Introduction to Genesis

Author, Date, and Recipients

Traditionally, Moses is considered to have been the author of Genesis and the rest of the Pentateuch (see Num. 33:2; Deut. 31:24; John 5:46). Of course, Moses lived much later than the events of Genesis. Presumably, stories were passed down about those earlier events, and Moses brought them all together.

The first audience would have been the Israelites Moses led through the wilderness. For readers today, Genesis is an essential introduction to the rest of the Bible. It is rightly called the book of beginnings.

Theme

The theme of Genesis is creation, sin, and re-creation. God made the world very good, but first cursed it and then destroyed it in the flood because of man’s disobedience. The new world after the flood was also spoiled by human sin (ch. 11). God chose Abraham for a special purpose. Through his family, all nations would be blessed (12:1–3). God's purpose will eventually be fulfilled through Abraham's descendants (ch. 49).

Key Themes

1. The Lord God commissions human beings to be his representatives on earth. They are to take care of the earth and govern the other creatures (1:1–2:25).
2. Instead of acting as God’s representatives on earth, the first man and woman—Adam and Eve—listen to the serpent and follow his advice. Their disobedience has devastating results for all mankind and for the entire created world (3:1–24; 6:5–6).
3. God graciously announces that Eve’s offspring will free humanity from the serpent’s control (3:15). Genesis then begins tracing the history of one family that will become the people of Israel. This family has a special relationship with God and will become a source of blessing to fallen humanity (12:1–3).
4. As a result of Adam’s disobedience, his unique relationship with the ground degenerates, resulting in hard work and later in flood and famine. But the special family descending from Adam also brings relief from the difficulties (3:17–19; 5:29; 50:19–21).
5. While Eve’s punishment centers on pain in bearing children (3:16), women play an essential role in continuing the unique family line. With God’s help, even barrenness is overcome (11:30; 21:1–7; 25:21; 38:1–30).
7. The wicked are exiled from Eden and scattered throughout the earth (3:22–24; 4:12–16; 11:9), but God is kind to his chosen people and promises them a land of their own (12:1–2, 7; 15:7–21; 28:13–14; 50:24).
8. God is prepared to destroy almost the entire human race because of its corruption (6:7, 11–12; 18:17–33), but he still wants his world to be populated by righteous people (1:28; 9:1; 15:1–5; 35:11).
INTRODUCTION TO GENESIS

OUTLINE

I. Primeval History (1:1-11:26)
   A. God's creation and ordering of heaven and earth (1:1-2:3)
   B. Earth's first people (2:4-4:26)
   C. Adam's descendants (5:1-6:8)
   D. Noah's descendants (6:9-9:29)
   E. The descendants of Noah's sons (10:1-11:9)
   F. Shem's descendants (11:10-26)

II. Patriarchal History (11:27-50:26)
   A. Terah's descendants (11:27-25:18)
   B. Isaac's descendants (25:19-37:1)
   C. Jacob's descendants (37:2-50:26)

THE NEAR EAST AT THE TIME OF GENESIS

C. 2000 B.C.
The book of Genesis describes events in the ancient Near East from the beginnings of civilization to the relocation of Jacob's (Israel's) family in Egypt. The stories of Genesis are set among some of the oldest nations in the world, including Egypt, Assyria, Babylonia, and Elam.
The Creation of the World

1 In the “beginning, God created the heavens and the earth. 2 The earth was without form and void, and darkness was over the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters.

3 And God said, “Let there be light,” and there was light. 4 And God saw that the light was good. And God separated the light from the darkness.

5 God called the light Day, and the darkness he called Night. And there was evening and there was morning, the first day.

6 And God said, “Let there be an expanse in the midst of the waters, and let it separate the waters from the waters.” 7 And God made the expanse and separated the waters that were under the expanse from the waters that were above the expanse. And it was so. 8 And God called the expanse Heaven. 9 And there was evening and there was morning, the second day.

10 And God said, “Let the waters under the deep be gathered together into one place, and let the dry land appear.” And it was so.

11 And God said, “Let the dry land be called Earth. And let there be a canopy over the dry land, and let it be called Sky.” And it was so.

12 And God said, “Let the canopy over the dry land be gathered together, and let it be called Sky.” And it was so.

13 And God said, “Let lights appear in the canopy in order that there may be days and nights.” And it was so.

14 And God called the lights Daylight, and the dark lights Night. And there was evening and there was morning—the third day.

15 And God said, “Let the expanse serve as a canopy over the waters, and let it be a parting for the waters that were above the expanse. And it was so.

16 And God called the expanse Sky. And there was evening and there was morning—the fourth day.

17 And God said, “Let the luminaries in the sky be for signs and seasons and for days and years.

18 And let them be lights in the sky, to give light on the earth, and to separate the day from the night. And it was so.

19 And God made the two great lights—the greater light to govern the day and the lesser light to govern the night. He also made the stars.

20 And God set them in the sky, to have light on the earth, and to govern the day and the night and the seasons and the years.

21 And God said, “Let the water that is under the sky be gathered to one place, and let the dry land appear.” And it was so.

22 And God called the name of the place dry land. And the name of the water that was under the sky he called Seas. And God saw that it was good.

23 And God said, “Let fresh ground springs flow out of the earth and let a river supply the dry land with streams.” And it was so.

24 And the names of the twelve tribes of Israel are written on it, one on each of the twelve gates, and the name of the Lord God is on each of the gates of the city, and its name is: The Lord God is there.
And God said, “Let the waters swarm with swarms of living creatures, and let birds of the heavens fly above the earth across the expanse of the heavens.”

God created the great sea creatures and every living creature that moves, with which the waters swarm, according to their kinds, and every winged bird according to its kind. And God saw that it was good.

And God blessed them, saying, “Be fruitful and multiply and fill the waters in the seas, and let birds multiply on the earth.”

And there was evening and there was morning, the fifth day.

And God said, “Let the earth bring forth living creatures according to their kinds—livestock and creeping things and beasts of the earth according to their kinds.” And it was so.

And God made the beasts of the earth according to their kinds and the livestock according to their kinds, and everything that creeps on the ground according to its kind. And God saw that it was good.

Then God said, “Let us make man in our image, after our likeness. And let them have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over the livestock and over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth.”

So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them.

DID YOU KNOW?
Father, Son, and Holy Spirit

God said, “Let us make man” (1:26). This phrase could be the Bible’s earliest indication that God exists as three persons in one: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Christians refer to this as the doctrine of the Trinity.

The earth to bring forth vegetation (vv. 11-12). The creation of distinctive locations in days 1-3, along with vegetation, prepares for the filling of these locations in days 4-6.

1:14-19 These verses, describing the fourth day, correspond with the separating of light and darkness on the first day (vv. 3-5). Here is the creation of lights that will govern time, as well as provide light upon the earth (v. 15). By referring to them as the greater light and lesser light (v. 16), the author of Genesis avoids using terms that were also proper names for pagan gods linked to the sun and the moon. The term made may simply mean that God “fashioned” or “worked on” these greater and lesser lights. It does not necessarily mean that they did not exist in any form before this. On this day God made it possible that the sun and moon would define the passing of time. The references to seasons (v. 14) or “appointed times” (ESV footnote) and to days and years probably refer to appointed times for religious observances in the Hebrew calendar (see Ex. 13:10).

1:16 and the stars. The immense universe that God created (see note on Isa. 40:25-26) is mentioned here only briefly, as almost an afterthought. The focus of Genesis 1 is on the earth.

1:20–23 This section, on day 5, describes how the waters and the expanse of the heavens are filled with various kinds of creatures.

1:21 The Hebrew term for great sea creatures can mean large serpents, dragons, or crocodiles, as well as whales or sharks. Some have suggested that this could also refer to extinct creatures such as dinosaurs.

1:24–25 livestock and creeping things and beasts of the earth. These terms group the land-dwelling animals into three broad categories, probably reflecting the way nomadic shepherds would experience them. This list is not intended to be exhaustive, and it is hard to know in which category to put some animals.

1:26 Let us make man in our image. Some have suggested that God may be addressing the members of his heavenly court, whom the OT elsewhere calls “sons of God” (e.g., Job 1:6) and the NT calls “angels.” But man is not made in the image of angels (see Gen. 1:27), and the Bible never teaches that angels participated in the creation of human beings. Since God alone creates man (v. 27), many Christians believe that “let us” means God is speaking to himself. If so, this would be the first biblical mention of the “Trinity” (see note on John 1:1).

1:27 The term image of God can be seen as describing the ways in which man is different from all other created beings. It describes how humans resemble God in their ability to think, to communicate, to understand right and wrong, to be creative, and to experience relationships with God and with one another. This allows men and women to represent God as they exercise authority over the rest of creation (see v. 26; and note on v. 28). The Hebrew word for man (adam), is often a generic term for both male and female, though sometimes it refers to man in distinction from woman (e.g., 2:22; 23:3; 3:8). It can also be the proper name “Adam” (2:23; 3:17; 4:1; 5:1).

2:7 The man whom God created in the likeness of God was given the garden of Eden, a place of limitless opportunity. This contrasts with the world of sin and suffering in which we live today. This garden was a place where God’s people might experience the blessings of God’s creation. The garden was a place where God’s people could know him and who serve wisely as his representatives. To understand right and wrong, to be creative, and to experience the image of God is to know him and who serve wisely as his representatives. To understand right and wrong, to be creative, and to experience the image of God is to know him and who serve wisely as his representatives.
And God blessed them. And God said to them, “Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and subdue it, and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over every living thing that moves on the earth.”

And God said, “Behold, I have given you every plant yielding seed that is on the face of all the earth, and every tree with seed in its fruit. You shall have them for food. And to every beast of the earth and to every bird of the heavens and to everything that creeps on the earth, everything that has the breath of life, I have given every green plant for food.” And it was so. And God saw everything that he had made, and behold, it was very good. And there was evening and there was morning, the sixth day.

The Seventh Day, God Rests

Thus the heavens and the earth were finished, and “all the host of them. And “on the seventh day God finished his work that he had done,

1 Or open country 2 Or earth; also verse 6 3 Or spring

**GENESIS 2:8**

and he rested on the seventh day from all his work that he had done. So God blessed the seventh day and made it holy, because on it God rested from all his work that he had done in creation.

The Creation of Man and Woman

These are the generations of the heavens and the earth when they were created, in the day that the LORD God made the earth and the heavens.

When no “bush of the field” was yet in the land and no small plant of the field had yet sprung up—for the LORD God had not caused it to rain on the land, and there was no man to work the ground, and a mist “was going up from the land and was watering the whole face of the ground—then the LORD God formed the man of “dust from the ground and “ breathed into his “nostrils the breath of life, and “the man became a living creature. And the LORD God planted a

**PROFILE: ADAM**

Adam, whose name means “man,” was the first human being. Created out of dust, he was made in the image of God. Adam was given dominion over the rest of creation and was placed in the garden of Eden to care for it. God created Eve as a helper for Adam, and together they enjoyed perfect fellowship with their Creator. But Adam and Eve chose to disobey God, which brought sin and death into the world. Because of their sin, all humans are now born sinners and will someday die. The Bible tells the story of how God redeems his creation from the curse of Adam’s sin. “For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ shall all be made alive” (1 Cor. 15:22).

**KEY REFERENCE: GENESIS 2:7**

Greek translation of the OT used the Greek word for “Lord” (Kurios) to refer to God. That translation was then quoted many times by the NT authors, who also used Kurios rather than Yahweh for God’s name. See notes on Ex. 3:14; 3:15.

27 Then the Lord God formed the man of dust from the ground. The verb “formed” describes a potter fashioning clay into a particular shape. The close relationship between the man and the ground is reflected in the Hebrew words ‘adam for man and ‘adamah for the ground. Living creature. The same Hebrew term is used in 1:20, 24 for sea and land creatures. (See Paul’s quotation of this passage in 1 Cor. 15:45.)

28-9 God provides a suitable environment for the man by planting a garden in Eden, in the east. The name “Eden” suggests luxury and pleasure. It probably refers to a region much greater than the garden itself. God formed the man in the “land” (see vv. 5-7), and then put him in the garden (compare v. 15). The earliest translation

28 ch. 9:1, 29 ch. 9:3; Ps. 104:14, 15; Hos. 15:16 30 Ps. 147:9 31 Eccles. 7:29
1 Tim. 4:4  CHAPTER 2 1 Dest. 419; Ps. 33:6 2 Ex. 20:18-19; 31:17; Dest. 5:12-14; Heb. 4:4 4 ch. 11 5 [ch. 11:1, 12] “ch. 3:21 7 ch. 3:19, 23, 16:27; Ps. 103:14; Eccles. 12:1; 1 Cor. 15:47 ch. 7:22; Job 33:4; Isa. 2:22 1 Cor. 15:45
The Lord God commanded the man, saying, “You may surely eat of every tree of the garden, but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die.”

Then the Lord God said, “It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him a helper fit for him.”

Now out of the ground the Lord God had formed every beast of the field and every bird of the heavens and brought them to the man to see what he would call them. And whatever the man called every living creature, that was its name.

The man gave names to all livestock and to the birds of the heavens and to every beast of the field. But for Adam there was not found a helper fit for him. So the Lord God caused a deep sleep to fall upon the man, and while he slept took one of his ribs and closed up its place with flesh.

And the rib that the Lord God had taken from the man he made into a woman and brought her to the man. Then the man said, “This at last is ‘bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man.”

The Lord God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to work it and keep it. And the Lord God commanded the man, saying, “You shall surely die. What kind of death doth this threaten: physical, spiritual, or some combination of the two? The Hebrew word can be used for any of these ideas, and the only way to discover what “surely die” means in this case is to see what happens as the story unfolds (see note on 3:4-5). In the day that you eat of it does not mean that death will come on that very day. It means that once the forbidden fruit is eaten, death will become a certainty.

Not good is a jarring contrast to 1:31. Helper is one who supplies strength in an area that is lacking in the one who is helped. Fit for him is another way of saying “matched him.” A wife is not to be just like her husband but is to complement him. I will make him can also be translated “I will make for him,” which explains Paul’s statement in 1 Cor. 11:9.

The man gave names. By naming the animals, the man demonstrates his authority over all the other creatures. Adam. See note on 5:1-2.

This at last is bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh. Compare 29:14. Marriage creates the closest of all human relationships. Heterosexual monogamy is the divine pattern for marriage that God established at creation. Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife. Marriage creates obligations that are more important than one’s duty to one’s parents. In ancient Israel, sons did not move away from home when they married. They lived near their parents and inherited their father’s land. But they “left” their parents in the sense of putting their wife’s welfare before that of their parents. The term “hold fast” is used elsewhere for practicing covenant faithfulness (e.g., Deut. 10:20). Thus, other Bible texts call marriage a “covenant” (e.g., Prov. 2:17; Mal. 2:14). Paul’s teaching on marriage in Eph. 5:25-32 is founded on this text. When a man leaves his parents and takes his wife, they shall become one flesh. That is, they become one
33

**GENESIS 3:14**

God created Eve, whose name means “life,” as a helper for Adam. Fashioned from one of Adam’s ribs, Eve became the mother (that is, the female ancestor) of all human beings. Though enjoying perfect fellowship with God, Eve was deceived by the serpent and disobeyed God by eating from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. Because of their sin, Adam and Eve were driven from the paradise of Eden and began to experience great hardship. For Eve, that included pain in childbirth. Yet, as promised in Genesis 3:15, one of her offspring would defeat the serpent and bring salvation and eternal life to all who put their trust in him.

**PROFILE: EVE**

Eve, the mother of all human beings, is a significant figure in the Bible. As the first woman, she is portrayed as both a helper and a sinner. Her role as a helper to Adam reflects the belief in the complementarity of the sexes, with each partner bringing unique qualities to the relationship. However, her role is also marked by her fall from grace due to the temptations of the serpent. Jesus’ role in the Bible is often compared to that of Eve, as a figure who would restore the harmony that was lost through sin. The story of Eve serves as a warning against the dangers of sin and a reminder of the consequences of disobedience.

**KEY REFERENCE: GENESIS 2:23**

"The Lord God said, 'It is not good that man should be alone. I will make him a helper fit for him.'" (Genesis 2:18) This verse is foundational in understanding the role of women in creation. It is often interpreted as God creating Eve as a companion to Adam, emphasizing the importance of relationships in the biblical narrative.

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**24** Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife, and they shall become one flesh. 25 And the man and his wife were both naked and were not ashamed.

**The Fall**

3 Now the serpent was more crafty than any other beast of the field that the Lord God had made.

He said to the woman, “Did God actually say, ‘You shall not eat of any tree in the garden?’” 2 And the woman said to the serpent, “We may eat of the fruit of the trees in the garden, 3 but God said, ‘You shall not eat of the fruit of the tree that is in the midst of the garden, neither shall you touch it, lest you die.’” 4 “But the serpent said to the woman, “You will not surely die. 5 For God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil.” 6 So when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was to be desired to make one wise, 7 she took of its fruit and ate, and she also gave some to her husband who was with her, 8 and he ate. 9 Then the eyes of both were opened, 10 and they knew that they were naked. And they sewed fig leaves together and made themselves loincloths.

8 And they heard the sound of the Lord God walking in the garden of the cool’ of the day, and the man and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the Lord God among the trees of the garden. 9 But the Lord God called the man to the man and said to him, “Where are you?” 10 And he said, “I heard the sound of you in the garden, and I was afraid, because I was naked, and I hid myself.” 11 He said, “Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten of the tree of which I commanded you not to eat?” 12 The man said, “The woman whom you gave to be with me, she gave me fruit of the tree, and I ate.” 13 Then the Lord God said to the woman, “What is this that you have done?” 14 The woman said, “The serpent deceived me, and I ate.”

14 The Lord God said to the serpent,
GENESIS 3:15

“Because you have done this, cursed are you above all livestock and above all beasts of the field; on your belly you shall go, and ¹dust you shall eat all the days of your life.

¹I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring¹ and ²her offspring; ³he shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise his heel.”

To the woman he said, “I will surely multiply your pain in childbirth; ⁴in pain you shall bring forth children. ⁵Your desire shall be for your husband, and he shall rule over you.”

¹Hebrew seed; so throughout Genesis. ²Or against you.

DID YOU KNOW?

Cherubim (3:24) are angels who guard holy places. They appear in various places in the Bible. “Cherubim” is the Hebrew plural form of “cherub.”

3:15 This verse is usually understood as pointing forward to the defeat of the serpent by the offspring (that is, a descendant) of the woman. For this reason, it has been labeled the “Protoevangelium,” that is, the first announcement of the gospel. While Genesis does not explicitly identify the serpent with Satan, that is clearly what the apostle John understood (see Rev. 12:9; 20:2). The idea of the woman’s “offspring” is seen again in Gen. 4:25 in the birth of Seth. The rest of Genesis traces a single line of Seth’s descendants (see diagram, this page), which will eventually produce a king through whom all the nations of the earth will be blessed. he shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise his heel. The use of the singular “he” and “his” suggests that one particular person (“offspring”) is in view. The promise of this person comes to fulfillment in Jesus Christ, who is clearly presented in the NT as overcoming Satan (Heb. 2:14; 1 John 3:8; compare John 12:31). At the same time, he is “bruised” by Satan at the cross.

3:16 Your desire shall be for your husband, and he shall rule over you. God originally intended that there would be a complementary relationship between husband and wife, with the husband in a leadership role (see note on 2:15–16). But that plan has now been distorted and damaged by sin. This takes the form of “desire” on the part of the wife and heavy-handed “rule” on the part of the husband. The Hebrew term here for “desire” appears again in 4:7, where the Lord says to Cain that sin’s “desire is for you.” Eve will have the sinful “desire” to oppose Adam and to assert leadership over him. But Adam will also abandon his God-given role of leading, guarding, and caring for Eve. Instead, he will have a sinful, distorted desire to “rule” over her. Thus one of the most tragic results of Adam and Eve’s rebellion against God is ongoing conflict between husbands and wives, as they both rebel against their God-given roles and responsibilities in marriage. (See notes on Eph. 5:21–33 for the NT ideal for marriage.)

The Genealogies of Genesis

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3:17-19 Because he has eaten what was prohibited (v. 6), Adam will have to struggle to eat in the future. He will no longer enjoy the garden’s abundance but will have to work the ground from which he was taken (v. 23; see note on 2:8–9). The punishment is not the work itself (see note on 2:15–16) but rather the hardship and frustration that it will involve. To say that the ground is cursed and will produce thorns and thistles means that it will no longer be as productive as it was in Eden.

3:19 Because of his sin, the man’s body will return to the ground, that is, he will die. Death was not a part of the original creation (see Rom. 5:12). The Bible looks forward to a time when nature will be set free from death and the other consequences of human sin (Rom. 8:19–22).

3:20–21 God’s words of judgment are immediately followed by two actions that offer hope. First, the man names his wife Eve, which means “life.” The serpent, driven out of the garden, will hate both the woman and the man (v. 15), and there will be enmity between the two sexes (v. 16). Second, God will put enmity between the woman and her offspring against the offspring of the serpent (v. 15). This enmity results in the birth of Jesus Christ, who will conquer the serpent. In the meantime, the woman’s offspring will bruise the serpent’s heel (v. 15). And finally, we are told that the offspring of the woman will be her deliverer (v. 15). These two verses are clearly about the birth of Jesus Christ, whose birth is a major theme throughout the OT (Ps. 2:7; 45:6; 104:14–16; 110:1; Isa. 11:1–9; Mic. 5:2; John 1:14; 3:8; 1 Cor. 15:25; Heb. 2:5–7; 2 Pet. 3:11–13).
they were in the field, Cain rose up against his brother Abel and *killed* him. Then the Lord said to Cain, “Where is Abel your brother?” He said, “I do not know; am I my brother’s keeper?”

10 And the Lord said, “What have you done? The voice of your brother’s blood is crying to me from the ground. And now you are cursed from the ground, which has opened its mouth to receive your brother’s blood from your hand. When you work the ground, it shall no longer yield to you its strength. You shall be a fugitive and a wanderer on the earth.”

11 Cain said to the Lord, “My punishment is greater than I can bear.”

12 Behold, you have driven me today away from the ground, and 3from your face I shall be hidden. I shall be a fugitive and a wanderer on the earth, and whoever finds me will kill me.”

13 Then the Lord said to him, “Not so! If anyone kills Cain, vengeance shall be taken on him sevenfold.” And the Lord put a mark on Cain, lest any who found him should attack him. 10Then Cain went away from the presence of the Lord and settled in the land of Nod, east of Eden.

17 Cain knew his wife, and she conceived and bore Enoch. When he built a city, he called the name of the city after the name of his son, Enoch.

18 To Enoch was born Irad, and Irad fathered Mehujael, and Mehujael fathered Methushael, and Methushael fathered Lamech. 19And Lamech took two wives. The name of the one was Adah, and the name of the other Zillah.

20 Adah bore Jabal; he means “life-giver” (see v. 24 footnote). Second, God makes clothing for Adam and Eve, which suggests that he still cares for them. Because the clothing requires the death of an animal, this can be seen as an anticipation of (1) the system of animal sacrifices that God would later institute to atone for sin, and (2) the death of Christ as the final anticipation of (1) the system of animal sacrifices that God would later institute to atone for sin, and (2) the death of Christ as the final atonement for sin.

22 Then the Lord God said, “‘Behold, the man has become like one of us in knowing good and evil. Now, lest he reach out his hand and take also of the tree of life and eat, and live forever—’

3:15 therefore the Lord God sent him out from the garden of Eden to work the ground from which he was taken. 24 He drove out the man, and at the east of the garden of Eden he placed the 3cherubim and a flaming sword that turned every way to guard the way to the tree of life.

Cain and Abel

4 Now Adam knew Eve his wife, and she conceived and bore Cain, saying, “I have gotten a man with the help of the Lord.” 2 And again, she bore his brother Abel. Now Abel was a keeper of sheep, and Cain a worker of the ground. 3 In the course of time Cain brought to the Lord an offering of “the fruit of the ground, 4and Abel also brought of “the firstborn of his flock and of their fat portions. And the Lord 5had regard for Abel and his offering, 6but 7for Cain and his offering he had no regard. So Cain was very angry, and his face fell. 8The Lord said to Cain, “Why are you angry, and why has your face fallen? 9If you do well, will you not be accepted? And if you do not do well, sin is crouching at the door. Its desire is for you, but you must rule over it.”

10 Cain spoke to Abel his brother. 5 And when

1 Eve sounds like the Hebrew for life-giver and resembles the word for living. 2 Cain sounds like the Hebrew for gotten. 3 Hebrew will there not be a lifting up of your face? 4 Or against. 5 Hebrew; Samaritan; Septuagint; SYRIAC; Vulgate add Let us go out to the field 6 Or My guilt is too great to bear. 7 Noah means wandering

14:9 I am my brother’s keeper? Cain denies any knowledge about his brother and shows no sign of remorse.

14:10-12 Because his brother’s blood cries out to God from the ground, Cain will no longer be able to cultivate the soil. As seen throughout Scripture, human sin has an impact on the fertility of the earth (compare 3:17-18).

14:13-16 Cain will be alienated from both the ground and God. He will become a fugitive and a wanderer on the earth. He fears that others will have such a dread of him that anyone who sees him will kill him. The precise nature of the mark on Cain is not known, except that it must have been something visible.

14:17 Cain knew his wife. Presumably, Cain married his sister, since the whole human race descends from Adam and Eve (see 5:4). The later laws forbidding this practice, such as Lev. 18:9, would not have been relevant yet.

14:18-22 Lamech’s immediate descendants are associated with animal breeding, music, and metalwork. Whereas Abel is linked to sheep (v. 2), Jabal raised livestock, which probably included cattle and donkeys, and possibly camels.

was the father of those who dwell in tents and have livestock. His brother’s name was Jubal; he was the father of all those who play the lyre and pipe. Zillah also bore Tubal-cain; he was the forger of all instruments of bronze and iron. The sister of Tubal-cain was Naamah.

Lamech said to his wives:

“Adah and Zillah, hear my voice; you wives of Lamech, listen to what I say: I have killed a man for wounding me, a young man for striking me.

24 If Cain’s revenge is sevenfold, then Lamech’s is seventy-sevenfold.”

1 Seth sounds like the Hebrew for he appointed 2 Hebrew adam

And Adam knew his wife again, and she bore a son and called his name Seth, for she said, “God has appointed me another offspring instead of Abel, for Cain killed him.” To Seth also a son was born, and he called his name Enosh. At that time people began “to call upon the name of the Lord.”

Adam’s Descendants to Noah

This is the book of the generations of Adam. When God created man, “he made him in the likeness of God. Male and female he created them, and he blessed them and named them Man” or in the bodies of humans (or both) following the flood. Psalm 90:10 describes a normal life span as 70 or 80 years, which has more or less been the case throughout subsequent history.

The genealogy of Adam’s family through Seth contrasts with the seven generations linked to Cain (4:17-18). Instead of saying that the sons of God came in to the daughters of man and multiplied on the earth in those days, and also afterward, when the sons of God saw that the daughters of man were beautiful, they married them, the text says the Nephilim were on the earth in those days. Scholars have proposed at least two interpretations of this passage: (1) fallen angels were marrying the daughters of man; (2) male descendants of Seth were marrying the ungodly daughters of man.

Genealogies: Showing Age at Fatherhood and Age at Death

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24 [Num. 15, 26] 1 [Ch. 10; Luke 3:38] 16 [Ch. 5:6, 7; Ps. 116:17, Zeph. 3:9; Zech. 13:9]