus (Rom 8:17)

### Isaac, a Type and Shadow of Christ

Isaac, the child of Promise	Jesus, the ultimate son of Promise
Yahweh visited his mother Sarah in conception	Holy Spirit is the agent of conception
Yahweh said “call his name Isaac”	The LORD told Joseph to call His name “Jesus”
<b>Circumcised on the 8<sup>th</sup> day</b>	
<b>One and only son, greatly loved by his Father</b>	
<b>Had to be sacrificed to make atonement (Lev 1:4)</b>	
<b>Both willingly submitted to the will of their Father</b>	
Accompanied to his place of death by two men	Crucified with two criminals
<b>Both carried the wood they were offered upon</b>	
Isaac was bound to a pile of wood	Jesus was bound to a wooden cross
<b>Both may have been offered to the LORD on Mount Moriah</b>	
Supposed to be a burnt offering	Offered up as a fragrant offering (Eph 5:2)
Did not die because of a ram (male sheep)	Died as the Lamb of God
God provides the ram as the substitute	The Son of God is the substitute
Figuratively raised from the dead (Heb 11:19)	Literally raised from the dead
Abraham proved his great love for God by being willing to sacrifice his son	God proved His love for us while we were still sinners Christ died for us (Rom 5:8)
Deceived Abimelech about his marital relationship to Rebekah	No sin, no deceit was found in His mouth (1Pe 2:22)
Died at the age of 180 years old	Ever lives to make intercession for all whom God has saved (Heb 7:25)

## Substitutionary Atonement

**And Abraham lifted up his eyes and looked, and behold, behind him was a ram, caught in a thicket by his horns. And Abraham went and took the ram and offered it up as a burnt offering instead of his son. (Genesis 22:13)**

**Substitutionary:** The testing of Abraham in the sacrifice of his only son Isaac provides the clearest picture of the Christian doctrine of substitutionary atonement in the Old Testament. A substitute is a person or thing that takes the place or function of another.<sup>1</sup> In Genesis 22, God tests Abraham with the commandment to sacrifice his son as a burnt offering. Surely this was the most difficult thing Yahweh had ever asked Abraham to do but Abraham obeys God and takes Isaac to Mt. Moriah to offer his son to the LORD. During the journey to the top of the mountain, Isaac asks his dad about the absence of a sacrifice. He said, “Behold, the fire, and the wood, but where is **the lamb** for a burnt offering?” To which Abraham responds with, “God will provide for Himself **the lamb** for a burnt offering, my son” (Gen 22:7-8). And this is exactly what happened. Just moments before Abraham was ready to end his son’s life and offer him as a burnt offering, a voice from heaven stops Abraham. “Do not lay your hand on the boy or do anything to him, for now I know that you fear God, seeing you have not withheld your son, your only son, from me.” Then Abraham looked up and there was a ram (a male sheep) strategically trapped in the thicket. “So Abraham went and took the ram and offered it as a burnt offering in place of his son” (Gen 22:12-13, CSB). The ram died and Isaac lived, providing a foreshadowing of Christ, the male “Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world”, dying so that others may live (John 1:29).

Key New Testament verses that point to this substitutionary death include:

- For while we were still weak, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly.<sup>7</sup> For one will scarcely die for a righteous person – though perhaps for a good person one would dare even to die –<sup>8</sup> but God shows His love for us in that while we were still sinners, **Christ died for us** (Rom 5:6–8).
- Christ loved us and gave himself up **for us**, a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God (Eph 5:2)
- By this we know love, that He laid down His life **for us**, (1Jo 3:16).
- **Christ died for our sins** in accordance with the Scriptures (1Co 15:3).

**Atonement:** Throughout the Old Testament animal sacrifices were offered to God to make atonement for sins. Wayne Grudem says atonement is the “doctrine concerned with the removal of guilt, the covering over of sin, or the satisfaction of the penalty for sin that separated humankind from God, especially with reference to the obedience of Christ even unto death on the cross.”<sup>2</sup>

Key New Testament verses regarding atonement include:

- He [Christ] himself is the **atonement sacrifice** for our sins (1Jo 2:2, CSB)
- [Christ] had to be like His brothers and sisters in every way, so that He could become a merciful and faithful high priest in matters pertaining to God, to **make atonement** for the sins of the people (Heb 2:17, CSB)
- [The Father] loved us and sent His Son to be the **atonement sacrifice** for our sins (1Jo 4:10, CSB)
- For Christ, our Passover lamb, has been sacrificed (1Co 5:7).

**Propitiation** is a common choice in English translations for **the sacrifice that bears God’s wrath** so that God can be just and the justifier of those who are sinners but believe the gospel (Rom 3:26). Paul writes “whom [Christ] God put forward as a propitiation by His blood, to be received by faith” (Rom 3:25; ESV, KJV, NASB).

Sometimes this doctrine will also be described with two other words: vicarious and penal.

- **Vicarious:** performed or suffered by one person as a substitute for another or to the benefit or advantage of another.<sup>1</sup> Christ’s atonement is to the benefit or advantage for all who believe upon Jesus as their savior – it is to these alone that the efficacy of the atonement is applied.
- **Penal:** involving punishment, penalties, or punitive actions<sup>1</sup> in Christ’s case, the penalty for sin was death.

Finally, no other chapter in the Bible describes the vicarious and penal nature of Christ’s atonement better than Isaiah 53.

<sup>1</sup> Merriam-Webster, *Merriam-Webster’s Collegiate Dictionary* (Springfield, MA: Merriam-Webster, 1996).

<sup>2</sup> Douglas Mangum, *The Lexham Glossary of Theology* (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2014).

## A Bride for Isaac, the Child of Promise

**swear by Yahweh, the God of heaven and God of the earth, that you will not take a wife for my son from the daughters of the Canaanites, among whom I live, (Gen 24:3, LSB)**

In Genesis 24, Abraham is old, and Isaac is not married. This is a problem. Isaac must continue Abraham's lineage. But how will he do it without a wife? Abraham is so old and so concerned that he asks his oldest and most trusted (unnamed) servant to take an oath that he will find Isaac a wife. But she must not be a daughter of the Canaanites because they are idolaters – they worship foreign gods. This may be the most crucial lesson in this story. Isaac is not to marry someone who will distract him from worshipping the one true and living God – Yahweh. 1 Kings 11:3-4 states plainly: King Solomon's "wives turned away his heart...after other gods." Abraham does not want this for his one and only covenant son. Instead, the unnamed servant must return to Abraham's country and family, where he must search for a wife for Isaac. In v. 12, the servant asks Yahweh to grant him success in finding Isaac a wife. At a well, the servant meets Rebekah. Could she be the one? Is Yahweh already answering his prayers? The answer is 'yes.' Through extensive negotiations, Rebekah agrees to return with the unnamed servant and be Isaac's wife (v. 34-67). But what about getting a spouse today? What if I don't have an unnamed servant to find me a wife (or husband)? And, could this story be a foreshadowing of the Holy Spirit securing a bride for the ultimate Child of Promise – Christ Jesus?

Christian men and women must recognize that in most situations, it is God's plan for a man to find a wife (Gen 2:24) and raise godly sons and daughters (Mal 2:15). Remember, it is God who said, "It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him a helper fit for him" (Gen 2:18). Are you willing to believe that God is correct? Is Proverbs 18:22 meant to be believed literally that "he who finds a wife finds a good thing and obtains favor from Yahweh?" Paul writes about marriage in 1 Corinthians 7. In v.2, he writes, "But because of the temptation to sexual immorality, each man should have his own wife and each woman her own husband." Today (2025), young adult Christians wrestle with obtaining a college degree, securing a good job, and getting married. Many times, the refusal to marry before graduation results in sexual immorality that should have been prevented by marriage. Paul addresses this struggle. He writes, "But if they cannot exercise self-control, they should marry. For it is better to marry than to burn with passion" (1Co 7:9). Two lovers burning with passion one for another should marry. Fewer are marrying than ever before, but the benefits of marriage have not diminished. Multiple studies by secular socialists consistently prove that married men and women do better. According to Harvard Medical School, "Numerous studies conducted over the past 150 years suggest that marriage is good for health" (<https://www.health.harvard.edu/mens-health/marriage-and-mens-health>). Those married also do better financially and in many other ways – happiness, contentment, etc. All this is often called the marriage dividend.

Preparing for marriage starts early in developing character traits and disciplines necessary to be a good husband or wife. Living selfishly for oneself comes naturally for an unsaved man or woman. Young men and women must begin thinking about marriage earlier in life. Each should ask themselves if they are trying to be the person someone would want to marry. Am I an honest person? Am I lazy? Do I care about others more than myself? Do I know how to share? Am I willing to compromise and have the discernment to know when it's appropriate to compromise? Questions like these and many others are meant to help one self-evaluate. Read 1 Corinthians 13:4-7 and ask yourself: do I know how to love others? Ladies, look at how your boyfriend or potential husband treats his mother. She has been the most significant woman in his life up to this point – how he treats her will help you see how he will treat you.

Are you a follower of Christ? Yes. Then, you must not, under any circumstance, marry someone who isn't also striving to follow Christ. This may mean finding a spouse will be more challenging, and you may not get to marry the funniest, cutest, or most athletic person. But those things are surface-level things. You want to know if the Spirit has changed his (her) heart. Is he (she) a new creation? Pray. Pray now. Pray that God will lead you and direct you. The unnamed servant in Genesis 24, responsible for finding a wife for Isaac, prayed. He prayed to Yahweh (24:12-14). Since you don't have an unnamed servant looking for a spouse for you, pray to Yahweh yourself. Ask Him to show you what you need to work on to be a better future spouse. He knows who you will marry. Ask Him to work on the one you will marry. Ask Him to protect you from marrying a Canaanite. Finally, contemplate how this story of the unnamed servant finding a wife for Isaac points to the Holy Spirit through regeneration (the birth from above), creating a bride for Christ – His church.

# Jacob, the Father of Israel

(Genesis 25-50)

**Then He said, “Your name shall no longer be called Jacob, but Israel, for you have striven with God and with men, and have prevailed.” (Genesis 32:28)**

Jacob is the father of the 12 sons (tribes) of the nation Israel – God changes his name to Israel. His father was Isaac, and his grandfather was Abraham. His story begins in Gen 25 and concludes in 50 with his burial in Canaan. Jacob receives the birthright, the blessing of the firstborn, and vowed that Yahweh would be his God if God kept His promises to him.

## Jacob’s Life

- Third patriarch of the Jews (Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob); born to Isaac when Isaac was 60 years old (25:26)
- Jacob means “supplanter” with the idea of cheating or trickster and/or taking the place of someone else
- Described as a quiet man dwelling in tents (25:27) and is alive for 15 years before Abraham died
- Twin brother to Esau, the firstborn; lives at odds with his brother until he comes back to Canaan
- Loved by his mother Rebekah more than his father
- Buys the birthright Esau despised for a bowl of red stew (25:34)
- Participates in a plot to deceive his father into giving him the blessing of the firstborn son
  - The plot is concocted by his mother; Yielded to the will of his mother in spite of his conscience convicting him
  - Rebekah prepares a meal that Esau was supposed to prepare for Isaac on his deathbed
  - Jacob makes himself feel like his hairy brother to deceive Isaac
  - He lies to his father when asked, “Who are you?” stating he is Esau
  - Jacob receives the blessing of the firstborn from Isaac according to God’s sovereign will (Rom 9:13)
- Flees for his life from the wrath of Esau to Uncle Laban (Rebekah’s brother) in Haran
- At Bethel (House of God), God promises Jacob what he promised Isaac in the dream of a “ladder to heaven”
- Time at Haran has 3 parts: Working for a wife (4), growing a family (see below), and building a personal fortune
  - Jacob falls in love with Rachel, the youngest daughter of Laban; she is beautiful in appearance
  - Agrees to work 7 years for the bride-price of Rachel but is tricked/deceived by Laban on his wedding night
  - 7 days after being tricked into marrying Leah, he also marries Rachel in exchange for 7 more years of free labor
  - Works as a shepherd and livestock owner from the time with Laban until his death
  - Raises a family under Laban’s house for 6 more years until he is far wealthier than Laban
- At circa 90, flees the oppression of Laban and returns to the land of Abraham and Isaac (31)
- Greatly fears his reunion with Esau but God answers his prayer for safety and they are eventually reconciled
- Wrestles with “a man” (God) all night until God puts Jacob’s thigh out of the socket and gives him the name Israel
- Fails to guide/control his adult sons when they disproportionately revenge the sexual assault of their sister Dinah
- At Bethel, Yahweh again promises a nation will come from him and gives him the name Israel again (35:10)
- Loses Rachel when she gives birth to Benjamin; when Jacob is 120 years old, his father Isaac dies at 180 years old
- Loved Joseph more than any of the older sons and showed that bias toward him with a special robe (37:3)
- Lived a depressed life all the years he thought Joseph was dead from an attack by a wild animal
- Famine forces Jacob to send his sons to get grain in Egypt on two different occasions
- After learning Joseph was the prime minister of Egypt, he moved to Egypt to reunite and survive the famine
- Jacob blessed Pharaoh, Joseph’s two sons: Ephraim and Manasseh, and lived in Goshen, Egypt for 17 years
- Prophesied concerning the future of all 12 sons including the “scepter and staff” promise for Judah (49:10)
- Buried in the same cave as Abraham, Sarah, Isaac, Rebekah, and Leah at 147 years old in the promised land

## Jacob’s Family

Leah (wife)		Bilhah (Rachel’s servant)	Zilpah (Leah’s servant)	Rachel (wife)
Reuben (1)	Issachar (9)	Dan (5)	Gad (7)	Joseph (11)
Simeon (2)	Zebulun (10)	Naphtali (6)	Asher (8)	Benjamin (12)
Levi (3)	Dinah (daughter)			
Judah (4)				

Referenced in Mat 1:2, 22:32; Acts 7:8-16; Rom 9:11-13; Heb 11:9, 20-21

## The Patriarch Jacob Gets a New Name: Israel

**Then He said, “Your name shall no longer be called Jacob, but Israel, for you have striven with God and with men, and have prevailed.” (Genesis 32:28)**

Modern **Israel** is a nation-state located in the Middle East, near the Mediterranean Sea and surrounded by the nations of Lebanon, Syria, Jordan, and Egypt. However, before it referred to a nation, the name Israel first referred to a man. After a night of wrestling with an unnamed “man,” Jacob insisted he would not let go of the man until the man blessed him. So, he gave Jacob a new name, saying “Your name shall no longer be called Jacob, but Israel.” Stop and read Genesis 32:22-32. After receiving the blessing of a new name, Jacob concluded that he had seen God face to face, and yet his life had been delivered (32:30). [*Who is this God a person could see face-to-face and not die?*] Name changes are important. Yahweh changed Abram’s name to Abraham and Sarai to Sarah (Gen 17). Later, in the same chapter, Yahweh directed them to name their son Isaac. Notice Yahweh named all three of His Patriarchs in Genesis: Abraham, Isaac, and Israel. The word “Israel” appears 2579 times in the ESV, referring to persons, people, land, and an unholy and holy nation.

Jacob—now **Israel**—will be the father of the twelve tribes of Israel (49:28). Notice how the second use of the word “Israel” now refers to the nation Yahweh first promised to make from Abram (12:2). In Genesis 36:21, the sons and daughters of Israel are called Israelites. Two chapters earlier, the sons of Jacob refer to the land they are living in as Israel (34:7). The student of the Bible quickly realizes Israel is used in many different ways in the OT and the NT.

Israel is a compound of two Hebrew words. The first word of the compound is translated as “striven” in the ESV and “struggled”, “wrestled”, or “contended” in other translations. The second word is “El” a shortened version of *Elohim* (God). Jacob’s name change to Israel memorializes the night he wrestled with God and prevailed. So, each time you see the word “Israel,” notice the “el” and remind yourself that Elohim put His name in the name of His people (Rev 22:4).

Hosea 11:1 reads, “When **Israel** was a child, I loved him, and out of Egypt I called my son.” Jacob died in Egypt. It was the *nation* Israel that Yahweh loved and called out of Egypt in the great Exodus described in the first half of the book of Exodus. But the Apostle Matthew quotes this very verse and applies it to Jesus, God’s Son. He writes, “This was to fulfill what the Lord [Yahweh] had spoken by the prophet [Hosea] ‘Out of Egypt I called my son’ [Jesus]” (Mat 2:15). Jesus was a toddler when Joseph and Mary took Him to Egypt, and when it was safe to return, an angel told Joseph to take Jesus back to the land of Israel. Thus, Israel (Yahweh’s Son) returned to Israel (the land).

Surely, at this point, one would think we have covered all the possible ways **Israel** is used in the Bible, but one more important use must be unpacked. In Romans 9:6, Paul writes, “For not all who are descended from Israel belong to Israel.” In the same verse, the word Israel is used in two *different* ways. Not all of Jacob's (Israel’s) biological descendants belong to the second use of the word Israel. In the second use of Israel, Paul creates a new category of Israelites. These Israelites are not biological; they are *spiritual* descendants of Abraham by faith (Gal 3:7, Gen 12:3). They believe in the promises of God, as Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob believed. Jesus is the Israel of God, and all who are spiritually in Christ (Israel) (Rom 8:1) are citizens of the *true Israel* of God (Gal 6:16).

Read the chart left to right to see all the ways **Israel** refers to persons, people, land, a nation, and God’s elect.

Israel	
One specific man, Jacob (Gen 32:28)	A geographic location often called the Promised Land (formerly Canaan) (Matt 2:20)
Biological descendants of Jacob and Yahweh’s Chosen People (struggling to become a nation) (Exo 1:7)	The United Kingdom of all 12 tribes of Israel led by Kings Saul, David, and Solomon (1Sa 13:1)
The Divided Kingdom of the 10 northern tribes formed after the split (1Ki 12:20)	Ethnic, national, and territorial Israel re-formed after the 70 years of captivity (Ezr 1:3)
The God-Man, Jesus the Christ (Hos 11:1, Mat 2:15)	Spiritual descendants of Abraham who by faith are in Christ Jesus—the Israel of God (Gal 6:16)

## The Defilement of Dinah and the Disproportionate Response

(Genesis 34)

Genesis 34 allows the student of Genesis to engage with the source of morality, victimization, applying the principle of proportionality of punishment, and what a Christian response is when one is a victim of a crime. After twenty years of separation, Jacob and Esau reconcile, and Jacob settles in the city of Shechem, having bought a piece of land from Hamor, Shechem's father. There, Jacob erected an altar and worshipped God, the God of Israel. Then, the nightmare of a lifetime happened. This chapter contains one of the more disturbing stories in the entire Bible. In chapter 34, there isn't a single mention of Yahweh (LORD) or Elohim (God). He is present but absent. Dinah, the daughter of Leah and the only daughter of Jacob, visits the women of the city of Shechem. During this visit, Shechem rapes her. He "saw her, he seized her and lay with her and humiliated her" (v. 2-3). She became the victim of sexual assault. He claimed to love her and demanded that his father get Dinah to be his wife. What was an appropriate punishment? Can she marry a Hivite?

Having found out that someone raped Dinah, her brothers declare that what happened to Dinah was an "outrageous" thing that should not have happened. Why are they very angry and indignant (v. 7)? By what authority could they claim this was wrong? What transgression of the law had occurred? At this point, Deuteronomy 22 had not been written. Yet the brothers know what Shechem has done is morally wrong. How do they? They know this is morally wrong because God wrote the works of the law on the hearts of all humans (see Rom 2). The conscience of the brothers declared raping their sister was wrong despite the absence of a societal law. Jacob gives no guidance as to what must or must not be done. So, the sons of Leah, in particular, take matters into their own hands. They deceitfully convince Hamor and Shechem that if they and all the men of the city are circumcised, they will give Dinah to be the wife of Shechem (is that why she is staying with Shechem v. 26?), and intermarriage can begin between them and the Hivites. They agree and are circumcised. Ironically, Hamor and Shechem motivate the men to be circumcised through greed (v. 23).

Three days later, when the men are sore, Levi and Simeon enter the city with swords in hand and execute ALL the males. You read that correctly: all the males, including Hamor and Shechem. They rescue Dinah. And the rest of the brothers plunder the city (v. 27). "They took their flocks and their herds, their donkeys, and whatever was in the city and in the field. All their wealth, all their little ones and their wives, all that was in the houses, they captured and plundered" (v. 28-29). This story is a case study of the principle of proportionality of punishment. Dinah was already a victim. Now, the males murdered are victims (except Shechem, or is he?), and the women and children are victims like Dinah. The failure to limit Shechem's punishment to what is proportionate to what he did led to hundreds of men, women, and children being victimized. Nothing in the text indicates this was a judgment from God like Sodom and Gomorrah.

After 25 verses of Jacob's silence, he finally speaks up. "You have brought trouble on me...I shall be destroyed, both I and my household" (v. 30). To which the brothers respond, "Should he treat our sister like a prostitute?" Then, Genesis 35 begins with nothing more recorded about the massacre until Genesis 49:5-7. Here are the highlights. Jacob says, "Simeon and Levi are brothers: weapons of violence are their swords...in their anger they killed men...cursed be their anger, for it is fierce and their wrath, for it is cruel." Jacob knew what they did was wrong. We all know the punishment must fit the crime. It must be proportionate. God gave us Exodus 21:23-25: "But if there is harm, then you shall pay life for life, eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot, burn for burn, wound for wound, stripe for stripe." What the brothers did was far more outrageous. The same moral compass that told them what happened to their sister was wrong failed them (or was it ignored?) in determining what an appropriate response was to the crime Shechem committed. Without a higher moral authority present (i.e., law enforcement), the brothers had to regulate their own behavior. For the unsaved, the Torah communicates principles of proportionality of punishment in Exodus, Leviticus, and Deuteronomy. If you damage my car, I won't torch your house. Instead, I may insist that you pay for the damages. "Eye for eye" ensures the punishment is not more or less than what should be applied. What was his "eye for an eye"?

But for the genuine follower of Christ, everything is different. Christ calls us to a higher standard of conduct. We forgive. We love our enemies. We turn the other cheek. We don't respond in kind. If you tell me to "go to \_\_\_\_." I don't tell you the same. Read the Sermon on the Mount (Mat 5-7). Forgiving does not mean we don't pursue justice, but we never take matters of justice into our own hands. We appeal to the God-ordained justice system and understand that vengeance is God's; He will repay (Rom 12:19). Finally, when we must decide someone's punishment, we follow life for life, eye for an eye, seeking to issue a punishment that is proportionate to the wrong done.

## Joseph, the Favorite Son of Jacob

(Genesis 37-50)

- 11<sup>th</sup> Son to Jacob (Israel), grandson to Isaac, great-grandson to Abraham
- One of two sons born to Rachel, the true love of his father; his only full brother is Benjamin (35:18)
- Loved by his father more than any of his other brothers; given a coat of many colors to show this favor (37:3)
- Helped his father and brothers pasture flocks of sheep and herds of goats
- Dreamed two dreams about future submission to him
  - The brothers' sheaves of grain bow down to Joseph's sheaf (fulfilled in 42:6)
  - Sun, moon, and 11 stars bow down to Joseph
- Hated and envied by his older brothers; stripped of his robe and left to die in a pit without water
- At 17 years old, pulled from the pit and sold to Ishmaelite/Midianite traders who took him to Egypt as a slave
- Brothers led his father into thinking Joseph was killed by a wild animal
- Purchased by Potiphar, an officer of the Pharaoh. Yahweh made Joseph successful in Potiphar's household
- Well-built and handsome; relentlessly sought after by Potiphar's wife to be intimate with her
- Refused to sin against God by engaging in sexually immoral behavior with his master's wife
- Falsely accused of a sin he did not commit and put in prison where the king's prisoners were confined
- Elevated to a position of authority in prison. Yahweh was with him and brought success to Joseph in prison
- Correctly interpreted two prisoners' dreams creating a reputation for being able to interpret dreams
  - Gave God credit for all dream interpretation
  - Promised the cupbearer he would be restored to his place in the palace in three days
  - Informed the baker that he will be hung to death in three days
  - Begged the cupbearer to remember him when he is released for he has been falsely imprisoned
  - Spent two whole additional years in prison until another opportunity to be released occurred
- Brought before Pharaoh King of Egypt and Yahweh gives Joseph the insight to interpret Pharaoh's two dreams
- Explained the two dreams are one: Egypt will experience 7 years of plenty followed by 7 years of severe famine
- Proposed a plan to Pharaoh concerning wisely preparing for the severe famine during the years of plenty
- Said to have had the Spirit of God in him; described as discerning and wise and released from prison
- At 30 years old, entered the service of Pharaoh as governor or ruler of the land (42:6); second only to Pharaoh
- Given an Egyptian (Gentile) bride, Asenath, who gives Joseph two sons: 1) Manasseh and 2) Ephraim
- Tested his brothers concerning their words and actions when they came to Egypt for food
- Imprisoned Simeon to force the brothers to bring Benjamin back to Egypt
- Tested his brothers a 2<sup>nd</sup> time concerning a stolen silver cup and then revealed himself to his dismayed brothers
- Understood and communicated that God sent him to Egypt to save his family and posterity from death (49:5)
- Insisted that Jacob's entire house must move to Egypt, in wagons provided by Pharaoh, to survive the famine
- Reunited with his father after 22 years of separation; Pharaoh gives Israel the land of Goshen to raise livestock
- Secured the blessing of Jacob upon first Ephraim and then Manasseh: great-great-grandsons of Abraham
- Buried his father, Israel, at 147 years old in the cave that Abraham bought and was buried in Canaan (23)
- Assured his brothers, after Jacob's death, that he knew God took their evil plans and "meant it for good" (50:20)
- Lived long enough to see great-grandchildren from Manasseh's son Machir; died at 110 years old in Egypt
- Made the sons of Israel take an oath to carry his bones back to the promised land when God rescued Israel
- Bones of Joseph were carried out of Egypt by Moses during the Exodus (Exo 13:19)
- Greatest type of Christ in Genesis: thoroughly foreshadows the totality of Jesus' ministry on earth and in heaven

Joseph's Six Dreams					
Joseph		Cupbearer	Baker	Pharaoh	
Brothers' sheaves bow down to Joseph's sheaf	Sun, moon, and 11 stars bow down to Joseph	Vine with 3 branches that budded, blossomed, and ripened into grapes; cup-bearer lives and is restored	3 cake baskets of baked food for Pharaoh; baker loses his head, hung on a tree and birds eat his flesh	7 ugly and thin cows eat the 7 plump cows	7 thin and blighted ears of grain swallow 7 plump ears of grain

## God's Natural Law of Morality in Genesis

**For when Gentiles, who do not have the law [of Moses], by nature do what the law requires, they are a law to themselves, even though they do not have the law. They show that the work of the law [revealing right from wrong] is written on their hearts, while their conscience also bears witness. (Romans 2:14–15)**

As you study the first book of the Bible, you will see a moral code of ethical conduct is present and understood by nearly all. In Genesis, we can see God's code of morality from Genesis 4 to 50. Although the word "law" does not appear anywhere in Genesis, there is plenty of evidence of the presence of God's law (a code of good and evil). We see this in two ways. First, moral judgments or confessions are made throughout the text. Second, actions, decisions, choices, and behaviors are described as sin or evil. Genesis records no less than 2000 years of human history before Moses. During those millennia of years, humans knew right from wrong. Sin existed in Genesis 4, thousands of years before God gave Israel the law on Mt. Sinai. The Apostle Paul teaches in Romans that without the law, he would not know what sin is (7:7). In Genesis 42:21, Joseph's brothers say, "We are guilty." God's inner law convicted them of their guilt. Examples of this inner moral law foreshadowing the Law of Moses are easily seen in Genesis. Here are four examples.

**You shall not murder.** In Genesis 9, God institutes capital punishment for murder. Anyone who takes another person's life must lose their own life. Genesis 9:5b, "If someone murders a fellow human, I will require that person's life" (CSB). Murder is so egregious of a crime against society that the guilty party must be put to death.

**You shall not commit adultery.** In Genesis 39, Joseph's master's wife wants to break her marital vows by sleeping with this young man. Joseph declares she is his master's wife. This is of no concern to her—she wants to lie with him. Joseph refuses to succumb to the temptation. He asks, "How then can I do this great wickedness and sin against God?" (v. 9). "Sin against God," but there is nothing recorded in Genesis that states it is wrong to sleep with another man's wife. Chapters 21 and 26 both contain narratives about Abimelech rebuking Abraham and, subsequently, Isaac for nearly causing adultery to happen through their half-truths.

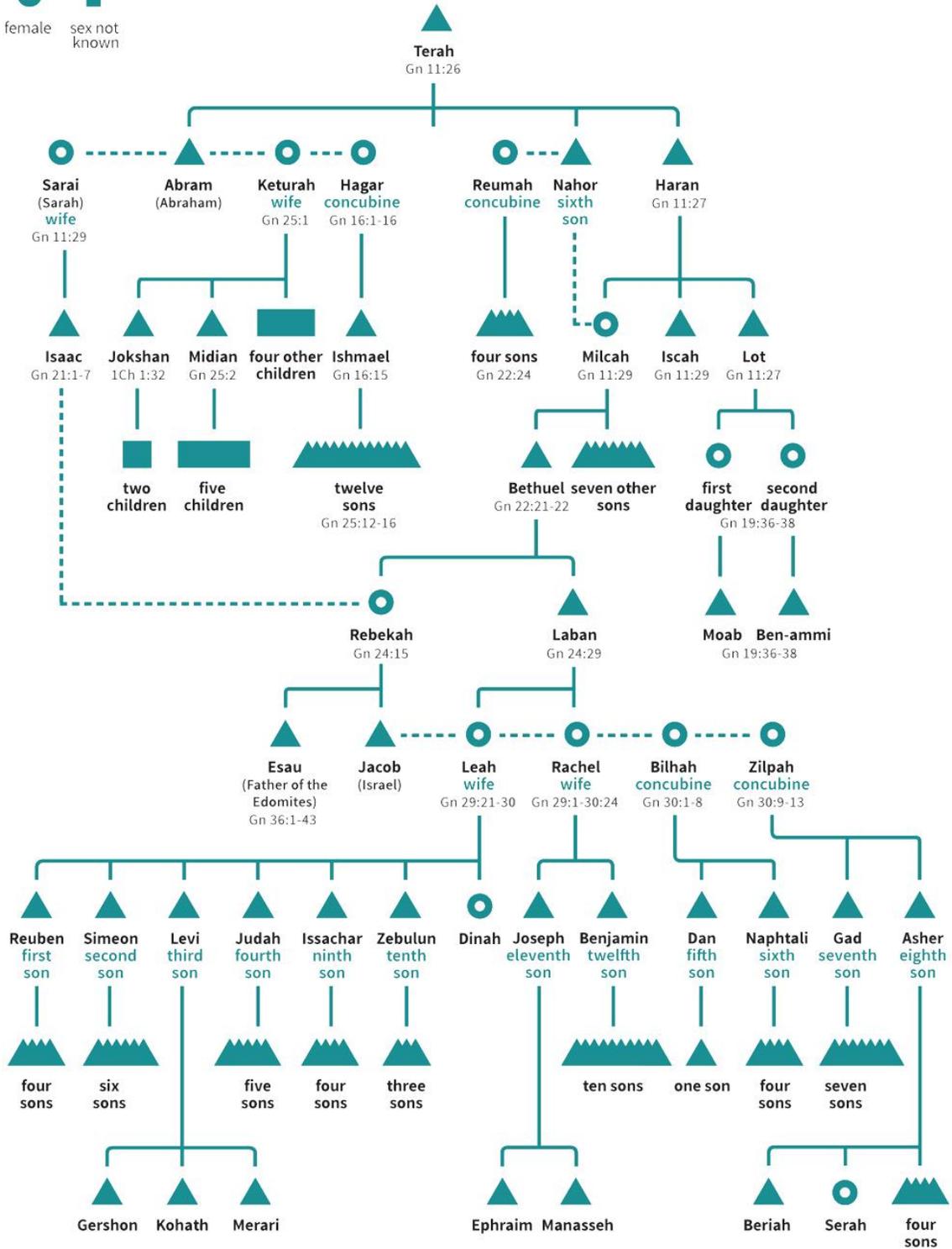
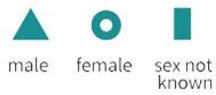
**You shall not steal.** While Rachel's father was away shearing the sheep, the Scripture says, "Rachel stole her father's household gods" (31:19). In Genesis 23, Abraham does not take for himself a burial plot of land for his wife, Sarah. Instead, he pays someone else four hundred standard shekels of silver for the land. Just two chapters earlier, Abraham and Abimelech are in a dispute over a well. Abraham argues that his servants dug the well, and all must acknowledge his ownership of the well. Abimelech's servants must stop stealing his water.

**You shall not bear false witness.** The serpent of Genesis lied to Eve. She tells God, "The serpent deceived me" (3:13). Fast forward to Jacob deceiving his dad for the blessing in Genesis 27. Old Isaac asks Jacob, "Are you really my son Esau?" And Jacob replied, "I am." Turn a few pages in the book to chapter 29, and Jacob is furious with Laban. He exclaims, "Why then have you deceived me?" Jacob, the hypocrite, knows that lying to someone is wrong. He is like the thief who has been gone all night breaking into homes only to come home to find his own home has been burglarized. Angry and frustrated, he calls 911 to report a crime. He knows stealing is wrong for all people everywhere.

Well before Deuteronomy 22, Lot asks the city's men not to "do evil" with the two men he is sheltering in his home (19). How does he know men raping men is evil without the law of Moses? God's pre-Moses moral law is the answer. When Shechem rapes Dinah, her biological brothers are outraged, indignant, and very angry. They plainly state that what Shechem did "must not be done" (34:7). With that judgment, they show a moral compass is present and functioning.

A code of morality was written on the hearts of Adam and Eve when they ate the fruit from the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil. From that moment forward, all the sons and daughters of our first parents were born with God's natural (moral) law written on the heart (Rom 2:15). Even without a codified law given like the one of Mt. Sinai, God tells Cain he must rule over sin (4:7). Sin predated the Mosaic Law because God's natural law of morality for all people everywhere was the standard for right and wrong the moment Eve ate of the forbidden fruit. A non-codified moral law existed for all people everywhere long before God gave Israel the Ten Commandments on Mt. Sinai. It is this law that makes all people everywhere guilty before God, even without the knowledge of the Law of Moses or the Law of Christ.

# Abraham's Family<sup>1</sup>



Robert D. Bergen, "Genesis," in *CSB Study Bible: Notes*, ed. Edwin A. Blum and Trevin Wax (Nashville, TN: Holman Bible Publishers, 2017), 77.

## Joseph, A Type and Shadow of Christ

Joseph, a beloved Son of Jacob	Jesus, the beloved Son of God
Hated by his brothers	Hated by His brothers (John 15:25)
Sent by his father to his brothers	Sent by His Father to His Jewish brothers (John 5:23, 6:57)
Tended sheep	Described as the Chief Shepherd (1Pe 5:4)
Loved by his father more than his other brothers	Loved by His Father as the only son (Mat 3:17, John 17:24)
Announced his future reign over his family through a dream	Gabriel announced His reign over the house of Jacob (Luke 1:33)
Brothers did not want Joseph reigning and ruling over them	His citizens did not want Jesus reigning over them (Luke 19:14)
His brothers were jealous of him	Jews put Him to death out of envy (Mat 27:18)
His brothers conspired to kill him	Pharisees conspired against Him to put Him to death (Mat 12:14)
Stripped him of his robe and dipped it in the blood of an animal to create the impression Joseph was dead	Stripped Him of His scarlet robe before His death and He is clothed in a robe dipped in blood (Mat 27:31; Rev 19:13)
Sold for 20 pieces of silver	Betrayed for 30 pieces of silver (Mat 26:15)
Thought to be dead from a bloody attack by a vicious animal	Experienced a bloody death by men acting like animals
Escaped death by means of a trip to Egypt	Escaped death by means of a trip to Egypt (Mat 2:13)
The LORD was with Joseph in Potiphar's house and prison	The power and Spirit of the LORD was with Jesus (Luke 4:18)
Joseph was a servant to Potiphar and the prison guard	Christ came not to be served but to serve (Mat 20:28)
Brought the blessing of Yahweh to an Egyptian's house	Brought blessing to those who received Him (Luke 7:23)
Resisted the temptation to sin with Potiphar's wife	Resisted the temptation to sin in the wilderness (Mat 4)
Falsely accused of a crime against Potiphar's wife	Falsely accused of breaking the law (Mark 14:55-56)
Did nothing that should have resulted in imprisonment	On the cross, declared to be innocent (Luke 23:47)
Imprisoned with two men; 1 received life, the other death	Crucified with two; 1 received eternal life; the other the 2 <sup>nd</sup> death
Yahweh gave Joseph favor with the prison warden	Jesus grew in favor with God and man (Luke 2:52)
Joseph asked the cupbearer to remember him when restored	Jesus commands, "Do this in remembrance of me." (Luke 22:19)
Figuratively resurrected from prison to appear before Pharaoh	Resurrected to appear before as many as 500 (1Co 15:5-6)
Described as filled with the Spirit of God, wise, and discerning	Led by the Spirit and increased in wisdom (Luke 2:40,52; 4:1)
Highly exalted to lead and save Egypt from starvation	God exalted Him as Leader and Savior (Acts 5:31)
At 30 years old, entered the service of Pharaoh, king of Egypt	At about 30 years old, Jesus began His public ministry (Luke 3:23)
Only Pharaoh is greater than Joseph in all of Egypt	Only God the Father is greater than Jesus (1Co 15:27)
Everything is committed to Joseph's charge	The Father has given everything into Jesus' hand (John 3:35)
Runners went before Joseph calling out "make way" (CSB)	John the Baptist announced: "prepare the way" (Mat 3:3)
Clothed with fine linen garments and a gold chain	Clothed with a long robe and golden sash/belt (Rev 1:13)
Given a bride, Asenath, and a new name from Pharaoh	Given a bride, the church, and a name (Eph 5:25-32; Phi 2:9)
Two sons were born to Joseph in Egypt	Through Jesus all who believe become sons of God (Gal 3:26)
Pharaoh said, "Go to Joseph. What he says to you, do"	Mary told the servants, "Do whatever He tells you." (John 2:5)
Joseph provided bread to the people of the earth	Jesus is the bread of life (John 6:35)
Joseph's brothers bowed before him	Every knee will bow before Jesus (Rom 14:11)
Joseph stood in judgment over his brothers	Jesus will judge the world in righteousness (Acts 17:31)
Joseph was filled with compassion and wept over his brothers	Jesus had compassion and wept over Israel (Mat 9:36; Luke 19:41)
Joseph is Father to Pharaoh, Lord of his house, and ruler of the land of Egypt	Jesus is the Everlasting Father, LORD of Lords, and ruler of the kings of the earth (Isa 9:6, Acts 2:36, Rev 1:5)
Joseph desired for his father to see his glory in Egypt	Prayed to the Father to reveal His glory to His own (John 17:24)
Sent by God to preserve life and save a remnant from death	Sent by God to save the world from the 2 <sup>nd</sup> death (Gal 4:4-5)
Prepared a place for his family in Goshen	Left the earth to prepare a place for His own (John 14:2)
Joseph forgave his brothers their sin against him	Jesus prayed "Father forgive them..." (Luke 23:34)
In both cases, what was evil against Joseph and Jesus, God turned it for good, in order to save many people alive from starvation in Joseph's case, and in Jesus's case the eternal salvation of all who believe the good news (Gen 50:20; Rom 8:28).	
Joseph was a great man but he wasn't greater than Jesus	
Joseph resisted Potiphar's wife's sexual advances but left her in her sin	But Jesus's righteousness can be accounted to even the most adulterous woman who believes the gospel
Joseph gave bread to his brothers but sold bread to the Egyptians even to the point of enslavement	But Jesus gives the Bread of heaven freely to Jews and Gentiles
Joseph enslaved Egyptians	But Jesus came to set humanity free (John 8:36)
Died in Egypt; bones of his body carried to the Promised Land	Ever lives to make intercession for His own (Heb 7:25)

## Until Shiloh Comes

(Genesis 49:8-12)

In Genesis 49, Jacob is about to die and gathers his sons before him to tell them what "shall happen to you in the days to come." Son by son, Jacob prophesies concerning their future. Each prophecy is important, but the one of greatest significance is the one given to Judah. Beginning in v. 8, Jacob states things that will happen to Judah; 1) his brothers shall praise him, 2) his hand will be on the neck of his enemies, and 3) Israel's sons "shall bow down" before him. Nothing in Scripture records that any of this happened to Judah personally. Perhaps, instead, this prophecy is speaking about a descendant of Judah.

Verse 9 compares Judah to a lion in three different ways. And in Revelation 5:5, the author writes the "Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, [who] has conquered, so that he can open the scroll and its seven seals." In the context of the chapter, it is abundantly clear that this Lion is also the Lamb of God, Jesus, who gave His life to save sinners from their sins (5:6-10). The Lion of Judah is Jesus. He is the One worthy of being praised; He has His hand on the neck of His enemies (figuratively), and every knee will bow down before Him one day in the future (Phi 4:10).

A scepter is an object a king possesses to symbolically communicate his authority as the sovereign in a particular region. In verse 10, Jacob states that "the scepter shall not depart from Judah nor the ruler's staff from between his feet." (This is a couplet which is a way of saying the same thing twice. For example, "The heavens declare the glory of God, and the sky above proclaims his handiwork" (Psa 19:1). Heavens and sky, declare and proclaim, and glory of God and handiwork are all couplets.) "His feet," in this case, is a euphemism for reproductive organs (1Sa 24:3). The point is that kings will come from Judah until the ultimate king, the final possessor of the scepter, comes. This becomes even clearer in the next couplet. Likewise, the scepter and ruler's staff are referring to the same thing.

The second portion of verse 10 is the most complicated because of the Hebrew word Shiloh. This particular variant of the word appears only here in the Old Testament. While the other Shiloh referring to a village appears throughout the OT. This Shiloh seems to be referring to a person. Some translations transliterate the Hebrew word שִׁילוֹה into English, and the reader sees "Shiloh," while others substitute an interpretation like "tribute" or the pronoun "he." The ESV provides a footnote that reads "Hebrew 'until Shiloh comes.'" Strong's Hebrew Lexicon indicates that Shiloh means tranquil and is an epithet of the Messiah ([www.blueletterbible.org](http://www.blueletterbible.org)). Daniel prophesied about one who would atone for sin and bring everlasting righteousness—an anointed one, the ruler. The KJV Bible transliterates māšîaḥ as Messiah (2x), and the English word Messiah was born in 1611 first in Daniel 9:25-26. Merriam-Webster Dictionary defines Messiah as "the expected king and deliverer of the Jews." Christians believe Jesus of Nazareth is the Messiah. In fact, the English word Christ means Messiah (John 1:41). Therefore, this reference to Shiloh in v. 10 may indicate that Shiloh will bring tranquility or peace with God.

Shiloh is a king, and people will obey Him as their king. "To Him shall be the obedience of the peoples" (v.10). Christians believe that Jesus is Shiloh, the Messiah, the LORD—the master, the sovereign one. And a central tenet of the NT is that followers of Christ strive to obey him as Lord (John 3:36). All of the eternal age will be characterized by God's people living in obedience to King Jesus and His Father (Acts 17:7).

Verse 11 is filled with imagery of abundance. Vines and grapes grow in such excess that a farmer can hitch a donkey to a vine and have no concern that the animal is eating the vine or grapes. The harvest is consistently plentiful in a way the mind cannot imagine. So much wine is available that one could use wine for washing clothes. Of course, no one washes clothes in wine, so this is poetically figurative. Jesus promised that He would drink of the fruit of the vine again in the kingdom of His Father.

Finally, this prophecy finds fulfillment in the NT in no less than two additional ways. First, in John 2, Jesus produces an abundance of wine from water at the wedding in Cana. Second, Jesus rides a donkey's colt, a foal, into Jerusalem as the king of Israel on the Sunday before his death. The response to the arrival of the King, the Messiah, was one of overwhelming praise to God. The king was on a colt, not a war horse, for He came to bring peace to all who believe He is the Messiah who died for their sins and rose again on the third day (Luke 19:42, 1Co 15:1-3).



## Yahweh’s Christ, Judah’s Son

**“The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord and of His Christ, and he [the Christ] shall reign forever and ever.” Rev 11:15**

The truth that Yahweh has a Christ, a Messiah, an Anointed (One), as seen in Luke 2:26, Acts 3:18, 4:26, and Revelation 11:15, 12:10, is first revealed in Psalm 2:2. It reads, “The kings of the earth take their stand and the rulers take counsel together against Yahweh and against His Anointed” (LSB). The title Christ, as in “Jesus, the Christ” (Mat 16:16), is the Greek word for the Hebrew transliteration *māshīah* (literally, anointed) or messiah – the one anointed by oil. The *Merriam-Webster Dictionary* defines the messiah as “the expected king and deliverer of the Jews.”<sup>11</sup> He was “expected” because of OT prophecies, like Daniel 9:25-26, and a “king” because of prophecies like Genesis 49:10, Numbers 24:17, and Psalm 2:6. The Jews expected a deliverer because of bondage they had experienced since the end of the Davidic dynasty. Jesus is the deliverer. **Jesus** means Yahweh saves – He will save His people from their sins (Mat 1:21). He is the offspring of Mary, who fulfilled the Genesis 3:15 promise. He is the offspring of Abraham (Gal 3:16) and the lion of the tribe of Judah (Gen 49:9-10, Rev 5:5). Jesus is **IMMANUEL**, “which translated means ‘GOD WITH US’” (Mat 1:23, LSB).

Prophets, priests, and kings were anointed when they assumed their roles in the kingdom of Israel. Aaron, the first high priest of Israel, was anointed with oil in Exodus 29:7. Oil was used to consecrate things for Yahweh in the OT. Saul was the first king of Israel, anointed by the prophet Samuel (1Sa 15:1). In 2 Samuel 2, the men of Judah anointed David as king of Judah. Then, ten chapters later, the prophet Nathan said to David, “You are the man! Thus says Yahweh, the God of Israel, ‘It is I who anointed you king over Israel, and it is I who delivered you from the hand of Saul’” (2Sa 12:7, LSB). Finally, in 1 Kings 19, the prophet Elisha is anointed.

Person	Anointed as a
<b>Deity Humanity</b>	<b>Prophet (Teacher, Rabbi)</b>
	<b>Priest (Savior, Lamb of God)</b>
	<b>King (Lord, Master, Owner)</b>

Jesus is anointed not with oil but with the Holy Spirit (Isa 61:1, Luke 4:18, Acts 10:38). Jesus, Yahweh’s Christ, is more than an Anointed Prophet (Deu 18:15), Priest (Heb 2:17), and King (Rev 19:16). He is the one and only **Son of God** (John 3:16). Jesus is our great high priest – after the order of Melchizedek (Psa 110:1-4) – the mediator of a new and better covenant (Heb 3:1, 8:1-13, 9:15, 12:24). He is the Son of God and **Son of Man** – His favorite self-designation\* in the gospels (Dan 7:13 and \*83x in the NT, ESV).

Paul emphasized Jesus’ humanity in 1 Timothy 2:5, with the words “the man Christ Jesus,” in 1 Corinthians 15, he called Jesus the “last Adam.” In John 1:1, “the Word was God,” in verse 14, the Word became flesh and dwelt among humans. Jesus is God-incarnate. Hypostatic union is a theological term describing the joining of Jesus’ two natures – humanity and deity. The Christ is the Creator like His Father (John 1:3). Jesus existed before His birth. In John 8:58, Jesus said, “Truly I tell you, before Abraham was, **I am**.” The two words “I am” are significant; Jesus directly connects Himself to the “**I AM**” of Exodus 3:14-15. From the burning bush, God communicated His name to Moses. God said, “Thus you shall say to the sons of Israel, **I AM** has sent me to you.”<sup>15</sup> And God furthermore said to Moses, “Thus you shall say to the sons of Israel, **‘Yahweh**, the God of your fathers...This is My name [Yahweh] forever.” In John 10:30, Jesus said, “I and the Father are one” and, “The one who has seen Me has seen the Father” (John 14:9). In the OT, the Father is the invisible Yahweh, and the Son is Yahweh’s visible Messenger – translated “angel of Yahweh [*LORD*]” 56x in the LSB (Gen 16:7-11, 22:11-15, Exo 3:2, Num 22, 1Ch 21, and esp. Zec 3). He is the angel of God in Genesis 21:17, 24:7, 31:11. In Genesis 32:28, Jacob wrestled all night with a man [*Yahweh’s messenger*], who gave him a new name (*Israel*), and Jacob said “I have seen God face to face.” In Hebrew, the name Israel sounds like “he struggled (*with*) God” (CSB, fn).

Jesus is the Lamb of God who died for our sins but God raised Him up on the third day (John 1:29, 1Co 15). The firstborn from the dead holds the keys of Death and Hades (Rev 1). In response to Christ’s obedience, the Father gave His Son the name above every name so that at the name of Jesus, every knee will bow and every tongue will confess that **Jesus Christ is Lord** (the master, owner, and Sovereign), to the glory of God the Father (Phi 2:5-11). He and He alone – the Lord Jesus, the Christ – will receive everlasting dominion from the Ancient of Days and an eternal kingdom fulfilling every eternal promise in the Bible (Gen 17:7-8, 48:4, 2Sa 7, Isa 55:3, Eze 37:26, Dan 7:13-14, 2Co 1:20, Rev 11:15).

<sup>11</sup> [Merriam-Webster’s Collegiate Dictionary](#) (Springfield, MA: Merriam-Webster, 1996).

## Sovereignty and Providence

From the first page to the last, the reader of Genesis sees God Almighty's sovereignty and providence in the lives of Adam, Noah, and the patriarchs, in the fulfillment of covenant promises, and in God's rule over the nations.

**Sovereignty** describes God's supreme power and authority over heaven and earth, including but not limited to the universe, all spiritual beings, mankind, all living creatures, and nature itself. The reader is introduced to God's supreme power in the first chapter when God speaks matter into existence out of nothing. This power to create establishes ownership. He is God Most High, possessor of heaven and earth (14:22). As the Creator, He is the absolute Sovereign.

### In Genesis, the reader sees God's sovereignty in:

- The pronouncement of judgment upon the serpent, Adam and Eve, and the exile from the Garden of Eden (3).
- Statements like, "I will blot out man whom I have created from the face of the land, man, and animals and creeping things and birds of the heavens, for I am sorry that I have made them." (6:5).
- The changing of people's languages and Yahweh's scattering of humans throughout the earth (11).
- Covenant promises, like God is going to give one man land, make his name great, create from him a great nation, and bless or curse particular individuals as they bless or dishonor him – all manifestations of supreme power
- A declaration of 400 years of affliction for the sons of Abraham in a land that is not theirs and then in the judgment of that nation for their iniquity (15).
- The rescue of one family from a wicked and sinful city before the total destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah (19).
- Giving Sarah a son, at the age of 90, after being barren all her life (21).
- Fulfilling the promise God made to Abraham that he would die in a good old age (25:8).
- The message that He gave Rebekah concerning the two nations that were in her womb when in reality it was two sons, but God had determined that each would become a nation (Edomites and Israelites) (25).
- Declarative statements like, "A nation and company of nations shall come from you [Jacob], and kings shall come from your own body." (35) "But God will visit you and bring you up out of this land..." (50:24).

**Providence** describes God's sovereign involvement in the affairs of mankind such that human choice and responsibility are not compromised while what God has decreed comes to pass. Providence can be distinguished from pure sovereignty in the involvement of humans to accomplish what God has determined will come to pass. For example, it is Pharaoh's choice and decision in every way to elevate Joseph to the position of governor of the land; yet, in hindsight, it becomes evident to Joseph that this was all God's will. Sometimes it is quite difficult to be dogmatic about providence. In chapter 37, "a man" finds Joseph looking for his brothers. If the man is a human, then this is God's providence guiding this man to find Joseph and give the information he needs to find his brothers. But if the "man" is a pre-incarnate appearance of Christ or an angel made to look like man, then this is supernatural and does not fit the definition of providence. In Genesis, providence is seen the most in the life of Joseph, but there are many other examples of divine providential involvement in the narrative. Finally, providence is another manifestation of God's sovereignty while maintaining the legitimacy of human choice, actions, and individual culpability when sin is involved (42:22).

### In Genesis, the reader sees divine providence in:

- A ram caught in a thicket after the angel of Yahweh told Abraham not to end Isaac's life; instead, God provided the burnt offering just as Abraham said, "God will provide for Himself the lamb for the burnt offering" (22:8).
- The servant of Abraham finding Rebekah in his search for a wife for Isaac (24).
- Esau's sale of the birthright he despised to Jacob such that Jacob would be the recipient of the Abrahamic covenant according to God's plan, yet Scripture is unambiguous: Esau sold the birthright and he did not see its value (25).
- Blessing Jacob's labor to grow his herds of livestock through breeding techniques that should have had no impact on the fertility and survivability of sheep and goats, yet Jacob's flock grew while Laban's did not (30).
- Judah's motivation to make money in the sale of Joseph to the Midianite traders was used by God to preposition Joseph in Egypt before the famine to ensure the sons of Jacob did not die from starvation (37 & 45).
- Selling Joseph to Potiphar, an officer of Pharaoh, a captain of the guard, who would have had the power or connections to get Joseph confined in the prison where the king's prisoners were kept. Joseph would be there when the cupbearer and baker each had a dream that needed to be interpreted so that he could eventually interpret Pharaoh's dreams and be released from prison and be promoted to the governor (39, 40 & 41).

## The Characters of Genesis

<b>God</b>	First person of the triune God of the Bible; the Father, the Sovereign Being perfect in power, wisdom, and goodness who is worshipped as creator and ruler of the universe
<b>Spirit of God</b>	Third person of the triune God; distinguished from God in Gen 1:2
<b>LORD</b>	English word for Yahweh/Jehovah in the OT—the proper name of the one true God
<b>Adam</b>	First man created by God; given dominion of the garden of God; husband to Eve; his name means man; father of Cain, Abel, Seth, and others; failed to protect his wife from being deceived
<b>Eve</b>	Wife of Adam; mother of Cain, Abel, Seth, and others; her name means mother of the living, deceived by the Serpent and ate the fruit
<b>Serpent</b>	Satan, the devil, the fallen angel who opposes God and actively works to thwart God’s will
<b>Cain</b>	Firstborn son of Adam and Eve; a farmer, lived as a fugitive on the earth after murdering Abel
<b>Abel</b>	Second son to Adam and Eve, a keeper of sheep; murdered by Cain
<b>Seth</b>	Third son of Eve, the father of the line from whom Jesus, the Son of God, would descend
<b>Noah</b>	Builder of an ark to the saving of his soul, a great man of faith, and a ‘preacher of righteousness’
<b>Shem</b>	Firstborn son of Noah, the son of the line from whom Abraham and Jesus would descend
<b>Ham</b>	Second son of Noah and the father of the Canaanites
<b>Japheth</b>	Third son of Noah whose descendants settled in Asia Minor and Europe
<b>Terah</b>	Father of Abram from the Ur of Chaldeans
<b>Abram/Abraham</b>	Father (patriarch) of the Jews (Hebrews) and the father of a multiple of nations including but not limited to Israel; the only man in the Bible described as a ‘friend of God’
<b>Sarai/ Sarah</b>	Wife of Abram and mother of Isaac; her only son, the child of promise
<b>Lot</b>	Nephew to Abram, son of Haran, grandson of Terah; a herdsman, settled in Sodom; became the father of the Moabites and Ammonites
<b>Pharaoh</b>	Generic name for the king of Egypt
<b>Melchizedek</b>	King of Salem and priest of God Most High, a very mysterious character in Genesis having neither a beginning nor end in the narrative; the priestly lineage of Jesus
<b>Hagar</b>	Sarah’s Egyptian female servant and mother of Ishmael by way of Abraham
<b>Ishmael</b>	Outcast son of Abraham by way of Hagar; considered to be a prophet in Islam
<b>Angel of the LORD</b>	Second person of the triune God; a pre-incarnate appearance of Jesus, the Son of God in the OT
<b>Isaac</b>	Only son of Abraham and Sarah; the inheritor of all the promises of the Abrahamic covenant; the husband of Rebekah and father of Esau and Jacob; a herdsman, envied for his wealth
<b>Rebekah</b>	Great granddaughter of Terah, sister of Laban, wife of Isaac, mother of Esau and Jacob
<b>Laban</b>	Father of Leah and Rachel, brother to Rebekah, and great-grandson of Terah
<b>Esau</b>	Firstborn twin son of Isaac and Rebekah; despised his birthright to the Abrahamic Covenant
<b>Jacob/Israel</b>	Twin son of Isaac and Rebekah, father of the 12 sons of Israel, the inheritor of all the promises of the Abrahamic Covenant; deceived his father to gain the blessing
<b>Leah</b>	Daughter of Laban, wife of Jacob, and mother of six of the sons of Israel and Dinah
<b>Rachel</b>	Daughter of Laban, younger sister to Leah, the love of Jacob, the mother of Joseph and Benjamin
<b>Reuben</b>	Firstborn son of Jacob and Leah
<b>Judah</b>	Fourth son of Jacob and Leah, the father of the tribe from whom King David and Jesus will descend
<b>Dinah</b>	Only daughter born to Jacob and Leah; sister to the 12 sons of Israel
<b>Joseph</b>	Beloved son of Jacob whose mother was Rachel; hated by his older brothers, used by God to save his family from starvation as the governor in Egypt, second only to Pharaoh
<b>Potiphar</b>	Captain of the Egyptian guard who bought Joseph as a slave
<b>Asenath</b>	Egyptian wife of Joseph and mother of Manasseh and Ephraim
<b>Manasseh</b>	Firstborn son of Joseph and Asenath; becomes one of the 12 tribes of Israel
<b>Ephraim</b>	Second son of Joseph and Asenath; becomes one of the 12 tribes of Israel and received the greater blessing from his grandfather Jacob

## Important Genesis Verses

Ask yourself: Do I understand why each of these verses is on this list?

1:1	In the beginning, <b>God created the heavens and the earth.</b>
1:26	Then God said, “ <b>Let us make man in our image, after our likeness.</b> And let them have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over the livestock and over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth.”
1:27	So God created man <b>in his own image</b> , in the image of God he created him; <b>male and female he created them.</b>
1:28	And God blessed them. And God said to them, “ <b>Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and subdue it, and have dominion</b> over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over every living thing that moves on the earth.”
2:4	<b>These are the generations [toledoth (Hb.)] of the heavens and the earth</b> when they were created, in the day that the LORD God made the earth and the heavens.
2:7	then the LORD God formed the man of dust from the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and <b>the man became a living creature.</b>
2:18	Then the LORD God said, “It is not good that the man should be alone; <b>I will make him a helper fit for him.</b> ”
2:24	Therefore a man <b>shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife</b> , and they shall become one flesh.
3:15	“I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and <b>her offspring; he shall bruise your head</b> , and you shall bruise his heel. “
4:7	“If you do well, will you not be accepted? And if you do not do well, sin is crouching at the door. Its desire is contrary to you, <b>but you must rule over it [sin].</b> ”
9:6	“Whoever sheds the blood of man, <b>by man shall his blood be shed, for God made man in his own image.</b> ”
12:1-3	Now the LORD said to Abram, “Go from your country and your kindred and your father’s house to the <b>land</b> that I will show you. And I will make of you a <b>great nation</b> , and I will bless you and make your <b>name great</b> , so that you will be a blessing. <b>I will bless</b> those who bless you, and him who dishonors you I will curse, and <b>in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed.</b> ”
15:6	And he [Abram] believed the LORD, and <b>he counted it to him as righteousness.</b>
17:4	“Behold, my covenant is with you, and you shall be the father of a multitude of nations.”
22:8	Abraham said, “ <b>God will provide for himself the lamb</b> for a burnt offering, my son.” So they went both of them together.
32:28	Then he said, “Your name shall <b>no longer be called Jacob, but Israel</b> , for you have striven with God and with men, and have prevailed.”
39:9	“He is not greater in this house than I am, nor has he kept back anything from me except you, because you are his wife. <b>How then can I [Joseph] do this great wickedness and sin against God?</b> ”
46:3	Then he said, “I am God, the God of your father. Do not be afraid to go down to Egypt, for there I will make you into a great nation.”
49:10	“ <b>The scepter</b> shall not depart from <b>Judah</b> , <b>nor the ruler’s staff</b> from between his feet, until tribute comes to him; and to him shall be the obedience of the peoples. “
50:20	“As for you, <b>you meant evil against me, but God meant it for good</b> , to bring it about that many people should be kept alive, as they are today.”

AS FOR YOU, YOU MEANT EVIL  
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—Genesis 50:20



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