

INTRODUCTION TO GENESIS

Author and Date

The book of Genesis is the first book of the Pentateuch (Genesis–Deuteronomy). It gives the foundation stories of God’s relation to the world, to the patriarchs, and to Israel. The name of Moses has been closely associated with the Pentateuch. He led Israel out of Egypt and was God’s faithful servant. His ministry has been variously dated from 1500 to 1300 B.C.

Audience

Genesis narrates for Israel the story of people who walked with the Lord (Enoch, Noah, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and Joseph) to encourage their descendants to break away from their resistant and recurring hardness of heart. The author intends the reader of the Pentateuch to connect the foundation stories (exile from Eden, human wickedness, and God’s unfolding promises of grace) with Israel’s new opportunity (of entering the land, despite Israel’s rebelliousness, and through God’s unfailing faithfulness to his promises). Genesis identifies the promises and path to life that must be understood and followed in order for the people of God to fulfill their calling as it is described and prescribed in Moses’ later books (e.g., Deut. 30:19–20) and, indeed, the rest of Scripture.

The Theological Message of Genesis

Genesis opens with the Bible’s greatest claim: there is only one God, and he made the heavens and the earth. This assertion sets Genesis apart from other ancient creation stories and from all polytheistic religions. All of life’s greatest questions and purposes begin and end in God. Who he is determines who we are and why everything in the universe exists.

God’s role as Creator and mighty King is seen in Genesis 1:1–2:3. He speaks his powerful word, and the world comes into existence. Since he is their Creator, all things are his servants (cf. Ps. 119:89–91). The order of creation shows that God provides for land, animals, and people before making them. And as he makes them he assesses them, repeatedly calling them “good.” When he completes his work he rests, thereby providing an example for his creatures to follow.

Genesis then highlights that human beings are created in the image of God. God makes men and women to be his regents, stewards of his creation (Gen. 1:26–31). Unlike the animals, they bear his image: they think, speak, relate, work, rule, and assess (2:4–25). Best of all, they can know him, walk with him, and share his work. Created sinless, they need only to keep his commands for their perfect life with him to continue.

But the first man (Adam) and woman (Eve) sin. They distrust God’s motives and words and break his commands (3:1–7). They fear his

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presence (3:8–13) and incur his punishment. Sin costs them everything dear to them. The ground, their children, and their walk with God all suffer (3:16–19). They pass on sin to their children like a genetic defect (4:1–26; Rom. 5:12–21). Soon they have so marred the world that God sweeps away all but Noah’s family in a great flood (Gen. 6:5–7:24).

God promises redemption. The Creator creates a way people can be saved from sin and its deadly effects. Faced with a massive problem, he begins simply and organically, with people. He promises a Savior through Eve, the first sinner (3:15). He makes a covenant with the earth and with Noah’s family, pledging that life will continue and binding Noah’s family to God’s service (8:20–9:7).

God makes a covenant with Abraham. God chooses Abraham, Noah’s descendant, and his family to bless all the world’s nations (12:1–9). He says to Abraham that in him, “all the families of the earth shall be blessed” (12:3; cf. Gal. 3:8), and promises to give him an eternal homeland (Gen. 12:1–2, 7; 13:14–17). God protects his family in Egypt, where he prepares them to bless the world (15:13–16; 37:1–50:26).

God saves by grace through faith. God saves Noah, Abraham, their spouses, and their descendants by his grace through their faith in him (8:20; 15:6; cf. Heb. 11:1–40). They do the good works he saved them to do (Gen. 18:18–19; cf. Eph. 2:9–10) so others will come to know God. God never surrenders his kingdom or his subjects to sin. He saves those who trust him.

Jesus Christ is a descendant of Adam and Eve, Noah, and Abraham (Matt. 1:1–17; Luke 3:23–38). He keeps all of God’s promises. He holds creation together (Col. 1:17; Heb. 1:3), defeats sin (Rom. 3:21–31) and death (1 Cor. 15:1–58), and blesses all nations (Matt. 28:16–20). He is the only Savior (Acts 4:12), and his people are a new creation (2 Cor. 5:16–20).

Outline

- I. The Creator Is Sovereign King of the Whole World (1:1–2:3)
- II. The Creation of the Garden of Eden and the First Human Family: Adam and Eve, Their Sin, Expulsion from Eden, and Life to the East of Eden (2:4–4:26)
- III. The Family of Adam: From Adam to Noah (5:1–6:8)
- IV. The Story of Noah: His Walk with God, the Flood, the Ark, and God’s Covenant (6:9–9:29)
- V. The Family of Noah: The Nations and the Tower of Babel (10:1–11:9)
- VI. The Family of Shem: From Shem to Terah (11:10–26)
- VII. The Family of Terah: Abraham, Isaac, and Ishmael and God’s Covenant with Abraham to the Exclusion of Ishmael (11:27–25:11)
- VIII. The Family of Ishmael (25:12–18)
- IX. The Family of Isaac: God’s Promises to Isaac and Jacob and the Exclusion of Esau (25:19–35:29)
- X. The Family of Esau (36:1–43)
- XI. The Family of Jacob: The Twelve Tribes (37:1–50:26)

GENESIS

The Creation of the World

In the^a beginning, God created the heavens and the earth. ²The earth was ^bwithout 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.

³And God said, ^c“Let there be light,” and there was light. ⁴And God saw that the light was good. And God separated the light from the darkness. ⁵God called the light Day, and the darkness he called Night. And there was evening and there was morning, the first day.

⁶And God said, ^d“Let there be an expanse¹ in the midst of the waters, and let it separate the waters from the waters.” ⁷And God made² the expanse and ^eseparated the waters that were under the expanse from the waters that were ^fabove the expanse. And it was so. ⁸And God called the expanse Heaven.³ And there was evening and there was morning, the second day.

⁹And God said, ^g“Let the waters under the heavens be gathered together into one place, and let the dry land appear.” And it was so. ¹⁰God called the dry land Earth,⁴ and the waters that were gathered together he called Seas. And God saw that it was good.

¹¹And God said, ^h“Let the earth sprout vegetation, plants⁵ yielding seed, and fruit trees bearing fruit in which is their seed, each according to its kind, on the earth.” And it was so. ¹²The earth brought forth vegetation, plants yielding seed according to their own kinds, and trees bearing fruit in which is their seed, each according to its kind. And God saw that it was good. ¹³And there was evening and there was morning, the third day.

¹⁴And God said, “Let there be lights in the expanse of the heavens to separate the day from the night. And let them be for ⁱsigns and

for ^jseasons,⁶ and for days and years, ¹⁵and let them be lights in the expanse of the heavens to give light upon the earth.” And it was so. ¹⁶And God ^kmade the two great lights—the greater light to rule the day and the lesser light to rule the night—and the stars. ¹⁷And God set them in the expanse of the heavens to give light on the earth, ¹⁸to ^lrule over the day and over the night, and to separate the light from the darkness. And God saw that it was good. ¹⁹And there was evening and there was morning, the fourth day.

²⁰And God said, “Let the waters swarm with swarms of living creatures, and let birds⁷ fly above the earth across the expanse of the heavens.” ²¹So ^mGod 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. ²²And God blessed them, saying, ⁿ“Be fruitful and multiply and fill the waters in the seas, and let birds multiply on the earth.” ²³And there was evening and there was morning, the fifth day.

²⁴And 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. ²⁵And 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.

²⁶Then God said, ^o“Let us make man⁸ in our

Chapter 1 ¹Job 38:4-7; Ps. 33:6; 136:5; Isa. 42:5; 45:18; John 1:1-3; Acts 14:15; 17:24; Col. 1:16, 17; Heb. 1:10; 11:3; Rev. 4:11 ²Jer. 4:23 ³2 Cor. 4:6 ⁴Job 37:18; Ps. 136:5; Jer. 10:12; 51:15 ⁵Prov. 8:27-29 ⁶Ps. 148:4 ⁷Job 38:8-11; Ps. 33:7; 136:6; Jer. 5:22; 2 Pet. 3:5 ⁸Ps. 104:14 ⁹Jer. 10:2; Ezek. 32:7, 8; Joel 2:30, 31; 3:15; Matt. 24:29; Luke 21:25 ¹⁰Ps. 104:19 ¹¹Deut. 4:19; Ps. 136:7-9 ¹²Jer. 31:35 ¹³Ps. 104:25, 26 ¹⁴ch. 8:17; 9:1 ¹⁵ch. 3:22; 11:7; Isa. 6:8

¹ Or a canopy; also verses 7, 8, 14, 15, 17, 20 ² Or fashioned; also verse 16 ³ Or Sky; also verses 9, 14, 15, 17, 20, 26, 28, 30; 2:1 ⁴ Or Land; also verses 11, 12, 22, 24, 25, 26, 28, 30; 2:1 ⁵ Or small plants; also verses 12, 29 ⁶ Or appointed times ⁷ Or flying things; see Leviticus 11:19-20

⁸ The Hebrew word for man (*adam*) is the generic term for mankind and becomes the proper name *Adam*

image, ²⁶ after our likeness. And ²⁷ 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.”

²⁷ So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; ²⁸ male and female he created them.

²⁸ And God blessed them. And God said to them, ²⁹ “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.” ³⁰ 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. ³¹ You shall have them for food. ³² And ³³ 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. ³⁴ 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

2 Thus the heavens and the earth were finished, and ¹ all the host of them. ² And ³ on the seventh day God finished his work that he had done, and he rested on the seventh day from all his work that he had done. ⁴ 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

⁴ ¹ 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.

²⁶ch. 5:1; 9:6; 1 Cor. 11:7; Eph. 4:24; Col. 3:10; James 3:9 ²⁷ch. 9:2; Ps. 8:6-8; James 3:7 ²⁸ch. 2:18, 21-23; 5:2; Mal. 2:15; Matt. 19:4; Mark 10:6 ²⁹ch. 9:1, 7 ³⁰ch. 9:3; Ps. 104:14, 15; 145:15, 16 ³¹Ps. 147:9 ³²Eccles. 7:29; 1 Tim. 4:4 **Chapter 2** ¹Deut. 4:19; Ps. 33:6 ²Ex. 20:8-11; 31:17; Deut. 5:12-14; Heb. 4:4 ³ch. 1:1

Mankind: The Image of God

Genesis 1:26-31

As God prepares to make mankind, he declares he will make creatures like himself and give them rule over his creation (v. 26). He then executes his plan: “So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them” (v. 27). The text does not define the image of God in mankind, but it does offer several hints.

Adam and Eve *are* God’s image. God created them holy (Eph. 4:24) and with the ability to obey him in knowledge (Col. 3:9-10), to use language, and to be creative. Bearing God’s image means possessing personhood, which involves unique souls and relationships with God and others. Moses hints at this by showing that two genders were a part of God’s plan from the beginning (Gen. 1:27). God gives significance to both men and women by creating them in his image, and both image him in his world.

Image-bearing also includes fulfilling the roles God assigns. Adam and Eve are to represent God by exercising dominion over his creation (vv. 26, 28). In addition, because Adam and Eve are the first parents of all humans, only one race of image-bearers exists, as Paul underscores: God “made from one man every nation of mankind to live on all the face of the earth” (Acts 17:26). Consequently, mankind’s various ethnic groups come from one family, ruling out any racism.

Theology for Life—May God help us to treat people of both genders and all races with the respect and dignity that accords with their creation in God’s image.

For more on the image of God see:
Col. 3:9-10

⁵When no ²bush of the field¹ was yet in the land² 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 ³to work the ground, ⁶and a mist³ was going up from the land and was watering the whole face of the ground— ⁷then the LORD God formed the man of ^bdust from the ground and ^cbreathed into his ^dnostrils the breath of life, and ^ethe man became a living creature. ⁸And the LORD God planted a ^fgarden in Eden, in the east, and there he put the man whom he had formed. ⁹And out of the ground the LORD God made to spring up every tree that is pleasant to the sight and good for food. ⁹The tree of life was in the midst of the garden, ⁹and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.

¹⁰A river flowed out of Eden to water the garden, and there it divided and became four rivers. ¹¹The name of the first is the Pishon. It is the one that flowed around the whole land of ¹Havilah, where there is gold. ¹²And the gold of that land is good; bdellium and onyx stone are there. ¹³The name of the second river is the Gihon. It is the one that flowed around the whole land of Cush. ¹⁴And the name of the third river is the ¹Tigris, which flows east of Assyria. And the fourth river is the Euphrates.

¹⁵The LORD God took the man ^kand put him in the garden of Eden to work it and keep it. ¹⁶And the LORD God commanded the man, saying, “You may surely eat of every tree of the garden, ¹⁷but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil ^lyou shall not eat, for in the day that you eat⁴ of it you ^mshall surely die.”

¹⁸Then the LORD God said, “It is not good that the man should be alone; ⁿI will make him a helper fit for⁵ him.” ¹⁹Now out of the ground the LORD God had formed⁶ every beast of the field and every bird of the heavens and ^pbrought them to the man to see what he would call them. And whatever the man called every living creature, that was its name. ²⁰The man gave names to all livestock and to the birds of the heavens and to every beast of the field. But for Adam⁷ there was not found a helper fit for him. ²¹So the LORD God caused a ^qdeep sleep to fall upon the man, and while he slept took one of his ribs and closed up its place with flesh. ²²And the rib that the LORD God had taken from the man he made⁸

⁵[ch. 1:11, 12] ⁹ch. 3:23 ⁷ch. 3:19, 23; 18:27; Ps. 103:14; Eccles. 12:7; 1 Cor. 15:47 ^{ch.} 7:22; Job 33:4; Isa. 2:22 ⁹Job 27:3 ⁹Cited 1 Cor. 15:45 ⁸ver. 15; ch. 13:10; Isa. 51:3; Ezek. 28:13; 31:8; Joel 2:3 ⁹ch. 3:22; Rev. 2:7; 22:2, 14 ^hver. 17 ¹¹ch. 10:7, 29; 25:18; 1 Sam. 15:7 ¹⁴Dan. 10:4 ¹⁵ver. 8 ¹⁷ch. 3:1-3, 11, 17 ^mRom. 6:23; James 1:15 ¹⁸1 Cor. 11:9; 1 Tim. 2:13 ¹⁹ch. 1:20, 24 ^pPs. 8:6 ²¹ch. 15:12; 1 Sam. 26:12

¹Or open country ²Or earth; also verse 6 ³Or spring ⁴Or when you eat ⁵Or corresponding to; also verse 20 ⁶Or And out of the ground the LORD God formed ⁷Or the man ⁸Hebrew built

Mankind: The Cultural Mandate

Genesis 1:28

God’s image-bearers have work to do in his good world. God’s first command to them is “be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth” (v. 28), for he wants his world to be filled with more image-bearers who know and love him and who will serve him as his vicegerents.

God’s second command to Adam and Eve concerns the created order—they are to “subdue it, and have dominion over . . . every living thing” (v. 28). In other words, God desires innovation and cultivation of the creation and its resources to expand Eden into the whole world. God cares for his good creation and for the people who live in it, so he establishes this cultural mandate to reflect his glory throughout the world. Even after the fall, God commands mankind, through Noah’s family, to continue this mandate (9:1, 7) for the glory of God in all the earth.

Theology for Life—Our Creator calls us also to raise children after his own heart and to cultivate the earth responsibly for his glory and our well-being.

*For more on
God’s creation
of mankind see:*

Gen. 2:7–8
Ps. 8:1–9

*For more on the
image of God see:*

Gen. 1:26–31
Col. 3:9–10

into a woman and brought her to the man.
 23 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 ^staken out of Man.”¹

24¹ 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 ^u 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, ‘You² shall not eat of any tree in the gar-

den?’” ² And the woman said to the serpent, “We may eat of the fruit of the trees in the garden, ³ but God said, ^v ‘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.’” ^{4w} 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,³ she took of its fruit ^x and ate, and she also gave some to her husband who was with her, ^y and he ate. ^{7z} Then the eyes

²³ch. 29:14; Judg. 9:2; 2 Sam. 5:1; 19:13; [Eph. 5:28-30] ⁵¹1 Cor. 11:8 ²⁴Cited Matt. 19:5; Mark 10:7; 1 Cor. 6:16; Eph. 5:31; [Ps. 45:10; 1 Cor. 7:10, 11] **Chapter 3** ^{1w}Matt. 10:16; 2 Cor. 11:3; Rev. 12:9; 20:2 ³ch. 2:17 ^{4w}ver. 13; John 8:44; [2 Cor. 11:3] ^{6z}1 Tim. 2:14 ^vver. 12, 17; Hos. 6:7 ^{7z}ver. 5

¹ The Hebrew words for *woman* (*ishshah*) and *man* (*ish*) sound alike ² In Hebrew *you* is plural in verses 1–5 ³ Or to give insight

Mankind: Creation

Genesis 2:7-8

Human beings are creatures of the Creator. While Genesis may not give us a highly detailed account of human beginnings, it does accurately record the historical events of God’s creative work. This account assured the people of Israel that their God was the Creator of the heavens and the earth and that they could count on his goodness and generosity. Genesis 2:7–8 speak of the creation of Adam, amplifying 1:26–31 in order to show that God is a divine potter, capable of using the dust from the ground to shape a body for his image-bearer. The passage showcases both God’s skill as Creator and his sovereignty over his creature.

After sculpting Adam’s body, God “breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man became a living creature” (2:7). Here God is giving Adam life, just as he gave “the breath of life” to animals (1:30; 6:17), which the text also describes as “living creatures” (1:20, 21, 24). However, unlike God’s creation of animals, his creation of Adam is intimate—face to face—and personal.

Because it was not good for Adam to be alone, God makes for him a counterpart and partner. After Adam’s fruitless search among the animals for a companion, God makes of his flesh and bones a person to be Adam’s wife—a woman Adam names Eve (2:18–23; 3:20). God brings Adam and Eve together and they are united, including sexually (2:24–25). Their marriage bond, which their Maker establishes, is to be exclusive and permanent, and they are to produce offspring (1:28). God puts Adam and Eve in the garden of Eden to work and tend it (2:15).

Theology for Life—God himself made our first parents, and he made them for himself. We are God’s creatures and belong to him. We find dignity and security in living as his creatures and giving him the honor due him as our Maker. That includes honoring his institution of marriage.

*For more on
 God’s creation
 of mankind see:*
 Ps. 8:1–9

*For more on sex
 and marriage see:*
 Song 1:2–2:7
 1 Cor. 6:15–20

of both were opened, ^a 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 in the cool¹ of the day, and the man and his wife^b hid themselves from the presence of the LORD God among the trees of the garden. ⁹ But the LORD God called to the man and said to him, “Where are you?”² ¹⁰ And he said, “I heard the sound of you in the garden, and I was afraid, ^c 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, ^d “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?” The woman said, ^e “The serpent deceived me, and I ate.”

¹⁴ The LORD God said to the serpent,

⁷ch. 2:25 ⁸(Ps. 139:1-12; Jer. 23:23, 24) ¹⁰ver. 7; ch. 2:25 ¹²ch. 2:18; Job 31:33 ¹³ver. 4; 2 Cor. 11:3; 1 Tim. 2:14

¹ Hebrew *wind* ² In Hebrew *you* is singular in verses 9 and 11

Sin: The Fall

Genesis 3:1-19

After the creation accounts in Genesis 1-2, chapter 3 tells of the fall of Adam and Eve and its catastrophic effects. Suddenly a new character enters the scene—the serpent, a mouthpiece for an evil power whom Scripture later identifies as the Devil or Satan (John 8:44; Rev. 12:9; 20:2). Addressing Eve, he first questions God’s prohibition of eating from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil on penalty of death (Gen. 3:1) and then denies God’s words (v. 4). Finally, he accuses God of selfishly withholding the fruit (v. 5). Satan seduces Eve, who eats from the tree and gives to Adam, who does likewise (v. 6).

The results of their primal sin are immense. God declares the death sentence on them both (v. 19), which is executed immediately in spiritual death (v. 8) and ultimately in physical death (5:5) as they are cut off from the tree of life (3:22). Their sin also has grave consequences for marriage roles (3:16) and for man’s work, which will be toilsome and frustrating (vv. 17-19). Because they have become slaves of sin, God will expel them from the garden-sanctuary (vv. 22-24).

After Adam and Eve rebel, they hide themselves from their Creator, but he finds them, holds them accountable for their sin, and promises salvation. God curses the serpent and the Evil One controlling it. His curse on the serpent, Satan, is not literal but figurative: to “eat dust” means to suffer humiliation and defeat (cf. Mic. 7:17). God further declares, “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” (Gen. 3:15).

Eve’s offspring will be an individual champion who defeats the Evil One; Satan’s offspring are those he will seduce into following him. Here is the first mention in Scripture of the gospel (also known as the *protoeuangelion*), as God promises to defeat the serpent for the benefit of humankind. The champion is a human (the woman’s offspring) powerful enough to defeat the Devil. Genesis thus begins to lay the foundation for the theology of the Messiah.

Theology for Life—God’s provision of an offspring who will overcome the serpent’s seed points to Jesus Christ’s defeat of Satan and death, deliverance of human beings, and liberation of creation from sin’s consequences (Heb. 2:14-15; Rom. 8:19-22; 16:20).

For more on Adam’s sin see:

Gen. 6:5-8
Rom. 5:12-19

For more on death see:

John 11:1-57
Rom. 6:23
1 Cor. 15:1-26

For more on Christ’s victory see:

Luke 4:1-13
John 12:31
Heb. 2:14-15

“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 ^fdust you shall eat
 all the days of your life.

¹⁵ I will put enmity between you and the
 woman,
 and between your offspring¹ and ^gher
 offspring;
^hhe shall bruise your head,
 and you shall bruise his heel.”

¹⁶ To the woman he said,

“I will surely multiply your pain in child-
 bearing;
ⁱin pain you shall bring forth children.
^jYour desire shall be contrary to² your
 husband,
 but he shall ^krule over you.”

¹⁷ And to Adam he said,

“Because you have listened to the voice of
 your wife
 and have eaten of the tree
^lof which I commanded you,
 ‘You shall not eat of it,’
^mcursed is the ground because of you;
ⁿin pain you shall eat of it all the days
 of your life;

¹⁸ thorns and thistles it shall bring forth
 for you;
 and you shall eat the plants of the field.

¹⁹ By the sweat of your face
 you shall eat bread,
 till you return to the ground,
 for out of it you were taken;
^ofor you are dust,
 and ^pto dust you shall return.”

²⁰ The man called his wife’s name Eve,
 because she was the mother of all living.³

²¹ And the LORD God made for Adam and for
 his wife garments of skins and clothed them.

²² Then the LORD God said, ^q“Behold, the
 man has become like one of us in knowing
 good and evil. Now, lest he reach out his hand
^rand take also of the tree of life and eat, and

live forever—” ²³ therefore the LORD God sent
 him out from the garden of Eden ^sto work the
 ground from which he was taken. ²⁴He drove
 out the man, and at the east of the garden of
 Eden he placed the ^tcherubim 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
 gotten⁴ 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 ^uthe fruit
 of the ground, ⁴ and Abel also brought of ^vthe
 firstborn of his flock and of their fat portions.
 And the LORD ^whad regard for Abel and his
 offering, ⁵ but ^xfor Cain and his offering he
 had no regard. So Cain was very angry, and
 his face fell. ⁶ The LORD said to Cain, “Why are
 you angry, and why has your face fallen? ⁷ ^yIf
 you do well, will you not be accepted?⁵ And
 if you do not do well, sin is crouching at the
 door. ^z Its desire is contrary to⁶ you, but you
 must rule over it.”

⁸ Cain spoke to Abel his brother.⁷ And when
 they were in the field, Cain rose up against his
 brother Abel and ^akilled him. ⁹ Then the LORD
 said to Cain, “Where is Abel your brother?”
 He said, ^b“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
^cis crying to me from the ground. ¹¹ And now
^dyou are cursed from the ground, which has
 opened its mouth to receive your brother’s
 blood from your hand. ¹² 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.” ¹³ Cain said to the LORD,
 “My ^e punishment is greater than I can bear.⁸

¹⁴Isa. 65:25; Mic. 7:17 ¹⁵Isa. 7:14; Mic. 5:3; Matt. 1:23, 25; Luke 1:34, 35; Gal. 4:4; 1 Tim. 2:15 ¹⁶Rom. 16:20; Heb. 2:14; Rev. 20:1-3, 10 ¹⁶[John 16:21] ¹ch. 4:7; Song 7:10 ¹1 Cor. 11:3; 14:34; Eph. 5:22-24; Col. 3:18; 1 Tim. 2:11, 12; Titus 2:5; 1 Pet. 3:1, 5, 6 ¹⁷ch. 2:17 ¹⁸ch. 5:29; [Rom. 8:20-22] ¹⁹Eccles. 2:22, 23 ¹⁹ch. 2:7; Ps. 103:14 ¹⁹Job 34:15; Ps. 104:29; Eccles. 3:20; 12:7; Rom. 5:12 ²²ver. 5 ^{ch. 2:9} ²³ch. 2:5 ²⁴Ps. 18:10; 104:4; Heb. 1:7; [Ex. 25:18-22; Ezek. 28:11-16] **Chapter 4** ³Lev. 2:12; Num. 18:12 ⁴Ex. 13:12; Num. 18:17; Prov. 3:9 ⁵Heb. 11:4 ⁵[Prov. 21:27] ⁷Eccles. 8:12, 13; Isa. 3:10, 11; Rom. 2:6-11 ^{ch. 3:16} ⁸Matt. 23:35; Heb. 12:24; 1 John 3:12; Jude 11 ⁹John 8:44 ¹⁰Heb. 12:24; [Rev. 6:10] ¹¹Deut. 27:24; [Num. 35:33] ¹³ch. 19:15

¹ Hebrew *seed*; so throughout Genesis ² Or *shall be toward* (see 4:7) ³ Eve sounds like the Hebrew for *life-giver* and resembles the word for *living* ⁴ Cain sounds like the Hebrew for *gotten* ⁵ Hebrew *will there not be a lifting up* [of your face]? ⁶ Or *is toward* ⁷ Hebrew; Samaritan, Septuagint, Syriac, Vulgate add *Let us go out to the field* ⁸ Or *My guilt is too great to bear*

¹⁴ Behold, ¹ you have driven me today away from the ground, and ⁹ from your face I shall be hidden. I shall be a fugitive and a wanderer on the earth, ^h and whoever finds me will kill me.” ¹⁵ Then the LORD said to him, “Not so! If anyone kills Cain, vengeance shall be taken on him ⁱ sevenfold.” And the LORD ¹ put a mark on Cain, lest any who found him should attack him. ¹⁶ Then Cain went away from the presence of the LORD and settled in the land of Nod, ¹ 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. ¹⁹ And Lamech took two wives. The name of the one was Adah, and the name of the other Zillah. ²⁰ Adah bore Jabal; he was the father of those who dwell in tents and have livestock. ²¹ His brother's name was Jubal; he was the father of all those who play the lyre and pipe. ²² Zillah also bore Tubal-cain; he was the forger of all instruments of bronze and iron. The sister of Tubal-cain was Naamah.

²³ 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 ^k If Cain's revenge is sevenfold,
then Lamech's is seventy-sevenfold.”

²⁵ And Adam knew his wife again, and she bore a son and called his name Seth, for she said, “God has appointed² for me another offspring instead of Abel, for Cain killed him.”

²⁶ To ¹ Seth also a son was born, and he called his name ^m Enosh. At that time people began ⁿ to call upon the name of the LORD.

Adam's Descendants to Noah

5 This is the book of the generations of Adam. When God created man, ^o he made him in the likeness of God. ² Male and female he created them, and he blessed them and named them Man³ when they were created. ³ When Adam had lived 130 years, he fathered

a son in his own likeness, after his image, and ^p named him Seth. ⁴ ^q The days of Adam after he fathered Seth were 800 years; and he had other sons and daughters. ⁵ Thus all the days that Adam lived were 930 years, ^r and he died.

⁶ When Seth had lived 105 years, ^s he fathered Enosh. ⁷ Seth lived after he fathered Enosh 807 years and had other sons and daughters. ⁸ Thus all the days of Seth were 912 years, and he died.

⁹ When Enosh had lived 90 years, he fathered Kenan. ¹⁰ Enosh lived after he fathered Kenan 815 years and had other sons and daughters. ¹¹ Thus all the days of Enosh were 905 years, and he died.

¹² When Kenan had lived 70 years, he fathered Mahalalel. ¹³ Kenan lived after he fathered Mahalalel 840 years and had other sons and daughters. ¹⁴ Thus all the days of Kenan were 910 years, and he died.

¹⁵ When Mahalalel had lived 65 years, he fathered Jared. ¹⁶ Mahalalel lived after he fathered Jared 830 years and had other sons and daughters. ¹⁷ Thus all the days of Mahalalel were 895 years, and he died.

¹⁸ When Jared had lived 162 years, he fathered ¹ Enoch. ¹⁹ Jared lived after he fathered Enoch 800 years and had other sons and daughters. ²⁰ Thus all the days of Jared were 962 years, and he died.

²¹ When Enoch had lived 65 years, he fathered Methuselah. ²² Enoch ^u walked with God⁴ after he fathered Methuselah 300 years and had other sons and daughters. ²³ Thus all the days of Enoch were 365 years. ²⁴ Enoch ^u walked with God, and he was not,⁵ ^v for God took him.

²⁵ When Methuselah had lived 187 years, he fathered Lamech. ²⁶ Methuselah lived after he fathered Lamech 782 years and had other sons and daughters. ²⁷ Thus all the days of Methuselah were 969 years, and he died.

²⁸ When Lamech had lived 182 years, he fathered a son ²⁹ and called his name Noah, saying, “Out of the ground ^w that the LORD has cursed, this one shall bring us relief⁶ from

¹⁴ Job 15:20-24 ² Kgs. 24:20; Ps. 51:11; 143:7; Jer. 52:3 ^h ch. 9:6; Num. 35:19 ¹⁵ Ps. 79:12 ¹ [Ezek. 9:4, 6; Rev. 14:9, 11] ²⁴ ver. 15 ²⁶ ¹ Chr. 1:1; Luke 3:38 ^m ch. 5:6 ⁿ Ps. 116:17; Zeph. 3:9; Zech. 13:9 **Chapter 5** ¹ ^o See ch. 1:26, 27 ³ ch. 4:25 ⁴ For ver. 4-32, see 1 Chr. 1:1-4; Luke 3:36-38 ⁵ ch. 3:19 ⁶ ch. 4:26 ¹⁸ Jude 14 ²² ver. 24; ch. 6:9; [Mic. 6:8; Mal. 2:6] ²⁴ [See ver. 22 above] ^v Heb. 11:5; [2 Kgs. 2:11] ²⁹ ch. 3:17

¹ Nod means wandering ² Seth sounds like the Hebrew for he appointed ³ Hebrew adam ⁴ Septuagint pleased God; also verse 24 ⁵ Septuagint was not found ⁶ Noah sounds like the Hebrew for rest

our work and from the painful toil of our hands.”³⁰ Lamech lived after he fathered Noah 595 years and had other sons and daughters.³¹ Thus all the days of Lamech were 777 years, and he died.

³² After Noah was 500 years old, Noah fathered ³Shem, Ham, and ⁷Japheth.

Increasing Corruption on Earth

6 When man began to multiply on the face of the land and daughters were born to them,² the sons of God saw that the daughters of man were attractive. And they took as their wives any they chose.³ Then the LORD said,² “My Spirit shall not abide in¹ man forever,³ for he is flesh: his days shall be 120 years.”⁴ The Nephilim² were on the earth in those days, and also afterward, when the sons of God came in to the daughters of man and they bore children to them. These were the mighty men who were of old, the men of renown.

⁵^b The LORD saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every^c intention of the thoughts of his heart was

only evil continually.⁶ And^d the LORD regretted that he had made man on the earth, and it^e grieved him to his heart.⁷ So the LORD said, “I will blot out man whom I have created from the face of the land, man and animals and creeping things and birds of the heavens, for I am sorry that I have made them.”⁸ But Noah^f found favor in the eyes of the LORD.

Noah and the Flood

⁹ These are the generations of Noah.⁹ Noah was a righteous man,^h blameless in his generation. Noahⁱ walked with God.¹⁰ And Noah had three sons, Shem, Ham, and Japheth.

¹¹ Now the earth was corrupt in God’s sight, and the earth was filled with violence.¹² And God^j saw the earth, and behold, it was corrupt,^k for all flesh had corrupted their way on the earth.¹³ And God said to Noah,^l “I have determined to make an end of all flesh,³ for

³²ch. 6:10 ¹⁰ch. 10:21 **Chapter 6** ³1 Pet. 3:19, 20; [Neh. 9:30; Gal. 5:16, 17] ^aPs. 78:39 ^bPs. 14:2, 3 ^cch. 8:21; Job 14:4, 15:14; Ps. 51:5; Jer. 17:9; Matt. 15:19; Rom. 3:23 ^d1 Sam. 15:11; 2 Sam. 24:16; Joel 2:13; [Num. 23:19; 1 Sam. 15:29] ^eIsa. 63:10; Eph. 4:30 ^fch. 19:19; Ex. 33:12, 13, 16, 17 ^gch. 7:1; Ezek. 14:14, 20; 2 Pet. 2:5 ^hJob 1:1, 8; Luke 1:6 ⁱch. 5:22, 24; [Heb. 11:7] ^jPs. 14:2, 3; 53:2, 3 ^kJob 22:15-17 ^l3 Ezek. 7:2, 3, 6

¹ Or *My Spirit shall not contend with* ² Or *giants* ³ Hebrew *The end of all flesh has come before me*

Sin: Its Universality

Genesis 6:5-8

Although we do not know how much time elapsed between the fall and the flood, Scripture leaves no doubt as to the deterioration of mankind’s moral condition in that interval. The words “The LORD saw” of verse 5 echo “And God saw” of 1:31. But what he saw on these two occasions could not be more different. After creation, everything God saw was “very good” (1:31). Here God sees humanity’s great and constant evil in thoughts and actions.

The phrase “The LORD saw” also shows that he brings judgment not impulsively but only after full awareness of the situation: “The wickedness of man was great in the earth, and . . . every intention of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually” (v. 5). Such great and extensive sin deeply wounds God, who responds by destroying human and animal life (vv. 6-7). God’s unchanging, uncompromising righteous character is consistent with his judgment on human rebellion, which takes the form of a flood that drowns mankind and the world over which it was to rule. Yet even in the midst of God’s judgment, his grace shines, for he spares Noah, who has found favor in his eyes (v. 8).

Theology for Life—Although Noah had not given himself over to sin like his contemporaries, he was not perfect (see 9:21). The effects of Adam’s first sin are universal: “All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God” (Rom. 3:23). Only one Man was without sin, and he died and rose to rescue all who trust in him.

For more on the universality of sin see:

Rom. 3:9-26

For more on sin and thoughts see:

Jer. 17:1-10
Matt. 5:27-30
Mark 7:1-23
Heb. 3:12-14

the earth is filled with violence through them. Behold, I will destroy them with the earth. ¹⁴Make yourself an ark of gopher wood. ¹Make rooms in the ark, and cover it inside and out with pitch. ¹⁵This is how you are to make it: the length of the ark 300 cubits, ²its breadth 50 cubits, and its height 30 cubits. ¹⁶Make a roof ³for the ark, and finish it to a cubit above, and set the door of the ark in its side. Make it with lower, second, and third decks. ¹⁷^mFor behold, I will bring a flood of waters upon the earth to destroy all flesh in which is the breath of life under heaven. Everything that is on the earth shall die. ¹⁸But ⁿI will establish my covenant with you, and you shall come into the ark, you, your sons, your wife, and your sons' wives with you. ¹⁹And of every living thing of all flesh, you shall bring two of every sort into the ark to keep them alive with you. They shall be male and female. ²⁰Of the birds according to their kinds, and of the animals according to their kinds, of every creeping thing of the ground, according to its kind, two of every sort shall come in to you to keep them alive. ²¹Also take with you every sort of food that is eaten, and store it up. It shall serve as food for you and for them." ²²^oNoah did this; he did all that God commanded him.

7 Then the LORD said to Noah, ^p"Go into the ark, you and all your household, for I have seen that ^qyou are righteous before me in this generation. ²Take with you seven pairs of all ^rclean animals, ⁴the male and his mate, and a pair of the animals that are not clean, the male and his mate, ³and seven pairs ⁵of the birds of the heavens also, male and female, to keep their offspring alive on the face of all the earth. ⁴For in seven days ^sI will send rain on the earth forty days and forty nights, ¹and every living thing ⁶that I have made I will blot out from the face of the ground." ⁵^uAnd Noah did all that the LORD had commanded him.

⁶Noah was six hundred years old when the flood of waters came upon the earth. ⁷And Noah and his sons and his wife and his sons' wives with him went into the ark to escape the waters of the flood. ⁸Of clean animals, and of animals that are not clean, and of birds, and of everything that creeps on the ground, ⁹two

and two, male and female, went into the ark with Noah, as God had commanded Noah. ¹⁰And after seven days the waters of the flood came upon the earth.

¹¹In the six hundredth year of Noah's life, in the second month, on the seventeenth day of the month, on that day all the ^vfountains of the great deep burst forth, and ^wthe windows of the heavens were opened. ¹²And rain fell upon the earth forty days and forty nights. ¹³On the very same day Noah and his sons, Shem and Ham and Japheth, and Noah's wife and the three wives of his sons with them entered the ark, ¹⁴they and every beast, according to its kind, and all the livestock according to their kinds, and every creeping thing that creeps on the earth, according to its kind, and every bird, according to its kind, every winged creature. ¹⁵They ^xwent into the ark with Noah, two and two of all flesh in which there was the breath of life. ¹⁶And those that entered, male and female of all flesh, went in ^yas God had commanded him. And the LORD shut him in.

¹⁷The flood ^zcontinued forty days on the earth. The waters increased and bore up the ark, and it rose high above the earth. ¹⁸The waters prevailed and increased greatly on the earth, and the ark floated on the face of the waters. ¹⁹And the waters prevailed so mightily on the earth that all the high mountains under the whole heaven were covered. ²⁰The waters prevailed above the mountains, covering them fifteen cubits ⁷deep. ²¹And ^aall flesh died that moved on the earth, birds, livestock, beasts, all swarming creatures that swarm on the earth, and all mankind. ²²Everything on the dry land ^bin whose nostrils was the breath of life died. ²³He blotted out every living thing that was on the face of the ground, man and animals and creeping things and birds of the heavens. They were blotted out from the earth. Only ^cNoah was left, and those who were with him in the ark. ²⁴And the waters prevailed on the earth 150 days.

¹⁷m ch. 7:4; 2 Pet. 2:5 ¹⁸o ch. 9:9, 11 ²²n Heb. 11:7; [Ex. 40:16] **Chapter 7**
¹p Matt. 24:38, 39; Luke 17:26, 27; Heb. 11:7; 1 Pet. 3:20; 2 Pet. 2:5 ^qch. 6:9 ²r ch. 8:20; [Lev. 11] ⁴s ver. 12, 17; [Job 37:11-13] ¹t ch. 6:17 ⁵u ch. 6:22 ¹¹v ch. 8:2; Prov. 8:28; [Amos 9:6] ^wx ch. 8:2; 2 Kgs. 7:19; Isa. 24:18; Mal. 3:10; [Ps. 78:23] ¹⁵y ch. 6:20 ¹⁶z ver. 2, 3 ¹⁷ ver. 4, 12 ²¹ ver. 4, ch. 6:13, 17; 2 Pet. 3:6 ²² ver. 2:7 ²³ 2 Pet. 2:5

¹ An unknown kind of tree; transliterated from Hebrew ² A cubit was about 18 inches or 45 centimeters ³ Or skylight ⁴ Or seven of each kind of clean animal ⁵ Or seven of each kind ⁶ Hebrew all existence; also verse 23 ⁷ A cubit was about 18 inches or 45 centimeters

The Flood Subsides

8 But God ^dremembered Noah and all the beasts and all the livestock that were with him in the ark. And ^eGod made a wind blow over the earth, and the waters subsided. ²The fountains of the deep and ^fthe windows of the heavens were closed, the rain from the heavens was restrained, ³and the waters receded from the earth continually. At the end ^gof 150 days the waters had abated, ⁴and in the seventh month, on the seventeenth day of the month, the ark came to rest on the mountains of ^hArarat. ⁵And the waters continued to abate until the tenth month; in the tenth month, on the first day of the month, the tops of the mountains were seen.

⁶At the end of forty days Noah opened the window of the ark that he had made ⁷and sent forth a raven. It went to and fro until the waters were dried up from the earth. ⁸Then he sent forth a dove from him, to see if the waters had subsided from the face of the ground. ⁹But the dove found no place to set her foot, and she returned to him to the ark, for the waters were still on the face of the whole earth. So he put out his hand and took her and brought her into the ark with him. ¹⁰He waited another seven days, and again he sent forth the dove out of the ark. ¹¹And the dove came back to him in the evening, and behold, in her mouth was a freshly plucked olive leaf. So Noah knew that the waters had subsided from the earth. ¹²Then he waited another seven days and sent forth the dove, and she did not return to him anymore.

¹³In the six hundred and first year, in the first month, the first day of the month, the waters were dried from off the earth. And Noah removed the covering of the ark and looked, and behold, the face of the ground was dry. ¹⁴In the second month, on the twenty-seventh day of the month, the earth had dried out. ¹⁵Then God said to Noah, ¹⁶“Go out from the ark, ¹you and your wife, and your sons and your sons’ wives with you. ¹⁷Bring out with you every living thing that is with you of all flesh—birds and animals and every creeping thing that creeps on the earth—that they may swarm on the earth, and ¹be fruitful and multiply on the earth.”

¹⁸So Noah went out, and his sons and his wife and his sons’ wives with him. ¹⁹Every beast, every creeping thing, and every bird, everything that moves on the earth, went out by families from the ark.

God’s Covenant with Noah

²⁰Then 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. ²¹And when the LORD smelled ^hthe pleasing aroma, the LORD said in his heart, “I will never again ⁱcurse¹ the ground because of man, for ^mthe intention of man’s heart is evil from his youth. ⁿNeither will I ever again strike down every living creature as I have done. ²²° While the earth remains, seedtime and harvest, cold and heat, summer and winter, ^oday and night, shall not cease.”

9 And God blessed Noah and his sons and said to them, ^o“Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth. ²The fear of you and the dread of you shall be upon every beast of the earth and upon every bird of the heavens, upon everything that creeps on the ground and all the fish of the sea. Into your hand they are delivered. ³° Every moving thing that lives shall be food for you. And ^uas I gave you the green plants, I give you everything. ⁴But you shall not eat flesh with its ^v“life, that is, its blood. ⁵And for your lifeblood I will require a reckoning: ^vfrom every beast I will require it and ^wfrom man. From his fellow man I will require a reckoning for the life of man.

⁶ × “Whoever sheds the blood of man,
by man shall his blood be shed,
^y for God made man in his own image.

⁷And you,² be fruitful and multiply, increase greatly on the earth and multiply in it.”

⁸Then God said to Noah and to his sons with him, ⁹° “Behold, ^zI establish my covenant

Chapter 8 ¹ch. 19:29; 30:22; Ex. 2:24; 1 Sam. 1:19 ^oEx. 14:21 ²ch. 7:11 ³ch. 7:24 ⁴2 Kgs. 19:37; Isa. 37:38; Jer. 51:27 ¹⁶ch. 7:13 ¹⁷ch. 1:22, 28; 9:1 ²¹Ex. 29:18, 25, 41; Lev. 1:9, 13, 17; See Ezek. 16:19; 20:41; 2 Cor. 2:15; Eph. 5:2; Phil. 4:18 ¹ch. 3:17; 6:17 ^mch. 6:5; Ps. 58:3; Rom. 1:21; [Matt. 15:19] ⁿch. 9:11, 15; Isa. 54:9 ²²Jer. 5:24 ^oJer. 33:20, 25 **Chapter 9** ¹ch. 1:22, 28; 8:17 ²[Ps. 8:6-8; James 3:7] ³Deut. 12:15; 1 Tim. 4:3, 4 ⁴ch. 1:29 ⁴Lev. 17:10, 11, 14; Deut. 12:16, 23; 1 Sam. 14:33; Acts 15:20, 29 ⁵Ex. 21:28 ^wch. 4:10, 11 ⁶Ex. 21:12, 14; Lev. 24:17; Num. 35:31, 33; [Matt. 26:52; Rev. 13:10] ¹ch. 1:27; 5:1; James 3:9 ⁹ch. 6:18; 8:20-22

¹ Or *dishonor* ² In Hebrew *you* is plural

with you and your offspring after you,¹⁰ and with every living creature that is with you, the birds, the livestock, and every beast of the earth with you, as many as came out of the ark; it is for every beast of the earth.¹¹ ^a I establish my covenant with you, that never again shall all flesh be cut off by the waters of the flood, and never again shall there be a flood to destroy the earth.”¹² And God said, ^b “This is the sign of the covenant that I make between me and you and every living creature that is with you, for all future generations: ¹³ I have set ^c my bow in the cloud, and it shall be a sign of the covenant between me and the earth. ¹⁴ When I bring clouds over the earth and the bow is seen in the clouds, ¹⁵ I will remember my covenant that is between me and you and every living creature of all flesh. And the waters shall never again become a flood to destroy all flesh. ¹⁶ When the bow is in the clouds, I will see it and remember ^e the everlasting covenant between God and every living creature of all flesh that is on the earth.”¹⁷ God said to Noah, “This is the sign of the covenant that I have established between me and all flesh that is on the earth.”

Noah's Descendants

¹⁸ The sons of Noah who went forth from the ark were ¹ Shem, Ham, and Japheth. (Ham was the father of Canaan.)¹⁹ These three were the sons of Noah, and ⁹ from these the people of the whole earth were dispersed.¹

²⁰ Noah began to be a man of the soil, and he planted a vineyard.²¹ ²² He drank of the wine and became drunk and lay uncovered in his tent. ²³ And Ham, the father of Canaan, saw the nakedness of his father and told his two brothers outside. ²⁴ Then Shem and Japheth took a garment, laid it on both their shoulders, and walked backward and covered the nakedness of their father. Their faces were turned backward, and they did not see their father's nakedness. ²⁵ When Noah awoke from his wine ^h and knew what his youngest son had done to him, ²⁵ he said,

ⁱ “Cursed be Canaan;

^j a servant of servants shall he be to his brothers.”

²⁶ He also said,

“Blessed be the LORD, the God of Shem; and let Canaan be his servant.

²⁷ May God enlarge Japheth,³ and let him dwell in the tents of Shem, and let Canaan be his servant.”

²⁸ After the flood Noah lived 350 years. ²⁹ All the days of Noah were 950 years, and he died.

Nations Descended from Noah

10 These are the generations of the sons of Noah, Shem, Ham, and Japheth. Sons were born to them after the flood.

² ^k The sons of Japheth: Gomer, Magog, Madai, Javan, Tubal, Meshech, and Tiras.

³ The sons of Gomer: Ashkenaz, Riphath, and Togarmah. ⁴ The sons of Javan: Elishah, ^l Tarshish, ^m Kittim, and Dodanim. ⁵ From these ⁿ the coastland peoples spread in their lands, each with his own language, by their clans, in their nations.

⁶ ^o The sons of Ham: Cush, Egypt, Put, and Canaan. ⁷ The sons of Cush: Seba, Havilah, Sabtah, Raamah, and Sabteca. The sons of Raamah: Sheba and Dedan. ⁸ Cush fathered Nimrod; he was the first on earth to be a mighty man.⁴ ⁹ He was a mighty hunter before the LORD. Therefore it is said, “Like Nimrod a mighty hunter before the LORD.” ¹⁰ The beginning of his kingdom was ^p Babel, Erech, Accad, and Calneh, in ^q the land of Shinar. ¹¹ From that land he went into Assyria and built Nineveh, Rehoboth-Ir, Calah, and ¹² Resen between Nineveh and Calah; that is the great city. ¹³ ^r Egypt fathered Ludim, Anamim, Lehabim, Naphtuhim, ¹⁴ Pathrusim, Casluhim (from whom⁵ the Philistines came), and ^s Caphtorim.

¹⁵ ^t Canaan fathered Sidon his firstborn and Heth, ¹⁶ and the Jebusites, the Amorites, the Girgashites, ¹⁷ the Hivites, the Arkites, the Sinites, ¹⁸ the Arvadites, the Zemarites, and the Hamathites. Afterward the clans of the

¹¹Isa. 54:9, 10 ¹²ch. 17:11 ¹³Ezek. 1:28; [Rev. 4:3; 10:1] ¹⁵[Lev. 26:42, 45; 1 Kgs. 8:23; Ezek. 16:60] ¹⁶ch. 17:7, 13, 19 ¹⁸ch. 5:32; 10:1 ¹⁹ch. 10:32 ²⁴[Hab. 2:15] ²⁵Deut. 27:16 ¹Josh. 9:23; Judg. 1:28; 1 Kgs. 9:20, 21 **Chapter 10** ²For ver. 1-5, see 1 Chr. 1:5-7; Ezek. 38:1-6 ⁴Ps. 72:10; Ezek. 38:13 ^mNum. 24:24; Isa. 23:1, 12; Dan. 11:30 ⁵Isa. 11:11; Jer. 2:10; 25:22; Ezek. 27:6; Zeph. 2:11 ⁶For ver. 6-8, see 1 Chr. 1:8-10 ¹⁰ch. 11:9 ¹¹2 ¹³For ver. 13-18, see 1 Chr. 1:11-16 ¹⁴Deut. 3:7; Jer. 47:4; Amos 9:7 ¹⁵[ch. 15:18-21]

¹ Or from these the whole earth was populated ² Or Noah, a man of the soil, was the first to plant a vineyard ³ Japheth sounds like the Hebrew for enlarge ⁴ Or he began to be a mighty man on the earth ⁵ Or from where

Canaanites dispersed. ¹⁹ And the territory of the Canaanites extended from Sidon in the direction of Gerar as far as Gaza, and in the direction of Sodom, Gomorrah, Admah, and Zeboiim, as far as Lasha. ²⁰ These are the sons of Ham, by their clans, their languages, their lands, and their nations.

²¹ To Shem also, the father of all the children of Eber, the elder brother of Japheth, children were born. ²² The ^u sons of Shem: Elam, Asshur, Arpachshad, Lud, and Aram. ²³ The sons of Aram: Uz, Hul, Gether, and Mash. ²⁴ Arpachshad fathered ^v Shelah; and Shelah fathered Eber. ²⁵ ^w To Eber were born two sons: the name of the one was Peleg,¹ for in his days the earth was divided, and his brother's name was Joktan. ²⁶ Joktan fathered Almodad, Sheleph, Hazarmaveth, Jerah, ²⁷ Hadoram, Uzal, Diklah, ²⁸ Obal, Abimael, Sheba, ²⁹ ^x Ophir, Havilah, and Jobab; all these were the sons of Joktan. ³⁰ The territory in which they lived extended from Mesha in the direction of Sephar to the hill country of the east. ³¹ These are the sons of Shem, by their clans, their languages, their lands, and their nations.

³² These are the clans of the sons of Noah, according to their genealogies, in their nations, ^y and from these the nations spread abroad on the earth after the flood.

The Tower of Babel

11 Now the whole earth had one language and the same words. ² And as people migrated from the east, they found a plain in ^z the land of Shinar and settled there. ³ And they said to one another, "Come, let us make bricks, and burn them thoroughly." And they had brick for stone, ^a and bitumen for mortar. ⁴ Then they said, "Come, let us build ourselves a city and a tower ^b with its top in the heavens, and let us make a name for ourselves, lest we be dispersed over the face of the whole earth." ⁵ And ^c the LORD came down to see the city and the tower, which the children of man had built. ⁶ And the LORD said, "Behold, they are one people, and they have all one language, and this is only the beginning of what they will do. And nothing that they propose to do will now be impossible for them. ⁷ Come, ^d let us go down and there confuse their lan-

guage, so that they may not understand one another's speech." ⁸ So ^e the LORD dispersed them from there over the face of all the earth, and they left off building the city. ⁹ Therefore its name was called ^f Babel, because there the LORD confused² the language of all the earth. And from there the LORD dispersed them over the face of all the earth.

Shem's Descendants

¹⁰⁹ These are the generations of Shem. When Shem was 100 years old, he fathered Arpachshad two years after the flood. ¹¹ And Shem lived after he fathered Arpachshad 500 years and had other sons and daughters.

¹² When Arpachshad had lived 35 years, he fathered Shelah. ¹³ And Arpachshad lived after he fathered Shelah 403 years and had other sons and daughters.

¹⁴ When Shelah had lived 30 years, he fathered Eber. ¹⁵ And Shelah lived after he fathered Eber 403 years and had other sons and daughters.

¹⁶ When Eber had lived 34 years, he fathered Peleg. ¹⁷ And Eber lived after he fathered Peleg 430 years and had other sons and daughters.

¹⁸ When Peleg had lived 30 years, he fathered Reu. ¹⁹ And Peleg lived after he fathered Reu 209 years and had other sons and daughters.

²⁰ When Reu had lived 32 years, he fathered Serug. ²¹ And Reu lived after he fathered Serug 207 years and had other sons and daughters.

²² When Serug had lived 30 years, he fathered Nahor. ²³ And Serug lived after he fathered Nahor 200 years and had other sons and daughters.

²⁴ When ^h Nahor had lived 29 years, he fathered Terah. ²⁵ And Nahor lived after he fathered Terah 119 years and had other sons and daughters.

²⁶ When ^h Terah had lived 70 years, he fathered Abram, Nahor, and Haran.

Terah's Descendants

²⁷ Now these are the generations of Terah. Terah fathered Abram, Nahor, and Haran; and Haran fathered Lot. ²⁸ Haran died in the

²²For ver. 22-29, see 1 Chr. 1:17-25 ²⁴ch. 11:12; Luke 3:35, 36 ²⁵¹Chr. 1:19 ²⁹¹Kgs. 9:28; 10:11 ³²ver. 1; ch. 9:19 **Chapter 11** ²ch. 10:10; 14:1, 9; Isa. 11:11; Dan. 1:2; Zech. 5:11 ³ch. 14:10; Ex. 2:3 ⁴Deut. 1:28 ⁵ch. 18:21 ⁷ch. 1:26; [Ps. 2:4] ⁸ch. 10:25, 32; Luke 1:51 ⁹ch. 10:10 ¹⁰[ch. 10:22]; For ver. 10:26, see 1 Chr. 1:17-27 ²⁴¹Josh. 24:2 ²⁶¹[See ver. 24 above]

¹ Peleg means *division* ² Babel sounds like the Hebrew for *confused*

presence of his father Terah in the land of his kindred, in Ur of the Chaldeans.²⁹ And Abram and Nahor took wives. The name of Abram's wife was¹ Sarai, and the name of Nahor's wife,¹ Milcah, the daughter of Haran the father of Milcah and Iscah.³⁰ Now Sarai was barren; she had no child.

³¹ Terah^k took Abram his son and Lot the son of Haran, his grandson, and Sarai his daughter-in-law, his son Abram's wife, and they went forth together¹ from Ur of the Chaldeans to go into the land of Canaan, but when they came to Haran, they settled there.

³² The days of Terah were 205 years, and Terah died in Haran.

The Call of Abram

12 Now^m the LORD said¹ to Abram, "Go from your country² and your kindred and your father's house to the land that I will show you. ² 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. ³ I will bless those who bless you, and him who dishonors you I will curse, and ^p in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed."³

⁴ So Abram went, as the LORD had told him, and Lot went with him. Abram was

²⁹ch. 17:15 1ch. 22:20 ³¹ch. 12:1 1ch. 15:7; Josh. 24:2; Neh. 9:7; Acts 7:2, 4
Chapter 12 ¹Acts 7:3; Heb. 11:8 ²ch. 17:6; 18:18; [Gal. 3:14] ³ch. 27:29; Num. 24:9 ^pch. 18:18; 22:18; 26:4; 28:14; Jer. 4:2; Acts 3:25; Gal. 3:16; Cited Gal. 3:8

¹ Or had said ² Or land ³ Or by you all the families of the earth shall bless themselves

Revelation: Abrahamic Covenant

Genesis 12:1-9

While Genesis 1-11 presents the wide-angle story of God as Creator, Judge, and Redeemer, chapter 12 narrows the frame. God focuses on one man in order eventually to bless "all the families of the earth" (v. 3). He elects Abram, whom he will rename Abraham, and his descendants to carry on the promise of the seed (Gen. 3:15) and redeem the created order from the curse of the fall (Col. 1:15-20).

The Lord will achieve this redemption with a promise. He calls Abram to leave his native land and extended family and go to the land God will give to his descendants (Gen. 12:1, 7), and he swears to him, "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" (v. 2). In Abram God will transform the dirge of the fall to a paean of redemption.

All of this occurs by way of his promise. First, God will provide offspring to a couple too old to have children (Genesis 21). He will then enable that offspring to increase into a great nation (Ex. 1:7). Then he will give the entire land of Canaan, crossroads of the known world, to that great nation so that they can make God known to all the world (Gen. 12:3, 6-9; Ex. 19:6; Josh. 4:23-24). Finally, all who bless Abram will know blessing, for he brings the promise of God's election, redemption, and presence.

The people at Babel tried to exclude God from the world by erecting a tower to dethrone him (Gen. 11:1-9). Instead of giving up on the world, God commits himself to Abram and his offspring, who will bless the nations with the fear of the true God. Abram's line will also bring about the greatest blessing in the promised offspring of Jesus the Christ (Matt. 1:1-17), who will be an everlasting blessing to all the nations.

Theology for Life—The church is the heir to the Abrahamic covenant (Gal. 3:29). Christ commissions the church to point to him, the promised Son, and thereby bless all the families of the earth, since he has won for them his new Promised Land, where believers will dwell with God forever (Revelation 21-22).

For more on God's covenant with Abraham see:
Gen. 15:1-21

seventy-five years old when he departed from ^aHaran. ⁵And Abram took Sarai his wife, and Lot his brother's son, and all their possessions that they had gathered, and the people that they had acquired in Haran, and they set out to go to the land of Canaan. When they came to the land of Canaan, ⁶Abram ^rpassed through the land to the place at Shechem, to ^sthe oak^t of ^lMoreh. At that time ^uthe Canaanites were in the land. ⁷Then the LORD appeared to Abram and said, ^v“To your offspring I will give this land.” So he built there an altar to the LORD, who had

appeared to him. ⁸From there he moved to the hill country on the east of ^wBethel and pitched his tent, with Bethel on the west and Ai on the east. And there he built an altar to the LORD and called upon the name of the LORD. ⁹And Abram journeyed on, still going toward the Negeb.

Abram and Sarai in Egypt

¹⁰Now ^xthere was a famine in the land. So Abram went down to Egypt to sojourn there,

⁴ch. 11:31 ⁶[Heb. 11:9] ⁵ch. 13:18 ¹Deut. 11:30; Judg. 7:1 ^uch. 13:7 ⁷ch. 13:15; 17:8; Ex. 33:1; Ps. 105:9-12; [Num. 32:11]; Gal. 3:16 ⁸ch. 28:19 ¹⁰ch. 26:1; 43:1

¹ Or *terebinth*

Jesus Christ: Priest

Genesis 14:18-20

After Abram returns from defeating Chedorlaomer and three other kings and rescuing his nephew Lot, he encounters the mysterious figure Melchizedek, who appears in the story out of nowhere and soon disappears to the same place. Although Moses records none of his ancestors or descendants, Melchizedek is both “king of Salem” and “priest of God Most High” (v. 18), an unusual combination in the OT. This priest-king praises God and blesses Abram, who gives him a tithe of his spoils of victory (vv. 19-20). Then Melchizedek exits, only to reappear in Psalm 110:4, where David writes, “The LORD has sworn and will not change his mind, ‘You are a priest forever after the order of Melchizedek.’”

David here predicts the coming of one he calls “my Lord,” a point Jesus underscores (Matt. 22:41-46). Amazingly, he is both David's descendant and Lord. David's Lord will sit as King at God's right hand, the place of highest honor and authority, until God defeats his enemies (Ps. 110:1). Since Jesus was descended from Judah, he could not be a priest from the line of Levi. How does God overcome this obstacle? Remarkably, he establishes a priesthood through Melchizedek, a priesthood to which only he and Jesus belong. God's oath makes David's Lord a priest forever.

The author of Hebrews also draws out similarities between Melchizedek and the great high priest Jesus. Like Melchizedek, Jesus is both king and priest. Since Melchizedek had no recorded ancestors or descendants, Melchizedek resembles Christ, the Son of God, who continues as a priest forever (Heb. 7:3). Jesus' high priesthood is superior to that of Aaron's sons because he became a priest not by physical descent but by God's oath (Heb. 7:20-22).

Although God sent Melchizedek to foreshadow Jesus, Jesus is far superior. Because of “the power of an indestructible life,” Christ the crucified and risen Savior “holds his priesthood permanently” (Heb. 7:16, 24). His death secures “an eternal redemption,” and because he lives, “he is able to save to the uttermost” those who trust him (Heb. 7:25; cf. 9:12-14).

Theology for Life—“By a single offering” Jesus our great high priest “has perfected for all time those who are being sanctified” (Heb. 10:14).

For more on Christ's offices of prophet, priest, and king see:

Deut. 18:15-19

Isa. 9:6-7

Heb. 1:1-8

for the famine was severe in the land. ¹¹When he was about to enter Egypt, he said to Sarai his wife, “I know that you are a woman beautiful in appearance, ¹²and when the Egyptians see you, they will say, ‘This is his wife.’ Then they ^vwill kill me, but they will let you live. ¹³Say you are my sister, that it may go well with me because of you, and that my life may be spared for your sake.” ¹⁴When Abram entered Egypt, the Egyptians saw that the woman was very beautiful. ¹⁵And when the princes of Pharaoh saw her, they praised her to Pharaoh. And the woman was taken into Pharaoh’s house. ¹⁶And for her sake he dealt well with Abram; and he had sheep, oxen, male donkeys, male servants, female servants, female donkeys, and camels.

¹⁷But the LORD ^zafflicted Pharaoh and his house with great plagues because of Sarai, Abram’s wife. ¹⁸So Pharaoh called Abram and said, “What is this you have done to me? Why did you not tell me that she was your wife? ¹⁹Why did you say, ‘She is my sister,’ so that I took her for my wife? Now then, here is your wife; take her, and go.” ²⁰And Pharaoh gave men orders concerning him, and they sent him away with his wife and all that he had.

Abram and Lot Separate

13 So Abram went up from Egypt, he and his wife and all that he had, and Lot with him, ^ainto the Negeb.

^{2b}Now Abram was very rich in livestock, in silver, and in gold. ³And he journeyed on from the Negeb as far as Bethel to the place where his tent had been at the beginning, between Bethel and Ai, ⁴to ^cthe place where he had made an altar at the first. And there Abram called upon the name of the LORD. ⁵And Lot, who went with Abram, also had flocks and herds and tents, ⁶so that ^dthe land could not support both of them dwelling together; for their possessions were so great that they could not dwell together, ⁷^eand there was strife between the herdsmen of Abram’s livestock and the herdsmen of Lot’s livestock. At that time ^fthe Canaanites and the Perizzites were dwelling in the land.

⁸Then Abram said to Lot, ⁹“Let there be no strife between you and me, and between your herdsmen and my herdsmen, ^hfor we

are kinsmen.¹ ⁹Is not the whole land before you? Separate yourself from me. If you take the left hand, then I will go to the right, or if you take the right hand, then I will go to the left.” ¹⁰And Lot lifted up his eyes and saw that the ^jJordan Valley was well watered everywhere like ^kthe garden of the LORD, like the land of Egypt, in the direction of ^lZoar. (This was before the LORD ^mdestroyed Sodom and Gomorrah.) ¹¹So Lot chose for himself all the Jordan Valley, and Lot journeyed east. Thus they separated from each other. ¹²Abram settled in the land of Canaan, while Lot settled among the cities of the valley and moved his tent as far as Sodom. ¹³Now the men of Sodom ⁿwere wicked, great sinners against the LORD.

¹⁴The LORD said to Abram, after Lot had separated from him, “Lift up your eyes and look from the place where you are, ^onorthward and southward and eastward and westward, ¹⁵for all the land that you see I will give ^pto you and ^qto your offspring forever. ¹⁶I will make your offspring as the dust of the earth, so that if one can count the dust of the earth, your offspring also can be counted. ¹⁷Arise, walk through the length and the breadth of the land, for I will give it to you.” ¹⁸So Abram moved his tent and came and ^rsettled by the ^soaks² of Mamre, which ^tare at Hebron, and there he built an altar to the LORD.

Abram Rescues Lot

14 In the days of Amraphel king of ^vShinar, Arioch king of Ellasar, Chedorlaomer king of ^wElam, and Tidal king of Goim, ²these kings made war with ^xBera king of Sodom, Birsha king of Gomorrah, Shinab king of ^yAdmah, Shemeber king of ^zZeboiim, and the king of Bela (that is, Zoar). ³And all these joined forces in the Valley of Siddim (^zthat is, the Salt Sea). ⁴Twelve years they had served Chedorlaomer, but in the thirteenth year they rebelled. ⁵In the

¹²See ch. 20:1-18; 26:6-11 ¹⁷1 Chr. 16:21; Ps. 105:14 **Chapter 13** ¹ch. 12:9 ²ch. 24:35; [Ps. 112:1-3; Prov. 10:22] ⁴ch. 12:7, 8 ⁶ch. 36:6, 7 ⁷ch. 26:20 ¹ch. 12:6 ⁸[1 Cor. 6:1-8] ⁹[Acts 7:26] ⁹ch. 20:15; 34:10 ¹⁰ch. 19:17, 25, 28; Deut. 34:3; 1 Kgs. 7:46; [Matt. 3:5] ¹ch. 2:8; Isa. 51:3; Ezek. 28:13; Joel 2:3 ¹ch. 14:2, 8; 19:22 ²ch. 19:24, 25 ¹³ch. 18:20; Ezek. 16:49; 2 Pet. 2:7, 8 ¹⁴ch. 28:14 ¹⁵ch. 17:8; 28:13; 35:12; Acts 7:5 ⁹ch. 12:7; 15:18; 24:7; 26:4; Deut. 34:4; 2 Chr. 20:7 ¹⁶ch. 22:17; 28:14; 32:12; Num. 23:10; [1 Kgs. 3:8]. See ch. 15:5 ¹⁸ch. 14:13 ¹ch. 12:6 ⁹ch. 35:27 **Chapter 14** ¹ch. 10:10; 11:2 ⁹ch. 10:22; Isa. 11:11; Acts 2:9 ²ver. 8; ch. 13:10; 19:22 ⁹Deut. 29:23 ³Num. 34:12; Deut. 3:17; Josh. 3:16

¹Hebrew *we are men, brothers* ²Or *terebinths*

fourteenth year Chedorlaomer and the kings who were with him came and defeated the ^aRephaim in ^bAshteroth-karnaim, the ^cZuzim in Ham, the ^dEmim in Shaveh-kiriathaim, ^eand the ^eHorites in their hill country of Seir as far as ^fEl-paran on the border of the wilderness. ⁷ Then they turned back and came to En-mishpat (that is, ^gKadesh) and defeated all the country of the Amalekites, and also the Amorites who were dwelling ^hin Hazazon-tamar.

⁸ Then the king of Sodom, the king of Gomorrah, the king of Admah, the king of Zeboiim, and the king of Bela (that is, Zoar) went out, and they joined battle in the Valley of Siddim ⁹ with Chedorlaomer king of Elam, Tidal king of Goiim, Amraphel king of Shinar, and Arioch king of Ellasar, four kings against five. ¹⁰ Now the Valley of Siddim was full of ⁱbitumen pits, and as the kings of Sodom and Gomorrah fled, some fell into

them, and the rest fled ^jto the hill country. ¹¹ So the enemy took ^kall the possessions of Sodom and Gomorrah, and all their provisions, and went their way. ¹² They also took Lot, ^lthe son of Abram's brother, ^mwho was dwelling in Sodom, and his possessions, and went their way.

¹³ Then one who had escaped came and told Abram the Hebrew, ⁿwho was living by the ^ooaks^l of Mamre the Amorite, brother of Eshcol and of Aner. These were allies of Abram. ¹⁴ When Abram heard that his kinsman had been taken captive, he led forth his trained men, ^pborn in his house, 318 of them, and went in pursuit as far as ^qDan. ¹⁵ And he divided his forces against them by night, he and his servants, and defeated them and pursued them to Hobah, north of Damascus. ¹⁶ Then he brought

⁵ch. 15:20; Deut. 2:11; 3:11 ^bDeut. 1:4 ^c[Deut. 2:20] ^dDeut. 2:10, 11 ^eDeut. 2:12, 22 ^f[ch. 21:21; Num. 12:16; 13:3] ^gch. 16:14; 20:1; Num. 13:26 ^h2 Chr. 20:2 ⁱch. 11:3; Ex. 2:3 ^jch. 19:17, 30 ^k1st ver. 16, 21 ^lch. 12:5 ^mch. 13:12 ⁿch. 13:18 ^och. 12:6 ^pch. 15:3; 17:12, 13, 23, 27; Eccles. 2:7 ^qJudg. 18:29

¹Or *terebinths*

Revelation: Abrahamic Covenant

Genesis 15

Here God formalizes the relationship initiated in Genesis 12. In fact, the newly formed relationship has grown to include a confession of faith (14:22) and now a covenant. This chapter concerns Abram's belief in the seed promise (15:1-6) and his doubts concerning the Promised Land (vv. 7-8). God responds to both with a formal covenant (vv. 9-21); this covenant not only solemnly promises Abram that he will come to possess what God has shown him (12:6-9) but also deepens their relationship. After all, God is Abram's "shield" (15:1) and his covenant Lord who brought him out of Ur (v. 7).

Further, chapter 15 answers many of the unanswered questions of chapter 12. The vague promise of descendants and offspring in chapter 12 narrows to a true flesh and blood heir, a promised son (15:4). Abram's great nation will not come from a distant relative but through his own offspring! It seems harder for Abram to believe the promise of the land of Canaan. God responds not only by making a covenant in blood (vv. 9-10) but also by telling Abram how his descendants will come to possess the land (vv. 13-16). God seals the covenant by moving between the pieces of the animals as "a smoking fire pot and a flaming torch" (v. 17).

It is clear that God is committed to Abram and his descendants. God's grace and mercy are mysterious, yet God has always desired to bless his image-bearers. Through Abram this blessing will come to all the nations (12:1-3).

Theology for Life—God forms a deep relationship with men and intends to dwell with his people—all who come to him through Jesus Christ (Rev. 21:3).

For more on God's covenant with Abraham see:

Gen. 12:1-9

back all the possessions, and also brought back his kinsman Lot ^r with his possessions, and the women and the people.

Abram Blessed by Melchizedek

¹⁷ After his return from the defeat of Chedorlaomer and the kings who were with him, the king of Sodom went out to meet him at the Valley of Shaveh (that is, the ^s King's Valley). ¹⁸ And ¹ Melchizedek king of Salem brought out bread and wine. (He was ^u priest of ^v God Most High.) ¹⁹ And he blessed him and said,

^w “Blessed be Abram by God Most High,
^x Possessor¹ of heaven and earth;
²⁰ and blessed be God Most High,
who has delivered your enemies into
your hand!”

And Abram gave him ^y a tenth of everything. ²¹ And the king of Sodom said to Abram, “Give me the persons, but take the goods for yourself.” ²² But Abram said to the king of Sodom, ²³ “I have lifted my hand² to the LORD, God Most High, Possessor of heaven and earth, ²⁴ that ^a I would not take a thread or a sandal strap or anything that is yours, lest you should say, ‘I have made Abram rich.’ ²⁴ I will take nothing but what the young men have

eaten, and the share of the men who went with me. Let ^b Aner, Eshcol, and Mamre take their share.”

God's Covenant with Abram

15 After these things the word of the LORD came to Abram in a vision: ^c “Fear not, Abram, I am ^d your shield; your reward shall be very great.” ² But Abram said, “O Lord GOD, what will you give me, for I continue³ childless, and the heir of my house is Eliezer of Damascus?” ³ And Abram said, “Behold, you have given me no offspring, and ^e a member of my household will be my heir.” ⁴ And behold, the word of the LORD came to him: “This man shall not be your heir; ^f your very own son⁴ shall be your heir.” ⁵ And he brought him outside and said, “Look toward heaven, and ^g number the stars, if you are able to number them.” Then he said to him, ^h “So shall your offspring be.” ⁶ And ¹ he believed the LORD, and ¹ he counted it to him as righteousness.

⁷ And he said to him, “I am the LORD who ^k brought you out from Ur of the Chaldeans

¹⁶ver. 11, 12 ¹⁷2 Sam. 18:18 ¹⁸Heb. 7:1 ^uPs. 110:4; Heb. 5:6, 10; 7:1, 11, 17 ^vPs. 57:2; Acts 16:17 ¹⁹Heb. 7:6, 7 ^wMatt. 11:25 ²⁰Heb. 7:4; [ch. 28:22] ²²Ex. 6:8; Num. 14:30; Deut. 32:40; Ezek. 20:5, 6, 15, 23, 28; Dan. 12:7; Rev. 10:5, 6 ²³3rd [Esth. 9:15, 16] ²⁴ver. 13 **Chapter 15** ¹ch. 26:24; Dan. 10:12; Luke 1:13, 30 ⁴Ps. 3:3; 18:2; 84:11; 119:114 ³ch. 14:14 ⁴ch. 17:16 ⁵Ps. 147:4 ^hch. 22:17; 26:4; Ex. 32:13; Deut. 1:10; 10:22; 1 Chr. 27:23; Heb. 11:12; Cited Rom. 4:18 ⁶Rom. 4:9, 22; Gal. 3:6; James 2:23 ¹Cited Rom. 4:3; [Ps. 106:31] ⁷ch. 11:31; 12:1; Neh. 9:7, 8; Acts 7:2-4

¹ Or Creator; also verse 22 ² Or I have taken a solemn oath ³ Or I shall die ⁴ Hebrew what will come out of your own loins

Salvation: Faith

Genesis 15:6

At the beginning of Genesis 15, God appears to Abram in a vision and promises to be his protector and to reward him greatly (v. 1). When Abram asks God how this is possible since he is childless, God promises that Abram's own son will be his heir. God takes him outside and promises that his offspring will be as numerous as the stars (vv. 3–5).

Abram's only reason for believing this will come true is God's word, but that is enough: “He believed the LORD, and he counted it to him as righteousness” (v. 6). Abram showed active trust in God's person and promise, and in response God regarded him as righteous. The NT quotes this key verse in the biblical story to show that justification has always been by faith, not by works (Rom. 1:16–17; 4:3, 22; Gal. 3:6; James 2:23).

Theology for Life—God is no one's debtor, so no one will ever earn salvation as payment for good deeds. Rather, salvation has always been by grace through faith in God as he reveals himself in Scripture. In the NT, it is made clear that faith in Christ saves.

For more on faith see:

Gen. 22:1–14
Ps. 25:1–3
Prov. 3:5–8
Isa. 26:1–6
Dan. 3:1–30
Hab. 2:4
John 20:21–23, 30–31
Rom. 10:9–17
Heb. 11:1
James 2:14–26

¹ to give you this land to possess.” ⁸ But he said, “O Lord GOD, ^m how am I to know that I shall possess it?” ⁹ He said to him, “Bring me a heifer three years old, a female goat three years old, a ram three years old, a turtledove, and a young pigeon.” ¹⁰ And he brought him all these, ⁿ cut them in half, and laid each half over against the other. But ^o he did not cut the birds in half. ¹¹ And when birds of prey came down on the carcasses, Abram drove them away.

¹² As the sun was going down, a ^p deep sleep fell on Abram. And behold, dreadful and great darkness fell upon him. ¹³ Then the LORD said to Abram, “Know for certain ^q that your offspring will be sojourners in a land that is not theirs and will be servants there, and ^r they will be afflicted for ^s four hundred years. ¹⁴ But ^t I will bring judgment on the nation that they serve, and afterward ^u they shall come out with great possessions. ¹⁵ As for you, you shall go to your fathers in peace; ^v you shall be buried in a good old age. ¹⁶ And they shall come back here in the fourth generation, for ^w the iniquity of the Amorites ^x is not yet complete.”

¹⁷ When the sun had gone down and it was dark, behold, a smoking fire pot and a flaming torch passed between these pieces. ¹⁸ On that day the LORD made a covenant with Abram, saying, ^y “To your offspring I give ^z this land, from ¹ the river of Egypt to the great river, the river Euphrates, ¹⁹ the land of the Kenites, the Kenizzites, the Kadmonites, ²⁰ the Hittites, the Perizzites, the Rephaim, ²¹ the Amorites, the Canaanites, the Girgashites and the Jebusites.”

Sarai and Hagar

16 ^a Now Sarai, Abram’s wife, had borne him no children. She had a female Egyptian servant whose name was ^b Hagar. ² And Sarai said to Abram, “Behold now, the LORD has prevented me from bearing children. Go in to my servant; it may be that I shall obtain children ² by her.” And Abram listened to the voice of Sarai. ³ So, after Abram ^c had lived ten years in the land of Canaan, Sarai, Abram’s wife, took Hagar the Egyptian, her servant, and gave her to Abram her husband as a wife. ⁴ And he went in to Hagar, and

she conceived. And when she saw that she had conceived, ^d she looked with contempt on her mistress. ⁵ And Sarai said to Abram, “May the wrong done to me be on you! I gave my servant to your embrace, and when she saw that she had conceived, she looked on me with contempt. May ^e the LORD judge between you and me!” ⁶ But Abram said to Sarai, “Behold, your servant is in your power; do to her as you please.” Then Sarai dealt harshly with her, and she fled from her.

⁷ The angel of the LORD found her by a spring of water in the wilderness, the spring on the way to ^f Shur. ⁸ And he said, “Hagar, servant of Sarai, where have you come from and where are you going?” She said, “I am fleeing from my mistress Sarai.” ⁹ The angel of the LORD said to her, “Return to your mistress and submit to her.” ¹⁰ The angel of the LORD also said to her, ^g “I will surely multiply your offspring so that they cannot be numbered for multitude.” ¹¹ And the angel of the LORD said to her,

“Behold, you are pregnant and shall bear a son.

You shall call his name Ishmael,⁴

^h because the LORD has listened to your affliction.

¹² He shall be ⁱ a wild donkey of a man, his hand against everyone and everyone’s hand against him, and he shall dwell ^j over against all his kinsmen.”

¹³ So she called the name of the LORD who spoke to her, “You are a God of seeing,”⁵ for she said, ^k “Truly here I have seen him who looks after me.”⁶ ¹⁴ Therefore the well was called ^l Beer-lahai-roi;⁷ it lies between ^m Kadesh and Bered.

¹⁵ And Hagar bore Abram a son, and Abram called the name of his son, whom Hagar bore,

⁷Ps. 105:42, 44 ⁸Judg. 6:17; 2 Kgs. 20:8; Ps. 86:17; Isa. 7:11-13; Luke 1:18
¹⁰Jer. 34:18, 19 ⁹Lev. 1:17 ¹²ch. 2:21 ¹³Acts 7:6, 7 ¹⁴Ex. 1:11, 12; 3:7 ¹⁵Acts 7:6; [Ex. 12:40, 41; Gal. 3:17] ¹⁴Ex. 6:6 ¹⁵Ex. 12:36; Ps. 105:37 ¹⁵ch. 25:8 ¹⁶1 Kgs. 21:26; Amos 2:9 ¹⁷Dan. 8:23; Matt. 23:32; 1 Thess. 2:16] ¹⁸ch. 12:7; 13:15; 24:7; 26:4; Num. 34:2; Deut. 34:4; Neh. 9:8 ¹⁹Ex. 23:31; Deut. 1:7; Josh. 1:4 **Chapter 16**
¹ch. 15:2; ³ch. 21:9; Gal. 4:24 ³ch. 12:5 ⁴[1 Sam. 1:6, 7] ⁵ch. 31:53; 1 Sam. 24:12 ⁷ch. 25:18; Ex. 15:22 ¹⁰ch. 17:20; 21:18; See ch. 25:12-18 ¹¹[ch. 29:32] ¹²Job 39:5-8; [ch. 21:20] ¹³ch. 25:18 ¹³[ch. 32:30; Ex. 19:21; 33:20; Judg. 13:22] ¹⁴ch. 24:62; 25:11 ¹⁵ch. 14:7; 20:1; Num. 13:26

¹ Or have given ² Hebrew be built up, which sounds like the Hebrew for children ³ Hebrew her mistress was dishonorable in her eyes; similarly in verse 5 ⁴ Ishmael means God hears ⁵ Or You are a God who sees me ⁶ Hebrew Have I really seen him here who sees me? or Would I have looked here for the one who sees me? ⁷ Beer-lahai-roi means the well of the Living One who sees me