

IN THE BEGINNING
A STUDY IN
GENESIS

VOLUME 1

MARK DRISCOLL

**IN THE
BEGINNING**

A Study in Genesis

Volume 1: Genesis 1-14

REALFAITH.COM

By Mark Driscoll

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REAL GROUPS

WITH REALFAITH

Faith that does not result in good deeds is not real faith.

James 2:20, TLB

At RealFaith, we believe that the Word of God isn't just for us to read, it's to be obeyed. And living in community with fellow believers is one of the ways God the Father allows us to learn and grow to become more like His Son Jesus through the power of the Holy Spirit. We do this through something called Real Groups. Here are a few tips to start your own.

1. Invite

Invite your friends, neighbors, family, coworkers, and enemies, because they all need Jesus whether they know Him or not! Whether it's a group of men, women, families, students, or singles, explain that you'd like to start a weekly sermon-based small group based on Pastor Mark Driscoll's sermons.

2. Listen to the sermon on realfaith.com or on the RealFaith app

You can host a viewing party to watch **RealFaith Live** and discuss it all at once, or you can watch it separately and gather to discuss it at another time that works for the group.

3. Get into God's Word

In addition to watching the sermon, make sure you and all group members have a study guide from realfaith.com for the current sermon series. There are questions for personal reflection as well as for groups that can guide your devotional times throughout the week. You can also sign up for Daily Devos at realfaith.com.

4. Gather together

Whether at someone's house, a public place, or through something like Zoom, meet weekly

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to discuss the sermon and what God has taught you through it. The great thing about Real Groups is that you don't all have to be in the same location. You can talk about sermon takeaways, what stood out to you in the study guide, or what God taught you in His Word that week. Focus on personal application as much as possible.

5. Pray

When you gather, feel free to share prayer requests, pray for each other on the spot, and continue praying throughout the week. Prayer is a great unifying force that God gives us to strengthen His family.

6. Share

Send us photos, videos, testimonies, and updates of how your group is doing to **hello@realfaith.com**. You might even be featured on our RealFaith Live show!

There are plenty more resources to discover at **realfaith.com/real-groups**, as well. We will be praying for you and your group and look forward to hearing what God does through it.

PREFACE

Genesis 1:1 - "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth."

If you stacked up all the books written in the history of the world as a mountain and had to pick a handful to rest as the summit, you'd have to include the book of Genesis. In its pages we encounter God our Creator, a holy and an unholy angel, gender and marriage, our first parents, the fall of humanity into sin, the first promise of Jesus' coming to conquer Satan, the first death, the judgment of sin in the Flood, the scattering of people into nations and languages, and God's grace in the calling to Abraham and working through his family to bring forth Jesus Christ as the blessing to all nations of the earth. Genesis closes with one of the greatest stories of God's providence and human forgiveness in the life of Joseph and his flawed family.

Before we can understand what went wrong in our world and how it can be fixed, we have to understand who God is, how He made us and our world, what we have done to wreck the world, and God's plan to create a new earth. In this introduction and overview study guide, the aim is to help introduce you to the book of Genesis, including its great themes and truths to better prepare you to study the book for yourself. All three study guides for Genesis 1-36, along with the sermons, sermon transcripts, daily devotions, and more are all available for free at RealFaith.com. I am also working on releasing a separate sermon series and book titled *Trusting God in Troubled Times: A Study of Joseph in Genesis 37-50* to help you learn the entire epic book of Genesis.

CHAPTER I

Answers to 12 Questions About Genesis

The Bible is the most translated, published, read, influential and opposed library of books in the history of the world. Imagine sitting down to write the opening lines knowing they would shape human history and serve as the foundation for Christianity, which would become the largest and longest-lasting movement of any kind in the history of the world! Where would you begin?

Moses, who wrote Genesis, inspired by the Spirit, starts aptly, "In the beginning God..."

Practically, the first thing we learn in the Bible is that you cannot understand anyone or anything unless you start with God. God must be first in our priorities, first in our days, first in our schedules, first in our marriages, first in our families, first in our finances, first in our work, and first in our hearts and minds. Just as the Bible starts with God, and reveals how everything goes wrong without God, we too need to start every aspect of our life with God and have nothing separated from God. This is the power packed principle in the first line of Genesis, which means "beginning". Simply stated, don't start with you. Do start with God.

Poetically, Genesis is one of the finest pieces of literature that has ever been written. Its characters, stories, images, and metaphors remain perennially popular some three and a half thousand years after they were penned because God's timeless Word is always timely.

Practically, Genesis is one of the most painfully honest accounts ever written about the triumphs and tragedies of a single family over many generations. Historically, Genesis provides for us the account of the origin of everything from creation to humanity, sin, sex, family, death, covenant, nations, judgment, and redemption. Theologically, Genesis reveals God as personal through His intimate involvement in the lives of His covenant people by loving them, protecting them, leading them, forgiving them, providing for them, and disciplining them.

Positionally, Genesis, the book of beginnings, is the first book of the Pentateuch, which means five-part book that also includes Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy,

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which are often referred to in Scripture as one book.^a Genesis accounts for about 25% of the content of the Pentateuch. The remaining four books of the Pentateuch, Exodus through Deuteronomy, focus on the life of Moses and account for about 75% of the content of the Pentateuch. Abraham and Moses are an interesting juxtaposition, as Abraham did not have the law but obeyed it by faith, while Moses did have the law but was punished for not obeying it in unbelief. Each of the books in the Pentateuch was penned by Moses (with a few sections penned by others) roughly 1400 years before the birth of Jesus Christ. To help you better understand the book of Genesis we will briefly answer some of the most common questions about the book to help you get the most out of reading and studying it for yourself.

#1 What is Genesis?

The name of the Bible's first book, Genesis, is taken from its first words, "...In the beginning..."

Genesis is a book about God. In a world of the selfie, where we are the center of our lives, Genesis reminds us that God is the center of human history and our life story. The Bible is for us, but it's not mainly about us. The Bible is mainly about God. Genesis reveals God as our Creator who judges human sin but sustains people and Creation by His grace. Genesis is clear that God is not responsible for human sin because He is perfect, holy, and good. All that He originally created was made "good", including the man and woman whom He declared to have been made "very good".

Two primary names for God appear throughout Genesis, which have led some Bible critics to wrongly conclude that multiple authors penned the book. Instead, when Genesis uses the name "Elohim", it commonly refers to God in general relationship with all nations, including unbelievers. And, when Genesis uses the name "Yahweh", it commonly refers to God in His special covenant relationship with His people. This is not unlike the fact that people who don't know me well call me "Mark" and my five kids call me "dad". God is a Father and like most dads, his kids have a more personal way of referring to him than other people.

Genesis is comprised of various types of literature, including narrative, poetry, law, and genealogy. The events in Genesis span such a lengthy time period (roughly 2000 years) that it may cover more history than the entirety of the rest of the Bible combined. Lastly, Genesis is a selective theological telling of history as Moses omits numerous things such as the creation

^a e.g. 2 Chr. 25:4, 35:12; Ezra 6:18; Ne. 13:1; Mk. 12:26

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of angels, fall of Satan, and life of Abraham before God called him. Genesis is not intended to give us an exhaustive history as much as a theological lesson about who God is and who we are through historical people and events recorded as interpreted facts.

#2 How is Genesis arranged?

Fans of great literature have always enjoyed Genesis for good reason. The book lays out into the following thematic sections:

First, Genesis 1-11 records God calling Creation into existence and Genesis 12-50 records God calling people into covenant relationship. The storyline of Genesis is God as Father making this world as a home for His family.

Second, both the major and minor sections of Genesis are introduced by the refrain “these are the generations...” The major sections beginning with this refrain are found in 2:4, 6:9, 11:27, 25:19, and 37:2 and the minor sections within the larger sections that begin with this refrain are found in 5:1, 10:1, 11:10, 25:12, and 36:1. These clues from Moses help the reader understand the shift in the storyline much like a road sign that tells a driver that a turn is coming up.

Third, in each section of Genesis, some aspect of God’s character is emphasized:

- Genesis 1-2 – As creator, God made everything and everyone
- Genesis 3:1-6:4 – As redeemer, God is the just judge of sinners and savior of His people
- Genesis 6:5-11:9 – As just, God is Holy and He punishes sin and rewards repentance
- Genesis 11:10-25:18 – As loving, God is relational and calls people into covenant relationship and promises to bless them
- Genesis 25:19-28:9 – As faithful, God provides for His people to fulfill His promises
- Genesis 28:10-36:43 – As sovereign, God elects and protects His people
- Genesis 37-50 – As Lord, God accomplishes His good purposes despite human sin

The primary focus of Genesis is God. The secondary focus of Genesis is people as we are His priority, not unlike a Father who is devoted to His children. Practically, this may indicate that the first two things we need to learn when we study the Bible is who God is and who we are.

#3 What does Genesis say about human life versus animal life?

Believing in evolution without God rather than creation by God, animal rights activists and environmentalists fail to distinguish between human life and animal life. Conversely, the

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Bible clearly distinguishes between the two without dishonoring the animals which the man and woman were made with dominion over to steward.

In Genesis 1:26-28, we see the reason for human dignity is simply because we were made by God in His image. Additionally, we see that both men and women have equality and dignity because they are both created as image bearers of God. This image of God that humanity alone bears makes us distinct from and superior to the rest of creation, including animals.

Unlike animals, the opening chapters of Genesis reveal that men and women were created for four relationships. First, we were made to have a spiritual relationship with God. Second, we were made to have a psychological relationship with ourselves. Third, we were made to have social relationships with others. Fourth, we were made to have an environmental relationship with creation.

As a result of our sin, the image and likeness that we bear persists but is marred by sin.^a Subsequently, Genesis and the rest of history report the theological problems, psychological problems, social problems, and environmental problems that follow in our sinful wake.

Theologian Helmut Thielicke once said that history is in many ways like a good play. When going to a play, one generally asks certain questions such as who wrote the play, who is the hero, who is the villain, and what is the plot? Upon answering these questions, we are able to make sense of and enter into the story in a meaningful way. Likewise, each day, people are born onto the stage of history where they will say their lines and act out their part without any concept of who the Author of life is, what great cosmic struggle they find themselves in, who the Hero and Villain are, and how they relate to the plot of which they are a part. Apart from revelation from God to explain all of this, we are left utterly lost, confused, and open to wrong alternative explanations of everyone and everything, including ourselves.

As we read the Bible, starting in Genesis, we uncover the source of both our dignity and depravity. We were made in the dignified image of God. However, we have descended into the depraved pattern of Satan through the rebellion of sin. Therefore, we are simultaneously both great and greatly fallen, which is the perplexing dilemma of human nature. Those who do not read the Bible and take it to heart are prone to ignore the complex dilemma of our dignity and depravity by favoring one aspect of our nature at the expense of the other.

Genesis 1-2 clearly states that we were made between God and the animals as lower than God but higher than animals. Genesis also states that our position between these two is

^a James 3:9

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indeed closer to God than the animals because we bear His image and were handcrafted by Him. Yet, there is a propensity for those who do not heed the insights of Genesis to error in one of two ways. One, some wrongly elevate us to god-like greatness as is common in Eastern spirituality and the wrong notion that we are basically good with humanity continually evolving and improving. Two, others are prone to describe us as little more than yet another animal, incapable of self-control, beauty, truth, or goodness. An example would include the psychological pioneer Sigmund Freud, who reduced us essentially as slaves to our animalistic urges for such things as sex and food, which drive our actions. Genesis uniquely balances these tensions with the dignity of our creation, and depravity of sin. Only by God's grace can we begin to overcome our depravity and increase our dignity as the Holy Spirit makes us more and more like Jesus Christ.

#4 Who are the major characters in Genesis?

Generally speaking, Genesis 1-11 covers the more universal events of Creation, Fall, Flood, and Babel. Genesis 12-50 focuses more narrowly on the history of one family descended from Abraham with whom God entered a covenant relationship. This seeming disconnect between Genesis 1-11 and the family of Abraham in Genesis 12-50 is intentional as Moses is seeking to portray Abraham as the beginning of a new humanity in covenant relationship with God as Abraham stands as a sort of second Adam for a new humanity.

In Genesis 12-50, 14 chapters are about Abraham, three and a half are about Isaac, eight are about Jacob, and the final 14 are about Joseph. While God clearly loved and blessed this family, Genesis painfully portrays their imperfections and sins to demonstrate the grace of God to endure with us and power of God to write straight lines with our crooked sticks. Examples include Abraham who gave his wife Sarah to another man not once but twice to save his own skin, Jacob who was a trickster, drunken Noah, murderous brothers of Dinah, and seemingly vain Joseph. Because of the honesty of Genesis, we can see ourselves and our families in the characters, which should give us hope that God's grace can overcome our sin and folly as it did theirs.

In Genesis, God's plan to bless the nations of the earth had to begin with someone somewhere. God chose the person Abraham and what we now know as the place Israel as the beginning of His work of redemption on the earth. This does not indicate that a particular person or piece of land are in any way morally superior to the other people and places in that day. Quite to the contrary, we know nothing of Abraham's life before God called him other than the fact that he was a seemingly very normal, old, godless Gentile

living near Babylon just like his godless father.^a Having travelled the globe, I can assure you that what we call The Promised Land is not as lovely or desirable as a lot of other places on the planet. God started His work of redemption humbly with a simple man in a simple place in the days of Abraham much like He later did when Jesus was born to peasant parents in a small nowhere town.

In the New Testament, the significance of Abraham can hardly be overstated. In the great chapter on faith, Hebrews 11, roughly 1/3 of the entire chapter is dedicated to him (11:8-19). In Genesis 15:6, we read that “And [Abram] believed the LORD, and he counted it to [Abram] as righteousness.” This very important verse establishes that salvation and righteousness come not by human merit, but rather solely by faith in God who gives salvation and righteousness as a gift of grace. This concept is exactly what the Apostle Paul taught throughout the New Testament as in Romans 4:3 and Galatians 3:6, he quotes Genesis 15:6 to establish his doctrine of justification by faith which became the bedrock issue of the Protestant Reformation. Likewise, in James 2:20-24 Jesus’ brother also quotes Genesis 15:6 to establish that faith produces good works just like Abraham’s faith in Genesis 15 showed his willingness to sacrifice his son Isaac in Genesis 22. Paul’s entire theology rests on the fact that everyone is saved by faith after the pattern of Abraham in Genesis, and James teaches that if we truly have faith like Abraham, our life will include visible good works as his life did.

Abraham is such a towering figure in both Scripture and human history that no less than three major world religions look back to him as the father of their faith. Jews, Christians, and Muslims see him as the place that their beliefs began.

#5 Is Genesis a myth?

Some critics have postulated that Genesis is not literal history but rather a myth, like a legend or fairy tale, intended to communicate ideals but not meant to be taken literally as historical fact. This hypothesis has numerous flaws.

First, the concept of myth or legend is foreign to Hebrew thought and life. The ancient people who originally received the book of Genesis were not like the later Greek cultures filled with myths and legends.

Second, Genesis is consistently organized around historical places, events, and people (including many lengthy genealogies) which is completely unlike the telling of a myth. Myths are not built on historical facts that can be proven by such things as archaeology.

Third, when the rest of Scripture, particularly the teachings of Jesus, speak of

^a Nehemiah 9:7; Acts 7:2-3

people, places, and events in Genesis, they are treated as straightforward fact and not myth. Therefore, the concept of Genesis being a myth is an imposition on the book by its critics that is not warranted from the book itself or the rest of Scripture which points back to Genesis as literal historical fact.

#6 Were Adam and Eve Real People or Not?

This question of the historicity of Adam and Eve is important because it's the foundation of the biblical story. If they are literary devices and poetic images, the loss to the storyline of the Bible is catastrophic. Without a real Adam and Eve, the Bible loses its basis for the Fall, sin, the need for redemption, and the need for Jesus and atonement.

What the Bible says About Adam and Eve

While the issues at stake are often quite confusing, it's apparent as we look at Scripture that it teaches the truth that Adam—and by extension Eve—were the first persons and that they were also the first persons.

Adam is the first person. One of the main reasons that Christians must affirm that Adam was the first human being to exist is the doctrine of the Fall and original sin.

Genesis 3:17 says, 'And to Adam he said, "Because you have listened to the voice of your wife and have eaten of the tree of which I commanded you, 'You shall not eat of it,' cursed is the ground because of you; in pain you shall eat of it all the days of your life..."' Here we see that God, as a result of Adam's sin, pronounces a curse upon Adam and all humanity after him.

Christians take seriously the fact that God made all things good and without sin^a and this has important ramifications for the consummation and new creation^b (FOOTNOTE: Revelation 21). Yet Adam, as the first person, brought sin into the world and tainted God's perfect creation. Romans 5:12 says that "sin came into the world through one man [Adam], and death through sin, and so death spread to all men because all sinned" and Romans 6:23 says that "For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord."

Based on what Scripture itself teaches, the Christian must be able to affirm the truth that Adam was the first person, through whom sin entered the world, in order to speak of Christ as the "last Adam," through whom sin and its curse—death—were vanquished.^c

There are at least five scriptural arguments that affirm the truth that Adam was not

^a Gen. 1:31 ^b Rev. 21 ^c 1 Cor. 15:45

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only the *first* person but also that he was the first *person*—a real human being: the Genesis account, Luke’s genealogy, Paul’s theology, and Christ’s statement on Adam in Matthew and Mark.

The Genesis Account

Genesis 1-3 affirms Adam and Eve as real people in the creation account. Additionally, Genesis affirms the reality of Adam as a person by giving us the number of years that he physically lived, “Thus all the days that Adam lived were 930 years, and he died”^a and by giving an account of Adam fathering other figures in the Bible who are treated as real, physical people and not mythical constructs.^b It’s impossible to take the Genesis account of Adam as one of him being a mythical representative of humanity since he fathers singular children who are part of a historical genealogy. To do so clearly divorces the creation account from the context of the rest of the book and ignores the intent of the author of Genesis and—as we shall see—the rest of the biblical accounts regarding Adam.

Luke’s Genealogy

The genealogy in Luke 3 is often recognized as one that explicitly expresses the humanity of Jesus Christ. While Matthew’s genealogy ties Christ to the Jewish people and John’s prologue refers to Jesus as God, Luke’s intention is to give a historical account of the life of Christ, which explains why it is also the only gospel written in chronological order – to show Jesus’ human life on the earth. Luke links Jesus to Joseph, David, Abraham, and, ultimately, Adam. It would make no sense for Luke to mention real person after real person only to come to the climax of his genealogy by mentioning a mythical figure. One who denies that Adam was a real person has reason to also question whether the rest of Luke’s figures are actual people as well.

Paul’s Theology

If one denies that Adam was a real person, it is difficult to make sense of Paul’s analogy of the relationship between Christ and Adam. For one, as we’ve already mentioned, according to Paul, sin came into the world through one actual person.^c But more than that, in both 1 Corinthians 15:22, 45 and Romans 5:12–21, Paul makes a direct connection between Adam and Christ.

In 1 Corinthians 15, Paul says that Adam was the one person who brought sin into the

^a Gen. 5:5 ^b Gen. 4:1, 25; 5:3–4 ^c Rom. 5:12

world, and Jesus Christ is the one person who brings life where death previously reigned. It would be odd for Paul to compare something that he knew was an actual human person (Christ) to a literary figure.

In addition, in 1 Timothy 2:14, Paul says, “and Adam was not deceived, but the woman was deceived and became a transgressor.” It is incredibly difficult to argue that Paul did not view this deception as an actual historical occurrence. Again, in Acts 17:26, Paul says, “And he made from one man every nation of mankind to live on all the face of the earth, having determined allotted periods and the boundaries of their dwelling place,” Here, once more, Paul talks about actual nations descending from one human person.

Christ on Adam and Eve

Even if one passes over Luke and Paul, one must deal with Jesus’ teachings. In Mark 10:6 and Matthew 19:4, Jesus refers to Genesis, speaking of God’s order in creating Adam and Eve and relating that literal act to the institution of marriage. It is difficult to think that God himself (Jesus) could be wrong about his own creative event since He was there as the Creator when it happened.^a

In conclusion, when we look at Scripture itself, it’s clear there are numerous biblical reasons why Christians should affirm that Adam was both the *first* person and the *first person*—and there is no biblical evidence to support a denial of this truth. Rather, to deny this historical teaching of the church undermines the clear teaching of the Bible and fails to make sense of its storyline, as without a historical Adam and Eve, there is no fall and no need for redemption and no need for Jesus. The very basis of Christianity is effectively undermined. So, yes, Adam and Eve were real people who really sinned and because of them we really need the last Adam, Jesus Christ.

#7 What happened before Genesis?

Genesis records the beginning of Creation and human history. However, Genesis does not record what happened in eternity past as Moses chose not to tell us about such things as the creation of angels, fall of Satan in the unseen realm of Heaven, or what the eternal God was doing before Creation. Therefore, it would be a mistake to view Genesis 1 as the beginning of history as it is instead an explanation that creation comes from God and was made habitable for human life.

Before Creation and mankind, there was history independent of creation; before

^a John 1:1–2; Col. 1:15–17

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energy, time, space, or what we know of as the material world was spoken into existence, God existed and made angels and other divine beings before humanity was created. The rest of Scripture gives us some clues as to that part of history in eternity past which preceded human life.

In Genesis 1:26 we read, “Then God said, ‘Let us make man in our image, after our likeness...’” Here is a reference to the Trinity which is the one and only God who exists equally as the three persons of Father, Son, and Spirit. It is this personal Trinitarian God who existed in eternity past before the creation of the world or humanity in a perfect and harmonious relationship of love and communication. This is important to note because other religions that wrongly do not believe in the Trinity are prone to believe that God made mankind because He was lonely, lacking, and longing for relationship. The Bible teaches that God has no need and is a personal God complete with love, communication, and relationship in His very nature.

In the New Testament, we do get some glimpses into what preceded Creation in eternity past through the words of Jesus, Paul, and Peter.

In John 17:5 Jesus says, “And now, Father, glorify me in your own presence with the glory that I had with you before the world existed.”

In John 17:24 Jesus says, “Father, I desire that they also, whom you have given me, may be with me where I am, to see my glory that you have given me because you loved me before the foundation of the world.”

Ephesians 1:4 says, “even as he chose us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before him.”

1 Peter 1:20 says, “He was foreknown before the foundation of the world but was made manifest in the last times for the sake of you.”

2 Timothy 1:9b says, “...because of his own purpose and grace, which he gave us in Christ Jesus before the ages began”.

Titus 1:2 says, “in hope of eternal life, which God, who never lies, promised before the ages began”.

Before the creation of the world and mankind, in eternity past, God the Father, God the Son, and God the Spirit dwelt together in glory and love. Additionally, God the Father chose God the Son to execute the plan of salvation by coming to earth to die for the sins of His people and rescue us from Satan, sin, and death. This plan of salvation that was executed by the Son through the Spirit’s power was devised by God the Father before Creation and before we sinned. In this we see that though God is not responsible for human sin, He also was not taken by surprise when our first parents sinned, but rather foreknew it would occur and had

already devised a plan to remedy our sin by redeeming us through Jesus.

#8 Who wrote Genesis?

An academic debate has raged over the authorship of Genesis. Jesus taught that Moses was one of the authors of Scripture.^a Additionally, Jesus taught that Moses wrote the Law, which included the book of Genesis, in John 7:19a when He said, “Has not Moses given you the law?” In John 7:22, Jesus said that “Moses gave you circumcision (not that it is from Moses, but from the fathers), and you circumcise a man on the Sabbath.” Packed into this verse we discover that circumcision, as was instituted in Genesis 17:12 by the patriarch Abraham, was written by Moses as the next verse of John 7:23 calls Genesis the “Law of Moses”. Therefore, Moses is the author of the first book of the law, Genesis. Lastly, John 1:17 echoes this saying “For the Law was given through Moses...”

Throughout the first five books of the Old Testament (also called the Pentateuch, which means book in five parts), there are, admittedly, very few sections that could not have originally been penned by Moses for two reasons. First, the Pentateuch occasionally mentions other books that contained true information which may have been included in the inerrant books of the Bible even though those books did not make the Bible.^b Second, some sections of the Pentateuch simply could not have been penned by Moses, such as the account of his own death and burial in Deuteronomy 34, which was likely added by Joshua, who was also a Spirit-inspired author of Scripture.

#9 How was Moses able to write such a masterpiece?

Genesis is such a rich literary masterpiece that some have speculated that it could not have been penned by a “primitive” man such as Moses or by any single author. C.S. Lewis calls this sort of thinking chronological snobbery where we think that thousands of years ago, people were really dumb whereas today, we are incredibly advanced and smart. If you’ve met some folks who are alive today, you will quickly realize that our day is like every day with a combination of brilliant and foolish people.

There are at least two reasons to believe that one man, Moses, could and did in fact write Genesis.

First, Acts 7:22 says, “And Moses was instructed in all the wisdom of the Egyptians, and he was mighty in his words and deeds.” Therefore, Moses was not only well-educated but

^a Mark 7:10 ^b e.g. Genesis 5:1; Exodus 24:7; Numbers 21:14; Joshua 10:13

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also a brilliant and courageous man, the kind of man capable of writing Genesis.

Second, 2 Peter 1:20-21 says, “knowing this first of all, that no prophecy of Scripture comes from someone’s own interpretation. For no prophecy was ever produced by the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit.” And, in Deuteronomy 34:9, we also read that Moses was filled with the Holy Spirit who then passed from Moses to Joshua to help him continue writing Scripture and leading God’s people. Therefore, since Moses the prophet was filled with the Spirit of God, he was able to know things (e.g. the creation of the earth) that can only be discovered by divine revelation and able to record them faithfully by God’s power. The same is true of every author of Scripture.

#10 Who originally received Genesis?

Genesis was originally written some 1400 years before the birth of Jesus Christ. The primary intended audience was the people of God who had been enslaved for 400 years in Egypt, passed through the Red Sea, received the 10 Commandments at the Sinai Covenant, and spent 40 years wandering in the wilderness as consequence for their sin. This nation of perhaps a few million people included worshippers of God who were both Jewish and people from other nations that also worshipped their God.^a

Genesis, however, was also intended to be read by ensuing generations of people as the book itself infers. For example, throughout the book of Genesis, Moses takes the time to explain to future readers, such as us, portions of the story that we may not fully understand because we do not share some of the experiences of his original audience. As one example, although the original recipients knew what the Jordan Valley was like, Genesis 13:10 tells us about the lush greenery to inform those who would read the book but live far away, like us. Second, we are told both the location of the tomb of Rachel, as well as its continued existence into the future, even though the original recipients of Genesis would have known this fact well.^b These kinds of details were not needed for the original reader but are helpful for those who read it many years later.

#11 What did Jesus teach about the events in Genesis?

Opponents of the accuracy of Genesis concentrate their criticism on such events as Creation, the Flood, and destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah. However, the greatest teacher who has ever lived, Jesus Christ, consistently referred to the Genesis account of people and

^a Exodus 12:38 ^b Genesis 35:20

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events as historically accurate. Some examples are listed below:

- Jesus taught that the Creation account of Genesis 1-2 was accurate in Luke 11:50
- Jesus taught that the first marriage account of Adam and Eve recorded in Genesis 2:24 was accurate in Matthew 19:4-5 and Mark 10:6-8
- Jesus taught that the Genesis 4 account of Cain's murder of Abel was accurate in Matthew 23:35 and Luke 11:51
- Jesus taught that the flood recorded in Genesis 6-9 was indeed accurate in Matthew 24:37-39 and Luke 17:26-27
- Jesus taught that Abraham, who looms large throughout Genesis beginning in 11:26, did actually exist in John 8:56
- Jesus taught that circumcision instituted by Abraham and the patriarchs in Genesis 17:12 was factual in John 7:22-23
- Jesus taught that the destruction of the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah recorded in Genesis 19 did in fact occur in Matthew 10:15, 11:23-24 and Luke 10:12
- Jesus taught that Lot, who is spoken of in Genesis 11:27 through Genesis 14 and again in Genesis 19, did in fact exist in Luke 17:28-32
- Jesus taught that Abraham's sons Isaac and Jacob, the patriarchs who appear in Genesis 21 and continue to loom throughout Genesis, did in fact exist in Matthew 8:11 and Luke 13:28

In summary, it is impossible for someone to simultaneously claim to be a Christian and disbelieve the book of Genesis because to do so, they would need to also believe that Jesus was either a liar or at best an ill-informed imperfect man who simply made honest mistakes. Either way, Jesus is imperfect, erroneous, and confirms Genesis as fact.

#12 How are Moses and Jesus connected?

Even though they are separated by 1400 years, Moses and Jesus are connected in numerous ways. We will explore this in more detail later in this book but, for starters, there are two curious ways that Moses and Jesus are connected.

One, theologically, Moses was the author of the Law, also known as the Pentateuch. Jesus said He came to fulfill the Law of Moses.^a Everything that the Holy Spirit, through Moses, lifted up as the standard for holiness, Jesus lived up to and alone fulfilled perfectly.

Two, relationally, while on earth, Jesus brought Moses down from Heaven.^b In this wondrous moment Jesus was transfigured upon a mountain as Moses had been upon Mount

^a Matthew 5:17 ^b Matthew 17:1-8; Mark 9:1-8

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Sinai while receiving the 10 Commandments.^a These two men, the God-man and a man of God, were reunited on the earth, are now reunited in Heaven, and will be reunited forever in the Kingdom. In our next chapter, you will learn other ways to get the most out of reading and studying Genesis.

Before we begin the study guide on Genesis 1-14, I would urge you to make a daily intake a Genesis part of your life during this study. The book of Genesis can be read in roughly 3.5 hours. If you took roughly 30 minutes a day to read Genesis, you could read it once every week. If you took roughly 15 minutes a day to read Genesis, you could read it twice a month. Another option is to go to an online resource such as the YouVersion Bible app and have Genesis read to you as you commute, do chores, work out, etc.

^a Exodus 34:29-35

CHAPTER 2

Personal and Group Study Guide for Genesis 1-14

Does the Bible Teach Creation or Evolution?

Creation Part I (Days 1-5)

Scripture to Read: Genesis 1:1-25

Scripture for Memorization and Meditation:

Genesis 1:1 – “In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.”

Commentary:

Genesis opens by revealing that everyone and everything begins with God. Everyone and everything are made by God, ruled by God, and responsible to God. Furthermore, although the Bible is for us, as the opening line shows, it is mainly about God, as He is both the author and subject of history and Scripture. Consequently, everything else in human history and Scripture is dependent upon God and only good when functioning according to His intentions for it from creation.

The opening line of Scripture clearly reveals that creation comes from God. Genesis 1-2 further reveal God as a prophet who both made creation and prepared it for us solely by the power of His word. This is indicated by the repeated phrases, “And God said” and “Let there be” or “Let the . . .” When God spoke, creation obeyed His command, as is repeatedly demonstrated by the phrase “And it was so.” After each act of creating, God pronounced the perfectly sinless nature of His creation with the phrase “And God saw that it was good”.

Therefore, original creation came not from preexisting matter but rather out of nothing, by God’s word.

The Bible teaches that God made creation *ex nihilo* (Latin for “out of nothing”). This doctrine is important because it negates the possibility of naturalistic evolution and an eternal universe. While God did not make creation from any pre-existing matter or the

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proverbial hunk of mud, creation did come into existence and was prepared for human inhabitation by the powerful word of God.

It is curious that God did not create from nothing on each of the six days of creation. Still, God did speak as both a prophet and poet on each day. Furthermore, there is a set pattern to God's words in Genesis 1. It is as follows:

1. Announcement: "And God said."
2. Commandment: "Let there be."
3. Separation: God separated the day and night, water and land, animals and plants.
4. Report: "And it was so."
5. Evaluation: "And God saw that it was good."

In Genesis 1:1, the word used for "created" is the Hebrew word *bara*, which means "creation from nothing". The other Hebrew word used in a creative sense in Genesis is *asah*, translated "make" or "made". This very common word is used in the creative sense^a which means "to fashion or shape," or "to make something suitable," such as making loincloths out of fig leaves^b or making the ark.^c *Bara* emphasizes the initiation of an object, whereas *asah* emphasizes the shaping of an object. Along with statements where God does initial creation like the heavens and the earth^d, the only other things *bara'd* are the living creatures^e and human beings.^f When people create, we are doing *asah*, not *bara*. We can take things that God has given us such as seed and land to plant crops and harvest food, but in so doing we are not creating food from nothing but rather creating it from the gifts given to us by God in creation.

In the creation account, we see that God created (*bara*) "the heavens and the earth". This phrase could be more literally translated "the skies and the land," since the heavens are not the place where God lives, but the place where stars move^g and birds fly.^h The Hebrew word *eretz*, usually translated "earth," in Genesis 1 does not mean the planet but the land under the waterⁱ, separated from water^k, where vegetation grows^m and animals roam.ⁿ Elsewhere in Scripture it usually means the Promised Land. The phrase "skies and land" is a Hebraic way of saying "everything"^o from the skies above to the earth below, like saying from top to bottom or head to toe, including space-time, mass-energy, and the laws that govern them. In other places in Scripture, the phrase includes the sun and moon, which could in turn mean that the sun and moon were created as a part of this first creation.^p

^a Gen. 1:7, 16, 25, 26, 31; 2:2, 3, 4, 18; Ps. 86:9; 95:5; 96:5 ^b Gen. 3:7 ^c Gen. 8:6 ^d Gen. 1:1; 2:3, 4

^e Gen. 1:21 ^f Gen. 1:27; 5:1, 2 ^g Gen. 1:14 ^h Gen. 1:21 ⁱ Gen. 1:2 ^k Gen. 1:10 ^m Gen. 1:11-12 ⁿ Gen. 1:20-24

^o Isa. 44:24; 65:17; Jer. 10:10-16; Eph. 3:9; Col. 1:16-17; Rev. 21:1 ^p Isa. 13:10; Joel 3:15-16

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The land or earth is “without form and void”. Many read this as primordial space, but it is *eretz*, land or earth in Gen. 1:2 before God prepared them for humans. Ancient Greek cosmology said that what originally existed was essentially a formless hunk of mud, which God then formed from chaos into cosmos. This ideology has had great sway in many Christian interpretations of Genesis 1:2.

However, the same language for “without form (*tohu*) and void (*bohu*)” used in Genesis 1:2 is used elsewhere in Scripture in reference to uninhabited land. Examples include Deuteronomy 32:10, which speaks of “a desert land, and in the howling waste (*tohu*) of the wilderness.” Isaiah 45:18 says that God “formed the earth and made it (He established it; He did not create [*bara*] it empty [*tohu*], He formed it to be inhabited!).” Perhaps the closest parallel is Jeremiah 4:23 where God prophesied the future state of Judah, a nation doomed to exile by its sin: “I looked on the earth, and behold, it was without form and void; and to the heavens, and they had no light.” Here, “without form and void” does not mean chaos, but it means empty of humans because it was not yet ready for human life; “no light” may not mean there is no sun but that the land is without the life of God’s blessing.

Similarly, in Genesis 1:2 “without form and void” is the condition of the land before God made it good, filling it with light and life. The best understanding is not that God created primordial chaos and formed earth out of it, but that God created everything out of nothing and that the land existed for some unstated period of time in a desert-like, empty state suitable for plants and animals but not human flourishing. The dawn of God’s light signals the arrival of his blessing. Then, God took six literal days to prepare the land for human habitation, as recorded in Genesis 1–2. This work is forming (*asah*) already-existing material, not creating (*bara*) from nothing. Historically, this view goes all the way back to Augustine.

The creation of heavens and earth in the first verse is a concrete, historical, scientific fact. But the text simply does not tell us when it happened, only that it was sometime before the preparation of the land for humans to dwell with God. “In the beginning” means that there was an inauguration, but not when that moment was. Therefore, Genesis 1:1 leaves open both the possibilities of a young and an old earth.

The creation account goes to great lengths to make it clear that the God who created (*bara*) everything according to the first verse is the same God who prepared (*asah*) the land for humans to dwell with him in the remainder of Genesis 1 and 2. The God of creation is also the God of covenant relation.

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Dig deeper

- Look up Psalm 33:6, 9, 148:5; Jeremiah 10:16; John 1:1-3; Colossians 1:15-17; Hebrews 1:10-12, 11:3; and 2 Pet. 3:7 to learn more about God as Creator.

Talk it out. Walk it out.

- What do you learn about God's attributes from the Scriptures that tell of God as Creator (e.g. all powerful, all knowing, independent, good, beautiful, etc.)?
- If God is so committed to an orderly environment for human flourishing, how are you doing at organizing your home, budget, schedule, health, etc.? What is currently needing your time and energy to get it orderly and beautiful?
- Read Psalm 19:1 and spend time sharing the places you have been in Creation that are most awe-inspiring and showed you something of God's glory.

NOTES

Are People Created by God or Evolved by Nature? Creation Part 2 (Day 6)

Scripture to Read: Genesis 1:26-2:4a

Scripture for Memorization and Meditation:

Genesis 1:27 – “So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them.”

Commentary:

When parents know they have a child coming into the world, their focus becomes getting the home environment set up just right. Since the Bible says that God loves us like a mother, leads us like a father, and considers us His children, it is not surprising to see the same thing happening in Genesis 1.

In Genesis 1:1, we discovered that God made everything from nothing. In Genesis 1:2, we are then told that creation was not yet ready for human habitation. In Genesis 1:3-25, we see God’s careful and loving preparation of our planet for human life in five literal days which explains the seven-day week when the Sabbath is included.^a

Then, in Genesis 1:26-2:3, the sixth day of creation occurs as God makes the first man and woman, our first parents Adam and Eve. In Genesis 1:26 we read, “Then God said, “Let us make man in our image, in our likeness...””. This plural language is a reference to the Trinity (one God in three persons – Father, Son, and Spirit). We then see that humanity is made in the binary categories of male and female, both created distinct, though equal, by virtue of the fact that they both bear God’s image and likeness, which are synonymous terms.

This image of God that mankind bears places human life lower than God in creation, but higher than animals who do not bear the image of God. Psalm 8:5-8 comments on this section of Genesis saying, “Yet you have made him a little lower than the heavenly beings and crowned him with glory and honor. You have given him dominion over the works of your hands; you have put all things under his feet, all sheep and oxen, and also the beasts of the field, the birds of the heavens, and the fish of the sea, whatever passes along the paths of the seas.”

Genesis 1:27 summarizes the creation of the man and woman with the first poetry in the Bible to remind us that God is Creator and creative. In Genesis 1:28-30, God then gave to the man and woman the cultural mandate to fill the earth with offspring that build a God-glorifying culture and rule over the earth as God’s Kingdom representatives. God then speaks

^a Exodus 20:11

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in Genesis 1:31 declaring the creation of the man and woman as “very good” as opposed to the other days of His work which God simply called “good”.

From beginning to end, the Bible consistently agrees with the Genesis account that human life comes from our living and personal Creator God and not an impersonal evolutionary process:

- Genesis 9:6 – “Whoever sheds the blood of man, by man shall his blood be shed, for God made man in his own image.”
- Isaiah 43:7 – “Everyone who is called by my name, whom I created for my glory, whom I formed and made.”
- Isaiah 45:12 – “I made the earth and created man on it; it was my hands that stretched out the heavens, and I commanded all their host.”
- Psalm 100:3 – Know that the Lord, he is God! It is he who made us, and we are his; we are his people, and the sheep of his pasture.
- Ephesians 2:10 – ...we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus...
- Acts 17:26 – ...he made from one man every nation of mankind to live on all the face of the earth...

In Genesis 2:1-4a, God then rested on the seventh day from His six days of work to enjoy His handiwork. This pattern of six days of work and one day of worshipful rest becomes the pattern for the seven-day week and the Sabbath day as one of the 10 Commandments in Exodus 20:8-11, “Remember the Sabbath day by keeping it holy. Six days you shall labor and do all your work, but the seventh day is a sabbath to the Lord your God. On it you shall not do any work, neither you, nor your son or daughter, nor your male or female servant, nor your animals, nor any foreigner residing in your towns. For in six days the Lord made the heavens and the earth, the sea, and all that is in them, but he rested on the seventh day. Therefore the Lord blessed the Sabbath day and made it holy.”

Dig deeper

- How do John 14:9, 2 Corinthians 4:4, and Colossians 1:15 help us understand Jesus Christ as our model for living a life that images God’s?
- What can we learn about being God’s image bearers from Romans 8:29, Colossians 3:9-10, and 2 Corinthians 3:18?
- How do Mark 2:27, Romans 14:5-6, and Colossians 2:16-17 help us understand the Sabbath today?

Talk it out. Walk it out.

- What do these verses in Genesis teach about the value of animal life compared to

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human life?

- What do these verses reveal about God's intention for children to result from marital intimacy?
- What is the cultural mandate and what does it say about Christian involvement in making culture such as business, politics, art, entertainment, sports, etc.? How are you involved in the cultural mandate (e.g. your work, ministry, parenting, etc.)?
- How are you doing at pursuing healthy lifestyle choices to preserve and protect the life God intends for you?
- What does your Sabbath day look like and how do you rest and recover on that day?

NOTES

Were Adam and Eve the First Human Beings? Adam and Eve

Scripture to Read: Genesis 2:4b-25

Scripture for Memorization and Meditation:

Genesis 2:24 – “Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife, and they shall become one flesh.”

Commentary:

When we are kids in school, we are asked to put together our family tree as an assignment to understand who we come from. As we get older, many people choose to go further in their research and learn as much as they can about their ancestors. Something in us wants to know who and where we come from, and all the variables that make us who we are. If we were able to trace our ancestry back to the very beginning, we would all find ourselves as part of the same human family with Adam and Eve as our first mother and father.

Genesis 2:4b-25 further elaborate upon Genesis 1:26-2:4a by giving greater details about the creation of Adam and Eve. There are three vital concepts that we learn from this section of Scripture that have significant implications for issues that rage in our day around, sex (our God-given male or female biological status), gender (male and female cultural traits culture such as dress and conduct), sexuality (allowed only in heterosexual marriage by God), and marriage (only for one man and one woman according to God).

First, we learn that God’s governance has singular headship and plural leadership. The man was made before the woman and appointed as the head, a fact that Paul builds the doctrine of male senior governance in the church upon in 1 Timothy 2:11-13 and serves as the beginning of male headship in the family.^a Both the husband and wife serve as plural leaders as they are supposed to live as “one” and, in the family, children are repeatedly exhorted to honor and obey both their mother and father, who are both family leaders.

Second, the man and woman were handmade in a personal way by God unlike anything else in creation. This fact stands in stark contrast to atheistic evolution which says there was no intentional or personal Creator of human life.

Third, God breathed life into the man, which made him a living person. Many theologians see this as referencing the human soul made for eternal relationship with our

^a 1 Corinthians 11:3; Ephesians 5:23

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Spirit God. This also explains why we have personhood as it was a gift from the personal God and not the work of impersonal matter working through implausible evolutionary chance.

In addition to the making of the man and the woman, several additional facts are given about the environment God had spent five days preparing. First, a beautiful garden cultivated by God was given as a home to our first parents and the prototype for the man and his descendants to cultivate the rest of creation to resemble through their work. Second, in the garden was the tree of life which sustained Adam and Eve's existence and may indicate that mankind was not made eternal but rather kept alive as long as they obeyed God and had access to this tree which appears again at the end of Revelation in Heaven. Third, also in the garden was the tree of the knowledge of good and evil that was in the middle of the garden and forbidden for consumption by God under penalty of death and used by God to test their faith in Him.

In addition to the making of the man and woman, these verses also inform us of the first marriage between the man Adam and the woman Eve. And since this is the first and only marital and sexual relationship before sin entered the world, it is perfect and therefore the prototypical pattern for us to follow. This is what normal gender, sex, and marriage look like before sin enters the world and makes everything abnormal or contrary to God's divine design.

First, though all of creation was declared to be good and very good in Genesis 1, the only thing which is declared to be not good is Adam's state as an unmarried single man. Simply, Adam could not reflect the image of God that he was created in by himself but needed a wife as his equal to represent the Trinitarian nature of God upon the earth. This fact is inferred in the text as the man and woman were declared to be "one" which is the Hebrew word "echad" that is used in Deuteronomy 6:4 to also speak of the one God in three persons. It is also echoed in 1 Corinthians 11:7-9, which states that woman was made for man in a way that man was not made for woman. Second, Eve was made to be Adam's helper, which is not a denigration of Eve's equality, since God is also called our helper.^a Third, the woman was made from the side of the man where she was made to dwell as his equal, lover, and friend and in lovemaking, the two become one again. Fourth, it was God who brought the woman to the man and gave her away as her father and officiated their wedding ceremony as their pastor. Fifth, it was God who created marriage as a union between one man and one woman which negates homosexuality, bisexuality, bestiality, polygamy, and all

^a Psalm 10:14, 118:6-7; Hebrews 13:6

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other sexual sins outside of heterosexual marriage. Sixth, it was God who established the three-fold process by which a man is to take a wife that is repeated by both Jesus and Paul as leaving home, then getting married, and lastly enjoying sexual intimacy.^a Seventh, it was God who created sexuality and intended for it to be good, pure, and without shame within the marriage covenant.

Upon seeing his bride, Adam burst into poetic song to Eve. Since these are the only recorded words we have of any human being before sin entered the world some have speculated that perhaps we were made to sing throughout life, like a musical, but because of sin have descended from poetry to prose. In any event, Adam's response to God's beautiful handiwork of making his bride was to burst out in poetic praise.

Dig Deeper

- For more information on this subject, review Chapter 1 question #6 "Were Adam and Eve Real People or Not?"
- Look at other Scriptures that indicate Adam was a real person and the first person God created (Genesis 5:1-5; 1 Chronicles 1:1-27; Hosea 6:7; Luke 3:23-38; Romans 5:12-21; 1 Corinthians 5:22; 1 Corinthians 15:45; 1 Timothy 2:13-14).

Talk it out. Walk it Out.

- What does God's creation of human life reveal about His loving care for us?
- According to these verses (and others) what are the duties of a husband?
- According to these verses (and others) what are the duties of a wife?
- What did you learn about marriage from these verses that encouraged and/or troubled you most? Why?

NOTES

^a cf. Matthew 19:5; Mark 10:7-8; Ephesians 5:31

Why is the World So Broken? The Fall

Scripture to Read: Genesis 3:1-24

Scripture for Memorization and Meditation:

Genesis 3:15 – “I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and her offspring; he shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise his heel.”

Commentary:

One thing that every human being innately feels and knows is that something has gone terribly wrong, and human life on the planet could be much better. Yet, no matter how many wars we wage, politicians we vote for, taxes we raise, money we spend, medications we prescribe, and tears we shed, life on our planet seems to get only more painful, perilous, and precarious.

Why? What went wrong? Only in knowing what went wrong can we begin to discover how it might be made right again.

Genesis 3 is one of the most important in all of Scripture as it explains the source of and solution for sin and death. The scene is the beautiful and perfect garden made by God for our first parents to live in together without sin and its many effects.

The entrance of the Serpent marks the beginning of chaos in creation. The Serpent is Satan.^a Satan began by tempting Eve to mistrust God’s Word by changing its meaning, just as He did when likewise later tempting Jesus.^b Rather than rebuking Satan, Eve entertained his lies^c and was subsequently deceived by his crafty arguments.^d Satan became so bold as to accuse God of being a liar and tempting the pride of Adam and Eve by declaring that if they disobeyed God, they could, in effect, become His peer and gods themselves. Eve believed Satan over God and chose pride over humility by partaking of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil in sin against God.

Tragically, we further read that, while all of this occurred, Adam stood by silently, failing to lead his family in godliness. For some, our sin is commission, and we do the wrong thing. For others, our sin is omission, and we do nothing.

Adam, the passive silent husband, then joined his wife in sin, which brought shame, distrust, and separation between Adam and Eve and between our first parents and God. Adam was the representative and father of all mankind and, when he sinned and fell out of

^a Revelation 12:9, 20:2 ^b Matthew 4:1-11 ^c John 8:42-47 ^d 2 Corinthians 11:3; 1 Timothy 2:14

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favor with God, so did every person who would ever live (Romans 5:12, 1 Corinthians 15:21-22). Consequently, every person since Adam and Eve, other than Jesus, is a sinner, both by nature and choice.^a

God then came looking for the man, holding him responsible for the sinful condition of his family as its head. Rather than repenting of his sin, Adam essentially argued with God by blaming Eve for his sin and blaming God for making Eve. Eve, too, failed to repent of her sin and blamed the Serpent for deceiving her.

God then cursed the parties involved as penalty for their sin. The serpent was cursed for what he had done and told he would be defeated one day by the “seed” of the woman, who is Jesus, according to Galatians 3:16. Theologians have long called the promise of Jesus in Genesis 3:15 at the *protoevangelion* (first gospel), as God preaches the gospel for the first time, whereas His angel will the last time.^b

The woman was given increased pain in childbirth and God notes that she would struggle with the tendency to rule over her husband rather than help him grow as a loving and godly head as God intended (note that the language here for Eve’s desire to rule over Adam sinfully is the same as sin’s desire to rule over Cain in Genesis 4:7). The man’s work became toil for him because God cursed the ground. This means that, as men seek to work their jobs and pay their bills, they will continually be as frustrated with that which is supposed to be under their dominion as God is with the rebellious man who is likewise supposed to be under His dominion. Adam was then given the privilege of naming his wife as he did the animals, calling her Eve which means “life-giver.”

God then dealt graciously and kindly with the man and woman, though they had sinned. God lovingly clothed Adam and Eve to protect them. God also banished the couple from the tree of life, or they would have lived forever in sin with no hope of redemption to instead live together as fallen and lost sinners.

The storyline of the Bible is wedding then war. Satan did not show up until a man and woman were married with a ministry call on their lives. The enemy’s deceptive subversion of their trust relationship with God was also an attack on marriage, separating the husband and wife so he could then wreck their family and legacy. Spiritual warfare on earth starts by attacking the relationship of a married couple.

Today, though we still bear the image of God, it is marred and twisted by our pride and sin, which accounts for the tragedies and evils in the world that proceed from us. Our only hope is redemption through Jesus, who was God that became a man to live without sin in our

^a Psalm 51:5, 58:3; Isaiah 53:6, 64:6; Romans 3:23; 1 John 1:18 ^b Revelation 14:6

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place, die in our place, and rise as the pattern for our future. One day, the seed of rebellion in us from Adam will be forever removed as we re-enter the second Eden in the new creation that will exceed that place in which Adam and Eve enjoyed perfect communion with God.

Dig Deeper

- Read Ezekiel 28:12-19 and Isaiah 14:12-19 to gain further insight on the origins and fall of Satan.
- Read 1 John 2:16 to discover the three ways that Satan tempts us to sin, which are also the same ways he tempted Adam and Eve.
- Read Romans 5:12-21 to note the effects of Adam's sin.
- Because of Adam's sin in Genesis 3, the Bible teaches that everyone who descends from him is a sinner both by nature and choice (e.g. Psalm 51:5, 58:3; Isaiah 53:6, 64:6; Romans 3:23; 1 John 1:18). What does this mean and why does it matter that we understand the origins and remedy for sin from Genesis 3?
- Read Colossians 2:13-15 and Revelation 19:11-21 and 20:7-10 to see how Jesus defeated Satan on the cross and will destroy him in the end.

Talk it Out. Walk it Out.

- Women, how does Eve's sinful choice continue to affect you today? Men, how does Adam's sinful choice continue to affect you today?
- Why does spiritual warfare begin its attack on a married couple with a calling from God on their life?
- What things could Adam and Eve have done instead of what they chose to do? What can you learn from their negative example?

NOTES

Why are Families So Painful? Cain and Abel

Scripture to Read: Genesis 4:1-26

Scripture for Memorization and Meditation:

Genesis 4:26b – “At that time people began to call on the name of the LORD.”

Commentary:

The Bible is the most honest book ever written, and only a few pages in, it gives us the honest account of how sin makes family relationships so painful. Not long after God said that everything was “very good” when He was done creating it, everything went very bad starting with the first marriage and first siblings. In varying degrees, we have all felt this particular pain of the fall firsthand. Often, it is our closest family members who cause our deepest pain and problems.

This episode of Genesis shows how quickly and tragically the sin of Adam and Eve spread to their sons. Importantly, this text also shows us that the first children in the history of the world were born after the fall which means that every human being was thereafter conceived with a sin nature without exception.

The account opens with Eve likely boasting that, though she brought sin and death into the world, she was also going to fix it through birthing her son Cain. She wrongly thought this would fulfill the promise of redemption through a son from Genesis 3:15 that was intended for Jesus to fulfill many years later. The brothers Cain and Abel worked as a farmer and herdsmen, which are both honorable trades.

As acts of worship, the brothers both brought offerings to the Lord, but the Lord rejected Cain's offering and received Abel's. This greatly angered Cain and the Lord warned Cain to control his anger lest it consume him and lead him into sin.

Bible commentators have been perplexed to understand why God rejected Cain's offering. Some have speculated that Abel's gift was an animal fit for sacrifice, while Cain's gift was not and thereby an unfit gift, which explains why it was rejected by God. The Genesis text does not say there was anything wrong with either gift for four reasons. First, they brought “offerings” and not sacrifices as the text clearly states. Therefore, Cain's offering was appropriate. Second, both men brought their offerings to God, which is appropriate. Third, the men both brought offerings in keeping with their employment, which is also appropriate. Fourth, the men both brought “firstfruits”, which means it was the first and best of their

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possession as is common throughout the rest of Scripture.^a

The problem with Cain's offering was not what he brought to worship in his hands, but rather what he brought to worship in his heart, namely sin. Cain was jealous of his brother^b and sought to worship God apart from faith.^c This section of Genesis reveals to us that true worship must proceed from the heart of someone whose faith is in God, otherwise their actions are an offense to God. In the same way, a loving father is not pleased with an unrepentant and stubbornly unfaithful and unloving, hard-hearted child that seeks to manipulate him with a token gift.

Cain yielded to his anger, which God had warned him to control, and murdered his own brother, Abel. And, like his father Adam, when confronted by God, he fails to repent and instead seeks to cover his sin. God, however, named Cain's sin as He had his father Adam's and Cain responded to God's rebuke in Genesis 4:13. And how one interprets this verse determines how the rest of the chapter is to be understood.

In Genesis 4:13, one option is that Cain is whining to God about the punishment for murdering his brother which God relented to and spared his life. The second option is that Cain was lamenting the burden of his sin or repenting of his sin by declaring it was more than he could bear to live with. In light of the way that God and people respond to Cain throughout the remainder of Genesis 4, the context of 4:13 makes it most likely that Cain indeed repented of his sin for three reasons, though admittedly the text is not clear on this matter. One, God gives Cain grace by sparing his life and sending him to live in a city of refuge.^d This seems unlikely if Cain not only murdered his brother but then also lied to God about it and whined about being punished without having repented. Two, God placed a mark on Cain to notify others not to harm him. And, though we have no idea what this mark may have been, it in effect branded Cain as God's possession to be spared harm. Again, this kind of loving provision seems unjust unless Cain indeed repented. Three, the chapter concludes by declaring that the people in that day began calling on the name of the Lord, which seems to indicate that they were simply following Cain's example as he is the focus of that chapter.

In summary, it seems possible that Cain began as a sinfully religious man who sought to worship God with a proud heart and murdered his own brother who worshiped God with a pure heart. But, when confronted by God face-to-face, Cain repented of his sin crying out to God that he could not bear to live under the pain of what he had done. God therefore forgave him, spared his life, and protected him for the rest of his days in love. God also lovingly gave

^a Ex 23:15-19; Nu. 18:12-13; Nu. 28:26; Dt. 26:1-11 ^b 1 John 3:12 ^c Hebrews 11:4 ^d Deuteronomy 19:1-14

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Cain's mother Eve another son, Seth, for Cain to have in place of Abel. In addition, men began calling on the God of Cain because his story of God's lovingly gracious forgiveness and blessing to even the worst of sinners compelled them to seek the Lord. In this way, Cain may be the Old Testament equivalent of the Apostle Paul who, like Cain, worshiped God with a proud heart and murdered his Jewish brothers who worshiped God with a pure heart, but was brought to repentance through a face-to-face encounter with Jesus and went on to tell his story of redemption as a great evangelist compelling other men to also call on the name of the Lord in forgiveness of sin, as he had.

Dig Deeper

- To gain further insight on Cain and Abel, it will be helpful to look up Jude 11, Hebrews 11:4, and 1 John 3:12.
- How is Abel a picture of how we have treated Jesus Christ according to Hebrews 12:24?
- Do you think it is most likely in Genesis 4:13 that Cain lamented the punishment for his sin or lamented the pain he had brought upon himself by his sin?
- How does Jesus expand murder of our hands to murdering spiritual brothers and sisters in our hearts (Matthew 5:21-26)?

Talk it Out. Walk it Out.

- What other Scriptures about the two topics of worship and a pure heart help to shed light on why Cain's offering was rejected by God?
- Why are our motives as equally important to God as our actions?
- How are you doing at giving your firstfruits to the Lord with a pure heart of worship?
- What family relationships does this chapter remind you of the most?

NOTES

Why Did God Flood the Earth but Save Noah? Noah's Ark

Scripture to Read: Genesis 5:1 – 7:1

Scripture for Memorization and Meditation:

Genesis 6:8-9 – “But Noah found favor [grace] in the eyes of the Lord. These are the generations of Noah. Noah was a righteous man, blameless in his generation. Noah walked with God.”

Commentary:

God calling Noah to build the Ark begins with the lengthy genealogy of Adam’s descendants until the birth of Noah. The time span covered in this genealogy is at least 1600 years and may be even longer, if there are gaps in this genealogy with some generations missing, as there are in other biblical genealogies.^a Both traditional Judaism and Christianity, beginning in the seventeenth century with Archbishop James Ussher, have sought to total the lifespan of each person listed in this genealogy and work backward to creation, which is then dated at 4004 B.C., which would make the earth roughly 6,000 years old. However, this means of seeking to date the earth are uncertain.

The primary theological point of the genealogy is to simply show that every generation and person who descended from Adam were sinners who lived and died without exception in rather monotonous and unspectacular fashion. The genealogy opens with the first man, Adam, who was made and blessed by God, who named the race “man” as Adam was made first as the head of the human race. Subsequently, this genealogy, as well as the others in the Bible, are all patriarchal, meaning they trace the family line through the men, as they are the head of their family in each generation.

The genealogy does include at least two curious features. One, the man Methuselah lived 969 years, which is apparently longer than anyone else ever has. Two, in Genesis 5:22-24, we are told that Enoch “walked with God” which means that he had a lifestyle of worshipful obedience to God and was history’s first prophet who predicted the coming flood.^b Enoch is also the only man in the genealogy that did not die but was spared death (like Elijah who is the only other man in the Bible that did not die). In Enoch, Moses is showing us that the only way to avoid death and experience eternal life is to “walk with God.” The genealogy ends in 5:32 for a lengthy excursus on Noah, and then picks up again in 9:28 with the genealogy of Noah’s death and the birth of his sons.

^a e.g. compare Genesis 11:31 and Luke 3:36 ^b see also Hebrews 11:5-6; Jude 14-16

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Genesis 6 raises four of the most difficult questions in all of Genesis. They are the marriage of the sons of God and daughters of men, the meaning of 120 years, the Nephilim, and why God chose Noah to build the Ark. I will seek to answer each of them briefly and also encourage you to study them for yourself.

The first question is what does Genesis 6:1-2 mean by saying that the sons of God married the daughters of men? Later in Genesis, Noah gets drunk and, from reading some of the answers to this question provided by Bible commentators, one is given the distinct impression that they have been joining him. Perhaps one of the most common and peculiar interpretations is that the sons of God were angels who came down to marry and have sex with earthly women. But this interpretation fails for at least three reasons. One, the forthcoming judgment for sin in the flood was on people and not angels. Two, Jesus clearly taught that angels simply do not marry.^a Three, Jesus taught that in the days of Noah, which Genesis 6 describes, people were simply getting married, which means that people were simply marrying one another and that is all is meant by Genesis 6.^b To answer this question, we need go no further than the teachings of Moses and Jesus. In Genesis 5, we are given the genealogy of the sons of God as that is the line of the covenant people, and they simply married the daughters of men who were the unbelieving families in that day. Therefore, among the great sins in the days of Noah which grieved God was the prevalent intermarriage between God's men (the sons of God) who took unbelieving wives (the daughters of men).

Genesis 6:3 then raises the second question of this section by saying that God would not allow human sin to continue and therefore He would limit their days to 120 years. Two possible explanations exist for the meaning of this verse. One, God promised to no longer allow people to live as long as they had previously (as listed in Genesis 5) and instead determined that no human being would live beyond the age of 120. Curiously, the first man to die at this age was Moses and today even the longest living people die around this age. Two, 1 Peter 3:20 says, "...because they formerly did not obey, when God's patience waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was being prepared, in which a few, that is, eight persons, were brought safely through water." And, if Peter is referring to the 120 years, then God promised His judgment through the flood and then waited patiently for 120 years to provide people an opportunity to repent of their sin, which apparently no one did, and give Noah time to prepare for the flood and build the Ark. If this interpretation is correct, and I personally believe that it may be but cannot be certain, then Noah also preached during this 120-year period^d though people were so wicked that they declined God's invitation to forgiveness.

In Genesis 6:4, the third question from this section arises, namely "Who were the

^a Matthew 22:30; Mark 12:45 ^b Matthew 24:37-39 ^c Deuteronomy 34:7 ^d 1 Peter 2:5

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Nephilim?” In Numbers 13:33, the word “Nephilim” is again used to refer to, apparently, a apparently giant race of people which have caused many to speculate that the Nephilim mentioned in Genesis 6:4 somehow survived the flood. There are four possible answers regarding who the Nephilim were. We will consider them in order from the most supernatural to the most natural possibilities. One, divine beings came to the earth and impregnated human women which led to offspring called the Nephilim. If so, this would be a demonic counterfeit to the incarnation of our God Jesus Christ who is fully divine and fully human with an earthly mother but a divine Father. The rejection of this view is largely centered around the sexual activity between divine and human beings, which Jesus may have spoken against after the resurrection but may not apply to the days of Noah, which were obviously pre-resurrection of mankind.^a Two, divine beings came in the form of human beings in a way that is similar to how God and other divine beings appeared to Abraham in physical bodies and ate a meal together (Genesis 18-19) or where Jacob wrestled with someone that the Bible calls both “a man”^b and a divine being or Hebrew *elohim*, also translated “angel”.^c Three, demons possessed the physical bodies of human beings to create a people group called the Nephilim. Four, the language is considered more general in reference to an ungodly family line that is opposed to the family line of Abraham and Sarah by God supernaturally allowing the barren elderly couple to have a son that led to the nation of Israel. In this sense, God and Satan each “fathered” a family line through natural means of human offspring.

In Genesis 6:5-8, the fourth question of why God chose Noah to build the Ark is given. You will need to read this section of your Bible very closely as the story of Noah is widely misunderstood. Tragically, the story of Noah is commonly told that in the days of Noah, all the men were wicked except for Noah, who was a righteous man that God saved from His judgment in the flood. The application of this telling of Noah is that there are good people and bad people, and that God loves and saves the good guys but kills the bad guys, so we should be good guys so that God will love and save us. This false teaching about Noah is antithetical to the rest of Scripture that teaches we are saved by God’s grace and not because of our good works and is simply not what Genesis 6:5-8 says. Therefore, it is imperative for you to closely read what Genesis says, paying attention to the intentional theological order of events to properly understand what Moses is teaching.

Genesis 6:5-7 states the total depravity of everyone on the earth with one of the most negative declarations about human sin in all of Scripture. We are told that God saw that every person was only evil all the time. God was grieved that He made mankind because

a Matthew 22:23-33 ^b Genesis 32:22-32 ^c Genesis 32:3-31; Hosea 12:3-4

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they filled His heart with pain. This statement does include Noah, who was simply one of the sinfully wicked men on the earth who grieved God.

Genesis 6:8 then explains the process by which God chose to save and bless Noah. It says, “But Noah found favor [grace] in the eyes of the LORD.” Noah did not begin as a righteous man, but rather he began as a sinner as bad as anyone else on the earth in his day. The only difference between Noah and the other sinners who died in the flood of judgment was that God gave grace to Noah. Beautifully, the word favor is the Hebrew word for grace, which appears here for the first time in the Bible and is echoed repeatedly by Paul throughout the New Testament in his teaching on salvation by grace through faith alone. Because everyone was a sinner in Noah’s day, just like everyone is a sinner in our day, God had no good person to work through to accomplish His plan of redemption. So God worked, as He always has, by saving an undeserving sinner through grace thereby enabling them to live a righteous life as is taught in the next verse. Genesis 6:9 then explains the effects of God’s grace to Noah saying, “This is the account of Noah. Noah was a righteous man, blameless among the people of his time, and he walked with God.”

Indeed, Noah was a blameless and righteous man who, like Enoch, “walked with God”. But Noah was only this sort of man because God saved him by grace and empowered him to live a new life of obedience to God by that same grace.

Once made a believer by God’s grace, God began to speak directly to Noah and give him commands to obey. God informed Noah that He planned to end sin by killing all the sinners through an enormous flood as judgment on sinners. God then gave Noah orders to build an enormous Ark that was some 1,400,000 cubic feet, shaped like a modern-day battleship, and big enough to house some 522 modern day railroad box cars.

Noah obeyed God’s commands and built the Ark, likely with only the help of his sons. Hebrews 11:7 says that Noah did so in holy fear as a man of faith who believed that God would bring the flood, even while others continued in sin without repentance. And, upon completing the construction of the Ark, Noah placed his family on the Ark with the animals God had commanded him to and waited for God to fulfill His promise of judgment.

Dig Deeper

- Compare Genesis 6:5-8 with Paul’s teaching in the New Testament that we are saved by grace to good works in places like Ephesians 2:8-10. Why is it vital to the gospel that we recognize that Noah was not a godly man of his own effort who was chosen by God to build the Ark because he was a holy man apart from God’s grace?
- What does it mean that Enoch and Noah walked with God? See Hebrews 11:5-7 and

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Jude 14-16 for further insight.

- If you are curious about recent archaeological finds which indicate that Noah's Ark may have been uncovered visit <https://www.israelhayom.com/2021/10/04/archaeologists-claim-to-have-found-true-location-of-noahs-ark/>

Talk it Out. Walk it Out.

- What can men learn about the importance of leading their family in God's will from the story of Noah?
- What can wives and children learn about the importance of family unity in following God's will for their family from the story of Noah's family?
- What does it mean for you and your family very practically to "walk with God" like Enoch and Noah? Are there any next steps God is calling you to take in faith?

NOTES

Does God Punish People for Their Sin? The Flood

Scripture to Read: Genesis 7:1 – 8:22

Scripture for Memorization and Meditation:

Genesis 8:20-21 – “Then Noah built an altar to the Lord and took some of every clean animal and some of every clean bird and offered burnt offerings on the altar. And when the Lord smelled the pleasing aroma, the Lord said in his heart, ‘I will never again curse the ground because of man, for the intention of man’s heart is evil from his youth. Neither will I ever again strike down every living creature as I have done.’”

Commentary:

Following the sinful fall of Adam and Eve that plummeted the entire human race and creation under the curse, their descendants simply sinned and died for 1656 years according to a literal reading of Genesis. The mention of Enoch as the only person who walked with God provides an almost entirely bleak view of human nature and history that would be hopeless if God did not sovereignly choose to start again with Noah as a second Adam through whom God would begin again His work on earth establishing a people for Himself.

After Noah was saved by God’s grace, built the Ark according to God’s instructions, and loaded his family on board with the animals as God commanded him, it is noted that the people and the animals obeyed God, which is rare until this point in history since the Fall (6:22, 7:5, 7:9, 7:10, 7:16). Just as the animals were brought to Adam, they are now brought to Noah as God sent what was likely the first rain in the history of the world. The rain continued for 40 days until it covered the land drowning all of the sinners under God’s righteous judgment. The only people spared in the flood were Noah and his family because, as Genesis 6:8 stated, God gave them grace.

The size of the flood has been widely debated and the two primary answers have been a local flood limited to the general area in which Noah lived and a universal flood covering the face of the entire planet. And, at first reading, the account of the flood certainly appears to be universal in nature covering the entire planet.

Upon further inspection, however, there are at least four reasons why a less than universal flood is possible. First, the “land” is spoken of some 400 times in Genesis and means everything from the entire planet earth to regions of the earth to local areas. Therefore, in stating that the flood covered the land could mean anything from the known world in that day to the entirety of planet earth. For example, in Genesis 8:8-9, Noah sent a

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dove out of the Ark looking for dry land and we are told that the dove examined all of the land, which obviously did not mean that the dove flew around the entire globe examining every inch in search of dry land following the flood.

Second, since the account of the flood was likely handed down from the eyewitness account of Noah, it is possible that Noah did not know what was going on across the earth, but rather was only aware of what he could see with his own eyes. If true, this would mean that when the text states that the flood rose above the mountains, it may refer to the highest mountains in that region, which would make the flood bigger than a local flood but not necessarily universal.

Third, the book of Genesis was written to the few million people who were essentially refugees wandering in the wilderness between Egypt and the Promised Land. Since to them the totality of the known world was their region of the earth and they had no idea of what was happening elsewhere, it is certainly possible that they would have understood the discussion of land to refer to Promised Land they were seeking as their home. Fourth, if the flood was not universal then it is likely that there could have been animals that lived outside of the area covered by the flood that lived despite the flood. Furthermore, those animals could have, over time, returned to the land and helped replenish the animal life which ended in the flood, along with the animals spared on Noah's Ark.

The question remains, how big was the flood? I would simply state that the flood was big enough. The point of the flood was to judge sinners. Since the human race had not spread out across the entire earth, the majority of the earth was not inhabited and would not be until God scatters mankind in Genesis 11. Therefore, to accomplish God's purpose of judging all fallen sinners, the flood simply needed to be big enough to cover all of the people who lived on the earth. Subsequently, whether the flood was universal or simply covered the area in which everyone lived it was big enough to accomplish God's purpose of putting an end to all sin and sinners except Noah and his family, who were saved by grace.

After the flood subsided and God dried the ground, Noah and his family exited the Ark. Then, Noah did a remarkable thing that we must be careful to note and appreciate. In Genesis 8:20, we read, "Then Noah built an altar to the Lord and took some of every clean animal and some of every clean bird and offered burnt offerings on the altar."

After recognizing the devastation that God wrought upon the earth, Noah was convicted of his own sin, knowing that he too should have been killed like everyone else. This was not a command from God, but rather an act of worship out of Noah's own heart. So, he offered a burnt offering for the atonement of his sin.^a God was so pleased with Noah's

^a e.g. Leviticus 1:4; Job 1:5

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offering of atonement that He responded by promising to never flood the earth again as the answer to sin would henceforth be atonement, which foreshadowed the death of Jesus for sin.

Dig Deeper

- In light of Genesis 6:5-7 and 2 Peter 2:4-9, why did God send the flood?
- According to Romans 3:21-28 (especially 3:25), how is the Old Testament act of atonement ultimately applied to Jesus Christ?
- According to 1 John 4:7-21 (especially 4:10), how is Jesus' atonement related to God's love and ours?
- According to Jesus' teaching in Matthew 24:36-39, how will the end of human history be a lot like the days of Noah?

Talk it Out. Walk it Out.

- What do you learn about what was going on in Noah's heart and mind according to Hebrews 11:7?
- What does the flood reveal about the inevitable fate of those who persist in sin without repentance? Who does not know Christ that you can be praying for and speaking with about Jesus?
- When we read that Noah spent his final days before the judgement by water in 2 Peter 2:5, what should we learn about the importance of sharing our faith and supporting those who are "a preacher of righteousness" until the last days before the final judgment by fire?
- What are the similarities between the story of Noah and his family and yours (e.g. saved by grace, walking with God daily, leading your family to serve God, enduring mocking and opposition for your faith, worshipping God in gratitude, giving your time and money to serve God, etc.)?

NOTES

How Does God Build Relationships? God's Covenant with Noah

Scripture to Read: Genesis 9:1-29

Scripture for Memorization and Meditation:

Genesis 9:1 – “And God blessed Noah and his sons and said to them, ‘Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth.’”

Commentary:

Throughout the Old Testament, covenant love is referred to in various terms, but the main one is *kheshed*, especially in the Psalms. The word *kheshed*, in essence, summarizes the entire history of God’s covenantal relationship with Israel. *Kheshed* is God’s lovingkindness – the consistent, ever-faithful, relentless, constantly pursuing, lavish, extravagant, unrestrained, one-way love of God. It is often translated as covenant love, lovingkindness, mercy, steadfast love, loyal love, devotion, commitment, or reliability.

Kheshed is typically translated “love” and sometimes as “mercy”.^a However, *kheshed* has a much narrower definition than the English term love conveys. *Kheshed* refers to a sort of love that has been promised and is owed—covenant love—as in Hosea 11:1: “When Israel was a child, I loved him, and out of Egypt I called my son.”

Covenant love is the love God promised to His people, and which they, in turn, were to respond in kind – loving God with all their hearts, minds, and strength. *Kheshed* does not suggest some kind of generic love of everyone, but rather a fiercely devoted unique loving loyalty. Perhaps the children’s *Jesus Storybook Bible* says it best: “God loves us with a never-stopping, never giving up, unbreaking, always and forever love.”

In Genesis 9, God’s covenant relationship with His people through Noah is often referred to as the Noahic Covenant. After the flood receded, the land appeared out of the water like the days of creation for Adam. In this way, the account of Noah in many ways echoes the account of Adam with a sort of new creation and new humanity and new fall. The connections between Adam and Noah are many, including:

- both Adam and Noah are the fathers of all humanity that descend from them
- both worlds are brought forth out of a watery chaos
- both men are said to bear the “image of God”
- both men “walked with God”
- both men ruled over the animals

^a Ps. 23:6

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- both men are given the cultural mandate to increase in number and rule the earth
- both men work the ground
- both men sin against God
- both men experience shameful nakedness following their sin
- both men had their nakedness covered
- both men were in covenant with God (Adam's covenant is found in Hosea 6:7)
- both have three named sons

God entered a covenant with Noah in Genesis 9:1-17 that was intended for all people of the earth. God promised that He would never again send a cataclysmic flood and that the seasons would continue by God's provision. In this covenant, we see that God's answer to human sin would be a covenant of grace, beginning with Noah. The sign of the covenant was the rainbow to remind God's people of His promise to never flood the earth again and may have been a reminder of an ancient warrior who hung up his bow after a war as a sign of peace. Through the covenant, God would restore His intentions to bless people as they are commanded to be fruitful and multiply (1:28, 5:2, 9:1).

The terms of the covenant for human beings include respect for the sanctity of human life and the freedom to eat animals as, at this point in history, meat was added to the human diet. These commands further build upon teaching in Genesis 1 that, while animal life is to be treated kindly, it is inferior to human life, which alone bears God's image. The effect of the covenant is the renewal of God's intentions in creation by distinguishing between those people, like Noah, in covenant with God from those who are not.

In Genesis 9:18-28, Noah responded to God's kindness by getting drunk and passing out naked in his tent like a hillbilly redneck on vacation. Noah's son Ham then walked into Noah's tent to gaze upon his father's nakedness. The Scriptures simply do not tell us much more than these bare details, but many people have inserted numerous speculations about what happened including Ham having homosexual intercourse with his passed-out father. Whatever happened, one thing is sure, it was sinful and shameful.

In the story of Noah, we have a sort of second Fall with God starting over with Noah who, like Adam, sinned. The point is simply that sin remains the human problem for everyone, even after the flood, which sets the stage for Jesus Christ coming down to save sinners.

Genesis 9:25-27 then picks up Noah's declaration of cursing and blessing directed toward his sons. Ham's son Canaan and the Canaanites who descended from him were cursed to serve the line of God's people that would come from Ham's brothers. It was also promised that Japheth would prosper as God would dwell with him. Racist theologies have

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tried to claim that the curse of Canaan was a curse upon black people, which is simply foolish and unfounded as from this man descended people of many races and nations, including Caucasians. Lastly, Genesis 9:28-29 picks up the genealogy from 5:32 as Noah dies and the human race again begins to grow and expand, though still sinful and in need of God who is a better Father than Noah, with a Son who is greater than Noah's sons.

Dig Deeper

- What does God's command to be fruitful and multiply both before and after the Fall reveal to us about God's commitment to marriage and sanctity of life? (1:28, 5:2, 9:1).
- What other insights can be learned about Noah from 2 Peter 2:1-9a?
- Moses interrupts his lengthy genealogy between Genesis chapter 5 and 10 to focus in on the life of one man, Noah. Why do you think he did this? What was he trying to teach us through the life of Noah?

Talk it Out. Walk it Out.

- In your own words, how would you describe a covenant relationship with God and how this differs from other kinds of relationships?
- What most surprises you about Noah as we have been learning about his life in Genesis?
- How have you seen God be faithful to your family, despite sin and folly, like he was to Noah and his family?

NOTES

What Does the Bible Say About Globalism? The City of Babel

Scripture to Read: Genesis 10:1 – 11:9

Scripture for Memorization and Meditation:

Genesis 11:8-9 – “So the Lord dispersed them from there over the face of all the earth, and they left off building the city. Therefore its name was called Babel, because there the Lord confused the language of all the earth. And from there the Lord dispersed them over the face of all the earth.”

Commentary:

Ever since sin and the curse hit the planet, fallen sinners in every generation have wrongly thought that if they simply came together, there would be peace and prosperity on the planet. This delusional myth that globalism is the cure for all that ails us finds its origination at the city of Babel in which was the Tower of Babel.

Genesis chapter 10 opens with a lengthy genealogy of people who will be important for the rest of the book. Genesis is basically written in chronological order with chapters 10-11 being the primary inversion as Moses' intent is to establish the nations that were scattered out from Babel to best frame the story theologically. The genealogy breaks down into the descendants of Noah's three sons, Japheth, Shem, and Ham from whom the Egyptians descended.

Throughout Genesis, the concept of going east corresponds to getting farther and farther from God. For example, when Adam and Eve were cast out of the garden they went eastward (3:24) as did Cain (4:7). When people go eastward in Genesis they are walking away from God (typified by Eden and the Promised Land) and into ruin as places such as Sodom and Babylon lie eastward.

Babylon (also referred to as Babel) is introduced as a nice city not unlike most in our own day where regular people simply sought to build a secular society apart from God. Today, the area is near Baghdad. Some people only speak of the Tower of Babel, which was a part of the city likely built to see incoming enemies, but the focus of the story is simply not on the building of the tower, but rather the building of a city to house a secular society as a counterfeit to the New Jerusalem Jesus will bring as headquarters for the New Earth. The story does not mention any particularly heinous sins that the Babylonians committed other than the simple fact that their hope was to make their name great and not God's. And, in the building of their great city, their hope was to gather together as a unified people who would not be scattered but would, apart from God's covenant and blessing, live for themselves by

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themselves. In fact, this may be the first great city in the history of the world and its purpose was to stand against all other people and God as a sort of secular seat of authority on the earth and the first attempt at globalism – people pulling together to create heaven on earth without God.

God caused the Babylonian attempt at their sovereign secular kingdom as an affront that ignored Him. Worse still, their intent was to have sufficient power to do as they pleased by uniting together and defending themselves from everyone else. God rightly viewed this centralization of power in the hands of proud sinners apart from Him as a dangerous thing and saved them from themselves and saved others from the potential abuses of power by simply scattering them and confusing their languages.

Ironically, this scattering of the people and confusing of the languages were two of the primary things these people were seeking to prevent from happening in the first place. The name Babel, or Babylon, is humorously akin to our English word babble which is what their communication sounded like once God confused their language. Beautifully, on the day of Pentecost in Acts 2 through the power of the Holy Spirit, the gift of tongues temporarily reversed this division as people who were saved from different nations and languages were supernaturally enabled to hear the gospel and worship God despite their language barriers.

The point of Babel and Pentecost is that the hope for our sin problem is not to be found in proud globalism between nations, nationalism for our people, technological advancement, or the working together of unrepentant sinners, but rather the miraculous power of the Holy Spirit. Rather than drowning the sinners as He had in the Flood, God instead saved them from themselves and graciously simply scattered them and confused their language to force them to live as He intended, scattering and filling the earth.^a Subsequently, these scattered people become the nations listed in Genesis 10 to which the Church is later sent to reach with the good news of the gospel of Jesus Christ.^b

Lastly, like the fall of Adam and mini-fall of Noah, this is yet another fall of sorts. Here, to overcome their sin problem, people do not turn to God but rather rely on one another and place their hope in military might, technological advancement, and the building of a good and decent global society, which is simply yet another sin against God that cannot remedy fallen human nature.

Dig Deeper

- What significance does Babylon play in the rest of Scripture both as a literal place and

^a Genesis 1:28, 9:7 ^b Acts 1:8

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a metaphorical people in rebellion against God (e.g. the book of Daniel, Revelation 14:8, 16:19, 17:5, 18:2)?

- In light of God's covenant with Noah to bless the earth, why did God not justly end the life of these sinners as He did in the Flood?
- How do we see the beginning of the reversal of the curse at Pentecost (Acts 2)?
- What is God's plan for the scattered nations in the Kingdom of God (Revelation 5:9, 7:9, 14:6)?

Talk it Out. Walk it Out.

- How are global missions and Bible translations God's way of overcoming the globalist agenda that started in Babel?
- How is Babel a counterfeit of the Kingdom of God (e.g. built by people versus build by God, brought up in pride from people versus brought down in humility by Jesus, for the greatness of our name versus the greatness of God's name, etc.)?
- What were the Babylonians putting their faith and hope in other than God? Were they any different than the typical non-Christian in our day who believe that globalism can reverse the curse?

NOTES

How Does God Change a Family? God Calls Abraham and Sarah

Scripture to Read: Genesis 11:10 – 12:9

Scripture for Memorization and Meditation:

Genesis 12:1-3 – “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. 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. 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.’”

Commentary:

In human history, some people loom larger than others. One of the most significant men in world history is Abraham, who we meet in Genesis 11. His name appears over 300 times in the Bible, including 11 books of the New Testament and all four gospels. In the great chapter on faith, Hebrews 11, each of the “heroes” of our faith is given one verse as a general rule, but six are reserved for Moses and 12 for Abraham. To this day, three major world religions all look to him as the founder and father of their faith (Jews, Christians, Muslims).

God’s answer to the efforts of Babylon seeking to make their name great was the calling of Abram to be the father of a new nation with a name that God would make great. Genesis 11 closes with a continuation of the genealogy from Genesis 5 and 10 in an effort to connect Abram as a descendant of both Adam and Noah through Noah’s son Shem. With the arrival of Abram in Genesis, the book shifts from the theme of God calling creation into existence in Genesis 1-11, to God calling people into covenant in 12-50.

God had not spoken since His covenant with Noah until He spoke to Abram to likewise again initiate a covenant relationship. At the time Abram was called by God to become the father of a new nation, prototype of a life of faith, and one of the most important men in the Bible, he was simply yet another sinner living among the scattered nations. In this way, Abram was not unlike Noah had been before God likewise called him into covenant. We know very little about Abram before God called him other than his genealogy, barren wife, and temporary home in Haran after having been born in Ur of the Chaldeans (11:27-32). Since Nehemiah 9:7 and Acts 7:2-3 seem to indicate God in called Abram in Ur of the Chaldeans, he may have even been called out of Babylon as a Babylonian that perhaps even sought to help build that great city which God judged, as the key city of the Chaldeans was Babylon.^a

Amazingly, Abram was apparently just a regular godless Babylonian when, much

^a e.g. Isaiah 13:19, 48:14; Jeremiah 24:5, 25:12, 50:1; Ezekiel 1:3, 12:13, 23:15

like Noah, he too found gracious favor in the eyes of the Lord. Amidst God's judging of the Babylonians by scattering them into various nations, God raises up one of their own to conversely be the man through who God's blessing will be sent forth to the nations.

God simply told Abram to leave his homeland and father to journey to a new land that God would show him. God then promised Abram that, though his wife was barren, he would be a father. Through Abram's son was promised a great nation, blessed by God, that would be a blessing to the nations of the earth through one of his offspring/seed. This promised seed is singular, meaning Jesus, and not plural meaning Israel.^a God also promised to make Abram's name great, the same thing the Babylonians failed to achieve as they pursued it apart from God.

Abram was also told that his descendants would receive the Promised Land if he in faith made a radical break with his past by leaving his home. This entry into the Promised Land was not fulfilled in Genesis as the book ends with Joseph requesting that his bones be taken from Egypt to the Promised Land in the day that God's people finally entered that place. Additionally, Exodus also ends with the expectation of one day entering the Promised Land^b, a longing not realized until after the death of Moses in the opening chapters of Joshua.

In faith, Abram believed and obeyed God, doing as God commanded at the age of 75. He took his wife Sarai, their household, and his nephew Lot, who becomes a troublesome figure later in the story. God then appeared to Abram who responded by worshiping God in faith by building an altar as he does throughout the book after encountering God.^c Abram then settled in Bethel just north of Jerusalem, which is an important city in the Old Testament mentioned more times than any other city but Jerusalem.

The central point of the account of Abram is discovered when contrasting Abram with Babylon, both the story which preceded his call and the city that was the location he was called from. The Babylonians sought to be a great nation, blessed people, great in name, protected from their enemies, and the centerpiece of world affairs. But they pursued their aims apart from faith and apart from God. So, God called one of them, Abram, out into covenant with Himself and promised to give to Abram, by His gracious provision, all that the Babylonians had strived for. Therefore, God is showing that our hope cannot rest in the efforts of sinners to save and bless themselves. Rather, our only hope is to be found by entering into covenant relationship with God by faith.

Abram goes on to dominate Genesis until his death in 25:11 somewhere around 2000

^a Genesis 3:15; Matthew 1:1, 1:17; Galatians 3:16 ^b Exodus 40:34-38 ^c 12:7, 12:8, 13:18, 22:9

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B.C. Then, the lens of Genesis focuses in from this point forward on the descendants of Abram as God's covenant people raised up to be blessed and a blessing to the nations. Abram, like Noah, is a picture of God's divine election.

Dig Deeper

- What additional light does Hebrews 11:8-12 shed on Abram's response to God's call?
- In what ways did Abram demonstrate faith in word and deed in Genesis 12:1-9?
- How does Romans 4 connect Abraham's faith with the faith of a Christian?
- According to Galatians 3:16, who is the blessing that is the offspring/seed of Abraham that was promised to the nations?

Talk it Out. Walk it Out.

- As we see God saving people from bad decisions made by themselves and their families, how have you seen God deliver you and/or your family from harm?
- What can we learn about marriage, parenting, and family from the faith, and lack of faith, in the lives of Abraham and Sarah and how God is the hero of our lives and legacies?
- In Genesis chapters 1-11, the word blessing was used five times and, in this call of Abram, the word is again used five times. What does "blessing" mean and how does one receive God's blessing?

NOTES

How Can a Family Be Blessed by God? God Blesses Abraham and Sarah

Scripture to Read: Genesis 12:10-13:18

Scripture for Memorization and Meditation:

Genesis 13:14-15 – The Lord said to Abram, after Lot had separated from him, “Lift up your eyes and look from the place where you are, northward and southward and eastward and westward, for all the land that you see I will give to you and to your offspring forever.”

Commentary:

Thus far we have seen God call and bless Adam, Noah, and Abram. And, we have seen each man after their call from God sin against God. Adam ate the forbidden fruit, Noah got drunk, and now Abram, who is the man of faith, acts without faith in God’s promise to protect him. Thus far, the point Moses is making repeatedly is that there is not a man sufficient to remedy the sin problem, which paves the way for God becoming the man Jesus Christ to remedy the sin problem Himself.

The story of Abraham begins with Abraham entering Egypt to escape a great famine. He feared that men would so desire his elderly, though apparently beautiful, wife that she should lie and say that she was his sister so that he would not be harmed.

The unsuspecting Egyptians believed Abram’s lie, bringing the lovely Sarai to the great Pharaoh and rewarding Abram with great gifts for the right to pursue his wife, whom they thought was his sister. Oddly, Pharaoh, who is the godless man in the story, appears more morally upright than the godly man Abram. However, God punished Pharaoh until the secret was revealed and Sarai was released to Abram, though she had not yet been sexually violated. Abram’s journey into Egypt foreshadows the 400-year exile there in the book of Exodus in which God safely delivers Abram’s descendants from the hand of Pharaoh as He had their mother Sarai and father Abram.

In this section, Abram and his closest relative, Lot, had become so prosperous that they needed to separate because the land could not accommodate them both with all of their households and animals. Their affluence is evidence of the fulfillment of God’s promise to bless Abram and to cause others to be blessed by him. Abram allowed Lot to select which portion of land he would choose.

The link between these two accounts is God sparing Abram from himself. God had promised to give Abram both offspring and the Promised Land and, in the nearly giving away his wife to Pharaoh and the Promised Land to Lot, Abram would have ruined all that

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God had promised him. Fortunately, God did intervene and, through inflicting diseases on Pharaoh and his household, and causing Lot to choose land other than the Promised Land, God made good on His promises in spite of His servant.

While we cannot be certain, it appears that Abram acted in unbelief with Pharaoh. But, after doing so, Abram called on the name of the Lord in worship^a, which may have refocused his faith back to God after a good time in repentance. Since he did so at the place of his earlier worship when he began in faith, it is likely that Abram's return to the place at which his faith was first evidenced in worship was also his return to trusting God by faith. This seems likely because, after his worship, we see Abram go from faithless with Pharaoh to a man of faith with Lot trusting God to give him the Promised Land.

The central theological point in these accounts seems to be that, while God's servants are imperfect, it is His sovereign protection which saves us from ourselves and makes His promises become reality. Additionally, those who do belong to the Lord quickly learn from the unbelief, as Abram did with Pharaoh, and trust God by faith, as Abram subsequently did with Lot. Since Abram was older than Lot, he would have had the right to choose the best land first, but it seems that Abram allowed Lot to choose first in faith that the Lord would give him the Promised Land by pure grace and no effort of his own. This same pattern of Abram relaying solely on the Lord to provide for him again appears in the next chapter where, in Genesis 14:22-24, Abram again rejects riches in favor of receiving it solely from God. Therefore, Abram apparently learned his lesson with the Pharaoh and returned to a life of radical trust in God to protect and provide, which enabled Abram to live humbly so that the Lord could exalt him just like He did Jesus.

Dig Deeper

- Note the times Abram uses words like “I”, “me”, and “my” showing his selfishness in encouraging his wife to be harmed so that he could be spared. How does Abram's example contradict Ephesians 5:25-33?
- In Genesis 12:10, Abram is not told by God to go to Egypt, indicating he is doubting God in going “down”, which is ominous and both literal and metaphorical. How is 13:1 an act of repentance, literally turning around to return to God's will for his life? What does this teach you about how we get in and out of trouble?
- What can you learn about the complexity of managing God's blessings in your life from 13:17?
- What negative lessons can be learned from Lot, who is younger than Abram and

^a Genesis 13:4

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should be deferring to his older relative, but instead makes a series of foolish and/or selfish decisions?

Talk it Out. Walk it Out.

- Abram's actions of allowing Lot to choose his portion of the land seems to be a foolish mistake. Like Abram, how have you seen God save you from yourself in light of His promise in 2 Timothy 2:13?
- What can you learn from the stories of Abram and Pharaoh and Abram and Lot to build your faith that God will be faithful to bless His people and keep His promises no matter what?
- What can we learn about the difficulty of relationships with unhealthy extended family members from the entire story of Abram and Sarai with Lot? Why is it difficult for you to navigate life with some extended family?
- What can men learn from Abram putting his wife in harm's way to spare himself? What can women learn from Sarai not speaking up and saying anything when her husband is lying and sinning?

NOTES

How Can a Couple Serve God? God Uses Abraham and Sarah

Scripture to Read: Genesis 14:1–24

Scripture for Memorization and Meditation:

Genesis 14:19-20 – “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!”

Commentary:

The Bible is an incredible book for many reasons, including the fact that it shows how God works through people and places to accomplish His will in spite of human folly and sin. The honesty of human shortcomings, and greatness of God’s grace should give us hope for our lives and the world around us. This is especially seen in Genesis 14 about a man who is thus far a nobody and a place that is considered nowhere who are used of God to change the course of history and reveal to us the character of the one true God. Genesis chapter 14 includes both a harrowing and a mesmerizing account regarding Abram. The first account is about a great war. The second account is about a great man.

Though Lot was a “righteous” man, he had taken up residence in the godless city of Sodom.^aThis in “Shinar”^b which is likely ancient Babylon and modern-day Iraq.^c With the existence of nations now in effect since God scattered people and their languages at Babel, the five city states in the plain of Jordan^d had been subject for 12 years to the kings of four eastern states^e and finally revolted against them. Today, we would call this a foreign occupation of a nation which led to a revolution by people to reclaim their nation. When a war broke out, the first recorded war in human history, and his city was overtaken, Lot was one of the men taken captive in war. The report of Lot’s captivity is brought to “Abram the Hebrew” (the word Hebrew here appears for the first time in Scripture) from someone who had successfully fled the war. The fact that four foreign kings defeated five kings on their own land seems to indicate that God’s hand is involved in military campaigns between nations, affecting the outcome.

Abram was apparently very wealthy as he gathered his 318 trained men from his personal army and defeated the army holding Lot. And, while a personal army of 318 men is quite large, it is not large compared to the armies of entire nations. Therefore, Moses likely provides for us the number of Abram’s warriors to demonstrate that Abram ultimately won

^a cf. 2 Peter 2:7-8 ^b Genesis 14:1 ^c Genesis 10:10, 11:2, 11:9 ^d Genesis 14:2, see 13:10 ^e Genesis 14:1

his battle by the blessing of God who promised to protect him and curse those who cursed him. Abraham defeating six tribes and five kings by God's help are much like Gideon's 300 men and David's 400 men who would fight and win by the Lord's power later in Scripture. The moral of the story is not to be as concerned about how big your resources are, but how big your God is and if you are on His side of the fight. Melchizedek likewise recognized that it was God who was ultimately responsible for the defeat of Abram's enemies.^a Abram the great warrior, leading his men into battle at the age of 75, riding 120 miles for war, recovered the stolen plunder and freed the men, women, and children as a blessing to both Lot and his fellow captives.

Abram the soldier then appears to be something of a king as both the king of Sodom and King of Salem came out to meet with him. Melchizedek was the king of Salem, which is short for Jerusalem.^b Melchizedek is indeed a shadowy man enveloped in mystery for many. Some Bible commentators have believed that he was a Christophony (appearance of Jesus before His birth), while others believe he was everything from an angel to a type of Jesus Christ, or perhaps simply a powerful man.

In Genesis, we read the following about Melchizedek. First, he was the king of Jerusalem. Second, he brought out bread and wine to fellowship with Abram, not unlike communion. Third, he was a priest though the priesthood from Aaron had not yet been established. Fourth, he blessed Abram as God had, and he blessed Abram's God. Fifth, Abram recognized his greatness, giving him a tenth of his possessions, or a tithe.

Whoever Melchizedek was, Abram's response to him is one of great faith. The powerful and wealthy Melchizedek offered Abram great wealth, but Abram rejected the offering. He did so because God had promised to bless him and make him prosper and Abram was unwilling to act in unbelief by gaining wealth through the hand of anyone but God alone as an act of faith.

Additionally, Abram knew that if he accepted wealth from Melchizedek, it could obligate him to the man, which could lead to a conflict between his loyalties to God and loyalties to a man. Therefore, in faith, Abram rejected the wealth and protection this great king offered him in favor of trusting God alone to provide for and protect him as He had promised. Again, we see Abram, by faith, leaving his fate in God's hands.

Dig Deeper

- What changes have occurred in Abram's faith and courage since he worshiped God in Genesis 13:3-4?

^a Genesis 14:20 ^b e.g. Psalm 76:2

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- For further study on Melchizedek see Psalm 110, Hebrews 5 and Hebrews 7. Who do you think Melchizedek was?
- Genesis 14:20 is the first mention of a tithe of 10% to the Lord. What else can you learn about this from other Scriptures? (e.g. Deuteronomy 12, 14, 26; 2 Corinthians 8-9)

Talk it Out. Walk it Out.

- Abraham rejected money and power so that he could be free to serve God without obligation. What lessons for your life and career can be learned from his example?
- Abraham united three armies to win his war. What lesson can God's people learn about the importance of unity in the spiritual wars we fight?
- Genesis 14:20 is the first mention of tithing in the Bible, giving 10% of one's gross, or firstfruits, to the Lord. Why is this important enough for Moses to include it in the faith of Abraham?

NOTES

MARK DRISCOLL & REALFAITH

With Pastor Mark, it's all about Jesus! Mark and his wife Grace have been married and doing vocational ministry together since 1993. They also planted The Trinity Church with their five kids in Scottsdale, Arizona as a family ministry (thetrinitychurch.com) and started RealFaith, a ministry alongside their daughter Ashley that contains a mountain of Bible teaching from Pastor Mark as well as content for women, men, parents, pastors, leaders, Spanish-speakers, and more.

Pastor Mark has been named by Preaching Magazine one of the 25 most influential pastors of the past 25 years. He has a bachelor's degree in speech communication from the Edward R. Murrow College of Communication at Washington State University as well as a master's degree in exegetical theology from Western Seminary in Portland, Oregon. For free sermons, answers to questions, Bible teaching, and more, visit RealFaith.com or download the **Real Faith app**.

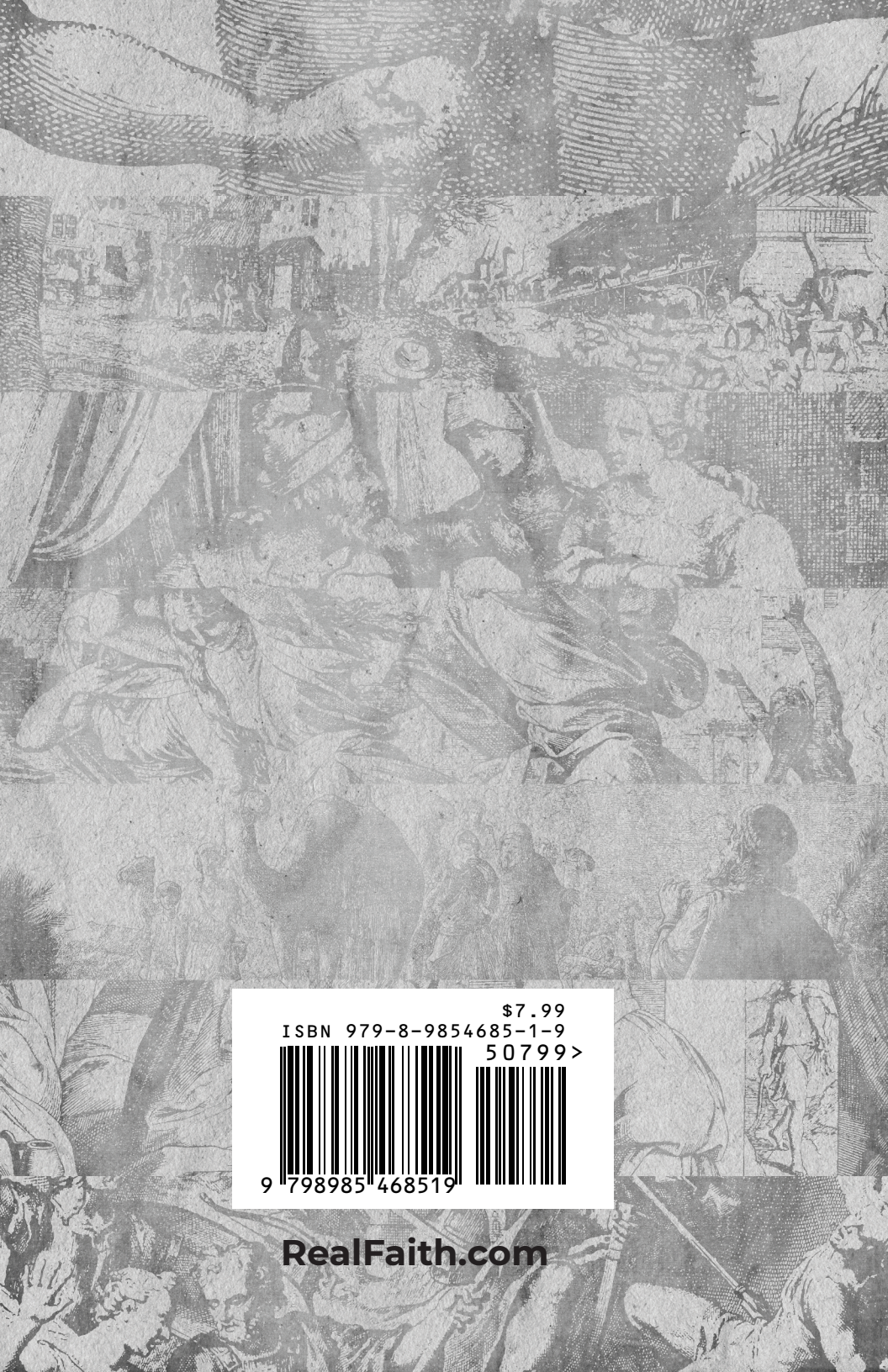
Together, Mark and Grace have authored "Win Your War" and "Real Marriage". Pastor Mark has authored numerous other books including "Spirit-Filled Jesus", "Who Do You Think You Are?", "Vintage Jesus", and "Doctrine". Pastor Mark and his daughter Ashley Chase have also written "Pray Like Jesus" as a father-daughter project.

If you have any prayer requests for us, questions for future Ask Pastor Mark or Dear Grace videos, or a testimony regarding how God has used this and other resources to help you learn God's Word, we would love to hear from you at hello@realfaith.com.



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