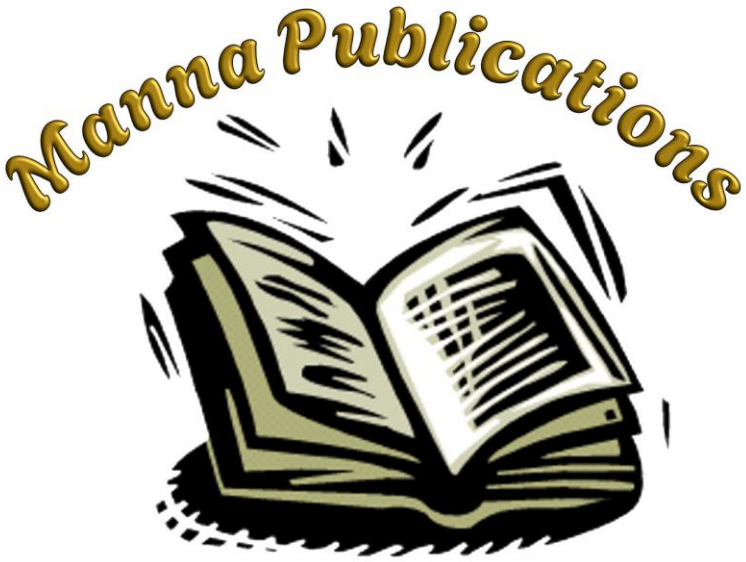
BEGINNINGS

The Origin and Purpose of Life

A Bible Teaching Commentary for personal or group study

Written by Fred Morris



MANNA FOR ALL

Genesis Part 1

Chapters 1 to 11

BEGINNINGS: Genesis Chapters 1 to 11
The Origin and Purpose of Life

• **Why God made the world**	• **How sin destroys life**
• **God's 'words' in DNA**	• **How God punishes sin**
• **Marriage and families**	• **Noah's Flood explained**

THIS BOOK explains how and why God made the world and everything in it. It teaches the purposes of God which are important for us today. It shows how everything was perfectly made from the beginning. It was later spoilt by sin and disobedience through listening to the voice of Satan. This first happened when Adam and Eve yielded to temptation and disobeyed God. It warns that God punishes sin but promises hope for those who obey Him. It also gives details of the worldwide Flood at the time of Noah. Noah obeyed the need for animal sacrifice as part of God's covenant with mankind until the time of Jesus Christ, who sacrificed His own life for the sins of all who believe He is God's Son. This commentary ends with the call of God to Abraham to move to His promised land of Canaan over 4000 years ago.

MANNA PUBLICATIONS publish small Bible teaching commentaries written by the late Fred Morris to use on your own or to study in a group. Fred and his wife Lorna, originally from Australia, travelled round the world teaching and preaching before retiring to the USA. Their low-cost books are easy to read, understand and translate into other languages. The books explain basic New and Old Testament teaching of God's word and the new life found in Christ plus additional notes for Bible students, teachers and pastors.

THESE BOOKS will help you to come closer to Almighty God. He is worshipped by millions of Jews and Christians worldwide. These books will also help you to receive salvation and eternal life through God's Son, Jesus the Christ who is Israel's Messiah. They will help you to talk about your faith in God and to pray to Him. They will help to guide you from going the wrong way in life. They will help you to live a life that is pleasing to God through the love and power of His Holy Spirit. This was promised to all who believe Jesus is the Son of God, who suffered death for our sins before returning back to Heaven. These are important teachings for these last days before His return.

WE PRAY that you may have a new peace and purpose in life as you trust in God, read the Bible and use these commentaries. Think about what Jesus taught and suffered 2000 years ago for our eternal salvation and what He is calling you to say and do today to prepare the way for His return. Amen.

Manna Publications

"MANNA FOR ALL" BIBLE TEACHING COMMENTARIES

'The secret of God's Kingdom has been given to you' (Mark 4:11)

To the Reader or Leader

These commentaries help to explain the Bible in a way that is easy to read and understand. They are also easy to translate. You can use Fred's books to study the Bible on your own or with others in a group. Each person should have his or her own book and a Bible if possible.

Bible reading: Where you see this heading, it means you or your group leader should always read the Bible verses first before reading this book.

Learn about this: Where you see this, the words help you to check the main things to know and to share with others to help everyone to grow in Bible knowledge and understanding of God's truth.

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Think about this: Where you see this, the questions require more time for personal meditation.

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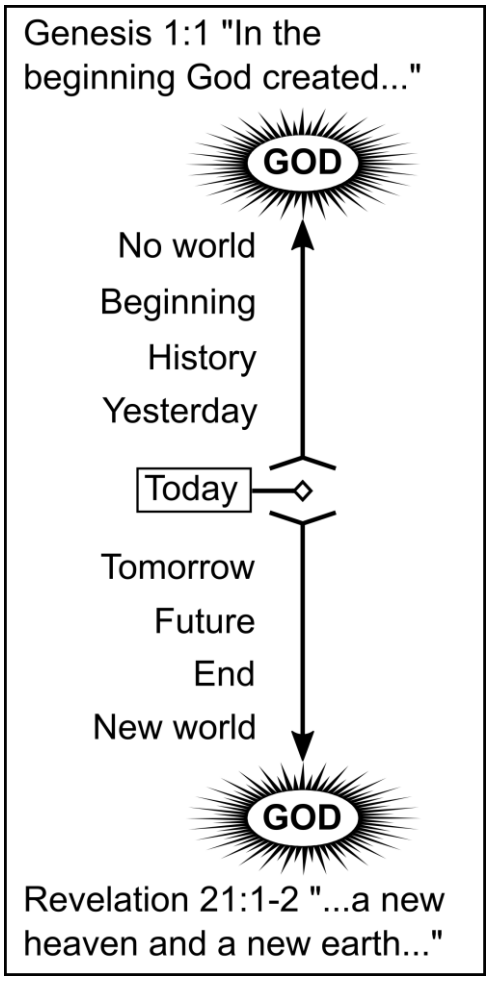
INTRODUCTION

Genesis is the first of five important books in the Old Testament called Torah in Hebrew. The history of God's work of creation was handed down for many generations. It was then written down in the Hebrew language about 3500 years ago. It includes the holy writings of God Himself, originally on tablets of stone, as well as by Moses on tablets of soft clay or scrolls. It tells us about:

- How God made the world and everything in it.
- The purposes of God and the purpose of life.
- The reasons for both good and evil.
- The importance of marriage between a man and a woman.
- The importance of having children.
- How sin separates us from God.
- How sin spoils the world.
- How God punishes sin.
- How God wants to save us from sin.

THE BIBLE AND THE BEGINNINGS OF LIFE

Genesis is the first book of the Bible. It tells us the truth about God's creation, about what He made and why He made it. The rest of the Old Testament tells us what happened before Jesus, God's Son and Messiah, came to live on Earth. It is the history of God at work in the world, first through Adam and Eve, then through Noah and his family then through Abraham and his family. But the greatest message in the Bible is that we can have everlasting life in Heaven with God if we obey Him and if we believe that Jesus Christ is His Son and our Saviour. Jesus makes it possible for us to know God!



We can see God's wonderful work in nature and in the night sky. The large number of plants, animals and stars tell us that God has great power. God created all these things and we cannot change them. We cannot stop our sun from rising or the tide from coming in! But sin and disobedience can corrupt and pollute what He has made.

However, God is greater than His creation. He works in and through His creation. He is King over Heaven and Earth. The Bible says 'He is LORD of all'. He is Yahweh, our Most High God or Almighty God.

He is LORD and King because He made the world. Everything in it belongs to Him. Since God made me, He is my LORD, too.

We know from the Bible that God is also a person. God thinks. He plans. He creates. He spoke and the Earth was made! He loves the world and the people He made and He wants us to love Him.

In the Bible, God tells us about Himself. We can know Him just like we can know another person. God had a wonderful way to show us what He is like. He first showed us how great He is in things that He created. Later on, He sent His Son, Jesus Christ, into the world for 33 years. Christians believe that Jesus is now with God and will return to Earth one day soon. He is in Heaven with His Father. We also believe Jesus was with God in Heaven before He was born to Mary on Earth through the Holy Spirit of God. Jesus told the Jewish leaders at that time, "I AM before Abraham was born" (John 8:58). Jesus used here the special words that only God used, 'I AM' (Exodus 3:14). Jesus came to live on Earth to show us God. He came down to show us what God is like. He is like God because He is God's Son and the promised Messiah of Jews and Christians everywhere.

We believe that Jesus was always with God the Father in Heaven even before He created the Universe and Earth. (Genesis 1:26; John 1:3; Colossians 1:16; Hebrews 1:2.)

The Bible says that Jesus Christ 'upholds' all things. That means He is in control. Nothing happens without Him. He does everything in a way that pleases God. And He allows things to happen which are part of His plan to bring people back to worshipping God His Father. He also sends His Holy Spirit into the world to teach people the truth about Himself. God is "Three in One". The Holy Spirit helps us to know Jesus as our Lord and Saviour. He helps us to know God as our Father. He helps us to know the Holy Spirit.

WHAT IS GOD LIKE?

So what kind of a person is God? God is a spirit but God is a person, too. God loves and cares. He does no wrong thing but He is not happy with the wrong things that people do. These bad things are called SIN. And we do them because we know good and evil and often choose to do wrong. He is sad when people die before they hear and learn the truth about Himself. He is sad when babies die before they are born or soon after they are born. He wants the population to learn about Himself and then dwell in us through His Spirit. In this way, we experience the love and compassion of God as demonstrated 2000 years ago by Christ on Earth.

Before time began, God had the creation of the world in His thoughts. This means He also knew us by our names, even before we were born! He even knows the number of hairs on our heads. God is very great. He knows everything. He knows what will happen tomorrow and who will be born next year. Our minds cannot understand how great and wonderful God is. He knows everything in the past, present and future.

Long ago a prophet of God wrote, "O LORD, you are my God. You have done wonderful things. You planned them long ago" (Isaiah 25:1). We are all part of His wonderful creation. But God is sad when sin spoils the world He made. We will read later that God allows us to choose between good and evil. We are all free to choose. We can love God or we can love evil. He shows us how to have faith in Him and longs for us to obey Him and worship Him.

Talk about this:

1. Are you ready to read the book of Genesis with an 'open mind'?
2. Are you willing to give time to understand the origin and purpose of life given in Genesis?
3. Are you able to ignore any false teachings that you have heard from those who do not know and love God?

Think about this: Pray that the Holy Spirit will speak to you while you study God's holy writings in the Bible. Know that Jesus Christ, God's Son, is with His Father in Heaven, seeking your salvation now through suffering for us on the cross for sinners 2000 years ago.

So let us begin at the beginning…

Bible reading: Genesis Chapter 1

Learn about this: *What happened when God created the universe and planet Earth and divided the waters above from the waters and land below (verses 1-10); God spoke the words to create grass and plants and trees to bear fruit and the sun, moon and stars to rule over Earth by day and by night (v.11-19); He created fish, birds and animals (v.20-25); He created mankind in His own image and provided green food to eat (v.26-31).*

GOD'S WORK OF CREATION

Genesis is at the beginning of the Bible. It tells us about the beginning of everything and of life itself. It tells us about the origin and purpose of life. In Genesis we read, "In the beginning God created the heavens and Earth" (Genesis 1:1). (The word for 'God' in the original Hebrew was plural and means 'God the Father, God the Son' and 'God the Holy Spirit'. They were there at the beginning of the Universe.)

At first, the world had no shape (1:2). No people! No morning! No evening! No sunrise! No sunset! No days and weeks and months! It was empty and God's Spirit 'moved over the waters'. Then God separated the land and the water. He set up time and space and stars (suns) and planets. On planet Earth, God made the days and weeks, with evenings and mornings. God created the plants and trees, the creatures and animals. Then He created Adam, the first man on Earth.

The Hebrew word 'create' is a very special word. It belongs to God alone and to His work. Only the Living God could create the heavens and Earth out of nothing. Men can only make things out of what God has already created.

This word 'create' is used three times in the first part of Genesis. In verse 1, God created the Earth and what we see in the heavens around us: that means 'everything'. In verse 21, God created animals. In verse 27, God created man.

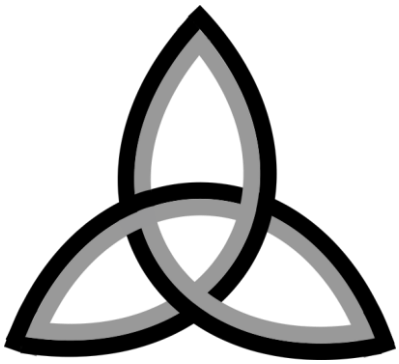
ALMIGHTY GOD: Father, Son and Holy Spirit

Christians believe that God is in three persons: Father (Hebrew 'Yahweh'), Son (Jesus, Hebrew 'Yeshua') and Holy Spirit, three in One. We sometimes say this is God the **HOLY TRINITY**. This means that Jesus and the Holy Spirit of God were together with Father God at the beginning, as **ONE GOD,** before the world was made. This is why the Bible says:

- "Let US make man in OUR own likeness" (Genesis 1:26).
- "The man (Adam) has become like one of US" (Genesis 3:22).

Later on in the Bible, the same word "US" is used:

- "Come let US go down and mix up their language" (Genesis 11:7).
- "Who shall I send, and who will go for US?" (Isaiah 6:8).



Jesus also confirmed that He lived before Abraham (John 8:58). This means that Jesus is God and Holy Spirit is God. Pray for wisdom to understand it and faith to believe it! Then God will show you the truth about Himself.

The Celtic Christians in Western Europe over 1900 years ago drew a symbol which helped them to understand the Trinity. It is called the Celtic Rope. It is in three parts but each part is joined with the other two parts; all three parts are one, God the Father, God the Son (Jesus) and God the Holy Spirit. The Holy Trinity (Matthew 28:19).

THE SIX DAYS OF CREATION

After the period of time when the world had no shape, God spoke six times to create suns, moons and planet Earth with its abundant life. God said six times that everything that He made was good (Genesis 1:9,12,18,21,25,31). We see this in the world around us, despite the pollution caused by mankind.

God gave us His Torah writings which tell how He created Earth and all the things in it. This is written down in Genesis Chapter 1 and happened in six days when God spoke the word. We must thank God for the Bible which tells us what happened 'in the beginning' and later with Adam, Noah and Abraham before Jesus Christ came down to Earth 2000 years ago. If we did not have the Bible, we would not know where this wonderful Earth came from. Or why we live here. In the Bible, God tells us about both the origin and purpose of life, to obey and worship Him and to know His salvation plan with the gift of an everlasting holy life.

New discoveries are being made all the time about our amazing world. God did not tell us everything about how He created the Universe and Earth, but He told us everything we need to know in simple words. It is in the Bible. The creation took place because God wanted it. He spoke the words to do it and He said it was good. He loved what He had made and welcomes our prayers and praises.

GOD'S WORDS OF CREATION

God's words are powerful and they create life. God said, "Let there be light" and there was light (1:3). There could not be life on Earth without light and heat and God's plan was to create life. This included mankind in His likeness (1:27).

Then God separated the light from the darkness. He called the light 'day' and the darkness He called 'night'. Light also provides heat. When the light appeared, God said that it was 'good'. Everything God does is good. Then God pushed the waters back and made the land (v.9). Some of the waters were below and some were above the sky (v. 6-7). But at that time it did not rain. No water fell from the sky but there was plenty of water below. A mist also kept the ground moist on planet Earth (2:5,6).

Then God said, "Let the waters be filled with living things and let birds fly in the sky" (1:20). This happened very quickly. Each creature was fully grown with eggs inside for new generations. God spoke and there were fish in the sea and smaller things for them to eat. God was not happy to make just one or two kinds. He made hundreds of different kinds of fish and birds.

God covered the land with many kinds of grasses and plants with their own seeds. Then God created the animals and the insects to eat the plants. God created many different kinds of animals, both male and female, including farm and wild animals, apes and some creatures that are no longer here. There were also very many flying and crawling creatures.

Each type was created fully grown with its own eggs within. And each type produced babies with a unique design to make the same type of fish, bird, insect or animal. God made sure that each type produced the same type each year, year after year. He used a new set of DNA 'words' or 'code' from His book of life to create each type.

At last all of God's creation was in place. The Earth, seas, trees, fruits, plants, insects, birds, fish and animals which were made by Him. Then God made the first human 'in His image', which was the central purpose of all God's creation.

WHY GOD MADE MANKIND

On the fifth day, God finished making all these wonderful things, but 'there was no man to work the ground' (2:5). We know that God made man to take care of God's creation (1:28). We should therefore obey God and care for the world He has created. It was peaceful, without storms or pollution. All life grew well and lived for a long time. When God finished His work of creation 'God saw everything He had made was very good' (1:31).

God created all life

God was pleased with the Universe and planet Earth that He had created. They were just as He had thought of them and planned them. He 'saw that His creation was good'. So He said, "Let the land grow grass, herbs and trees with fruit with its own seed in it". Yes, He created the first plants with their own seeds already inside them. He placed life in every tiny seed. Only God can create life. Each seed has its own design built in to make more of the same plant. In this way, God made sure that each plant would produce the same type each year, year after year, without change.

Even seeds that people leave in a dry place for hundreds of years will grow into the same type of plant. Scientists tell us that every seed has its own 'words of life' in it which they call DNA. In this way God gave His 'words of life' to every plant and to every creature. Each one was different. Each kind had its own DNA words. The DNA words spoken by God control what grows and how it grows. Nothing is allowed to grow into another kind. (Man tries to change what God has done by chemicals, by 'selection', by 'cross-breeding' and even by changes to the cells or DNA coding.) God spoke the words of creation and each plant and creature was made. And everything was good and perfect.

Life is precious because God created it. All life comes from Him. He created certain kinds (species) of life in the trees and the plants, other kinds of life in the fish, and still other kinds of life in the animals and insects.

Animals and people must have air to breathe, so God created plants first to help to make the pure air that we need. We must care for the plants and the trees. They give us our food and the oxygen in the air.

God created the sun to give the hours of light. He also allowed darkness, but only for some of the time.

Our sun gives light and heat to the Earth. Plants use this light and heat to grow. The sun keeps the Earth warm so that we do not get cold and die. He made and named the stars and put them in their places. They always stay in the paths God gave them. This is another part of the wonderful order God put into His creation.

Genesis 1 tells us why God made people:

- To be like Himself 'in his image' (1:26,27).
- To rule over His creation and care for it (1:26).
- To have children and populate the Earth (1:28).

God cared for mankind and the creatures He created through eating the good things that grow on Earth (v.29). His purpose was for us to receive His love and for us to worship Him.

Talk about this:

1. What has God created for His pleasure?
2. What has God created for our pleasure?

Bible reading: Genesis chapter 2

Learn about this: *The blessing of the seventh day as a Sabbath (verses 1 to 3); more details of Earth and the first man and the Garden of Eden and its river (v.4-14); God tells Adam to name the birds and animals (v.15-20); He creates a woman from Adam's rib as a helper and wife and they were naked and unashamed (v.21-25).*

HOW GOD MADE MANKIND

Genesis 2 tells us more about how God made man. 'The LORD God formed a man. He made him from the dust of the ground. He breathed into him the breath of life and the man became a living person' (2:7).

God used the basic elements of the ground when He created life (2:7,19). Although people (and other creatures) do not look like dust and soil and rocks, we are actually made from the same elements of nitrogen, oxygen, carbon, hydrogen, calcium, etc. We are made from the same materials that God used at the beginning to make the plants and other creatures.

However, Adam, the first man, was also given an ever-living spirit like God's Spirit. He had a mind and he could think about things. He knew God as his friend. God had close fellowship with Adam.

The animals cannot talk to God or know God as man can. God wanted a person to love, someone like Himself, so He made Adam 'in His own image'. He gave him a 'living soul' or 'personality'.

God made Adam as a grown-up person. He was never a baby. Adam could talk to God and listen to what He said. He did not make noises like the pigs or apes. He spoke the words of a proper language, and he understood what God was saying to him. He knew what was right and could choose to do right. Animals do not have a spirit or mind, like man. Man is not like anything else that God created. He is not like an animal or fish, bird or tree. Man can think like God. He can know what is right and choose to do it. We say man is a 'moral being'. Man can know God and therefore speak the true words of God.

Then God told Adam to give names to the animals. The animals came to Adam and he gave names to all of them (2:19). This is the first time that God gave man a job to do with the words to say. Adam knew the mind of God and spoke His words.

Evolution or Creation?

The Bible says that the first man and woman were the special creation of God. They were like their Creator and were very different from the animals and other creatures on Earth.

Many believe that people came from apes or monkeys, but this is not true according to the Bible or according to the ancient bones (fossils) we find in the ground. Charles Darwin believed that slight changes in each living creature or plant produced more advanced forms of life. This is called the theory of evolution. However, scientists have proved it is not possible for an animal to become a man. Nor have any links between the other species been found to prove this theory. Darwin's 'missing links' are still missing!

Christians believe that dogs have always been dogs and apes have always been apes and men have always been men. They have never been linked together. All dog varieties are still dogs. All varieties of apes are still apes. All varieties of people are still people. God made sure that each creature or plant could not change into another species. Their seeds or eggs are always the same type, but with many different varieties. Their seeds and eggs were created within them by God at the time He first created the plants and creatures.

Scientist Charles Darwin did not know about this 150 years ago, but today scientists have proved that the cells in each creature or plant do not permit change to another creature or plant. The DNA code makes sure it creates only its own kind of seed (see Genesis 1:12). God spoke the word, so everything was created and finally He made man 'in His own image'.

Our bodies are made in the image of Father God, for His glory and purposes and not for fulfilling our own selfish desires. If you believe in God's creation, then you have a special purpose in life, a reason for living, and hope of life after death through obedience and faith. This is possible today through faith in God's son, Jesus Christ, who left His heavenly Father to suffer on the cross for our sins before returning back to Heaven.

A SPECIAL PLACE FOR ADAM

God is loving and very wise. When God made Adam, He took him to a special garden (2:8). God made this garden in Eden. Its exact location is given in the Bible (2:10-14). God put every good thing in the garden for Adam to enjoy. Everything that Adam needed grew there.

God told Adam to live in the garden and take care of it. He told Adam how to care for the plants and animals. God's plan was for man to rule over His creation. And there would always be sufficient to eat. There was also a 'tree of life' which is the same tree that will grow in the New World at the end of this age (2:9; Revelation 22:2). And there was also the 'tree of the knowledge of good and evil' (2:9).

Because God said 'rule over creation' (Gen. 1:26), man is a natural leader. And he needs work. A man is not happy if he has no work! God told Adam what to do and the things he should not do. He told him how to rule justly and with care. Everything God tells us to do is good for us. God is love and God is just and right.

Adam had a choice and he chose to obey God at the beginning. Adam took care of God's garden and God talked to him about everything. Adam was very busy on the sixth day naming all the animals as he sat with God (2:19). But none of the animals were equal with Adam.

A FRIEND FOR ADAM

After all the animals passed by, God looked at Adam. He sat there all alone. God said. "It is not good for man to be alone. I will make a helper who is right for him" (2:18).

God knew Adam needed one of his own kind, a person who would be his friend. So He created Eve. While Adam slept, God took a rib from his side and made a female person (2:21-22).

'In His image… male and female, God created them' (1:27). Eve, also, was made 'in God's image' or in the likeness of God.

When Adam awoke, God brought Eve to him. He saw at once that she was like him. She was not like the animals. She became a special friend to him. Then Adam named her too. He called the woman 'Eve' and she shared in everything he did. Eve became Adam's wife.

Note that:

1. Adam and Eve were the only two people who entered the world without actually being born. They were God's special creation.
2. Adam and Eve were the only people who entered the world free of sin, apart from Jesus who is sometimes called 'the Second Adam'.

THE DAY OF REST

On the sixth day, God stopped creating (2:1,2). God did not create anything more after He created Eve. God called the next day 'a holy day' or 'Sabbath'. This was to be a time of rest for God, to take pleasure in what He had created. He particularly enjoyed fellowship with Adam and Eve. This is why many religions around the world keep a Sabbath day of rest and worship each week.

The seventh day was a time of pleasure and rest for God. Note that the seventh day does not have an ending like the other six days. God is still enjoying His creation. So should we! The best way to keep the Sabbath rest is to worship God, take pleasure in His creation and give time for God to have fellowship with us. We should also try to do this at other times and with other believers.

God put His own Spirit in Adam and Eve. He gave them life that would go on forever. All life comes from God, so man should obey Him and worship Him only (Exodus 20:3). However, we know that sin shuts out God's Spirit and stops us from having everlasting life. Sin leads to everlasting death.

The Creation of the World

At the beginning there was darkness, waters and God's Spirit.

The Bible account agrees with what scientists say happened next:

a. First there was light (including heat).
b. Then water 'below' and water 'above' with air in between.
c. Then seas, land and green vegetation.
d. Then other suns, moons and stars.
e. Then fish and birds.
f. Then animals and other living creatures.
g. Then man and woman.

Earth was different before Noah's Flood (Genesis 7) from what it is now:

- Water was held in the sky above the Earth (Genesis 1:7).
- No rain fell on the ground (Genesis 2:6). Mist and dew gave water.
- People lived much longer (Genesis 5:5-32). There was no severe weather.
- There were some giant people (Genesis 6:4) and giant creatures.
- No rainbows occurred because there was no rain or storms (Genesis 9:13).
- It was not very hot or very cold. Plants grew everywhere. There was no desert or ice.

God planned that one day Jesus would come down from heaven and become the only way back to God for us to regain everlasting life.

Talk about this:

1. What did God say about the seventh day of the week (2:2)?
2. What did God tell Adam to do, eat and say (2:15,16,19)?
3. What do you understand about God's roles for men and women from the beginning (1:26; 2:18,27)?
4. What do you know about the two special trees in the garden of Eden (2:9,16,17)?
5. What is God's plan for marriage and families (2:24)?

Think about this: Are you asking God to help you to understand about everlasting life and knowledge of good and evil (2:9)?

Bible reading: Genesis chapter 3

Learn about this: *The serpent (Satan) deceives Eve and causes Adam and Eve to sin and they were ashamed (verses 1-13); God curses the serpent but predicts his defeat by a descendant of Eve (v.14-15); God also punishes Adam and Eve (v.6-19) but provides for their needs before driving them out of the Garden of Eden (v.20-24).*

GOD GAVE ADAM A COMMAND

Every day, God walked and talked with Adam and Eve. He wanted them to get to know Him and love Him as a very dear friend.

God said to Adam: "You can eat the fruit from any tree in the garden, but you must not eat the fruit of the tree of knowledge of good and evil. For the day you eat from it you can be sure that you will die" (Genesis 2:16-17).

Adam could understand God's command; he knew that God's words were true. God loved Adam and wanted only the best for him. He knew what was good for the man. He wanted to protect Adam and Eve from danger. He wanted to protect Adam from knowing evil. If Adam obeyed God it would be easy to work the garden. But God created Adam free to choose. Adam could choose to obey God or choose not to obey. To not obey God is very wrong; it is sin. And sin must be punished.

THE CHOICE BETWEEN GOOD AND EVIL

Satan wanted to spoil God's creation. He came into the garden looking for Adam and Eve. He used the serpent or snake in the garden to speak to Eve. The snake may have been very beautiful. But it was more able to trick others than any other animal that God had made (Genesis 3:1).

Satan (the chief devil) was once a beautiful angel, but he was proud and wanted to be greater than God. So God put Satan out of Heaven (Luke 10:18). Jesus was with His Father, God, at the beginning (John 17:5). Jesus saw Satan fall from Heaven.

Eve heard Satan's voice speaking to her. He said things about God that were not true. Satan wanted Eve to choose the wrong way, and then he could get power over the man and his wife. Satan wanted to be king over God's creation.

God cannot lie (Hebrews 6:18). Everything God says is true. All lies come from Satan. The Bible says, "The bad spirit, the devil… is a liar, and all lies come from him" (John 8:44).

Satan asked Eve, "Did God really say that you should not eat from any tree in the garden?" Satan changed God's words to make God seem unfair.

Eve told Satan that God said, "Do not touch or eat fruit from the tree in the centre of the garden. If you do, you will die" (Genesis 3:3).

Did Eve believe what God had said? Did she believe what Satan told her? She had to choose between God's command and Satan's lie. She was given the choice between obeying God or Satan. We, too, must choose between what is right and what is wrong!

Some of the angels followed Satan. All the angel spirits who did not obey God were put out of Heaven. There are many of these evil spirits around today, with Satan as their leader. In the Bible they are called devils or demons. Satan uses demon spirits to try to gain power over men and women. Like Satan, they are all liars and try to deceive us and control us.

Our Wonderful Creator: Our Wonderful Saviour

Genesis 1 provides us with a wonderful picture of our God:

- Our God is the only god.
- Our God is the only creator.
- Our God's creation is perfect and good.
- Creation shows God's wisdom and purpose.
- Creation shows God's nature, beauty and kindness, His glory.

But the story of life is that men and women disobey God and choose evil instead of good. Genesis 1-11 tells us about the goodness of God and about the sin of mankind and the rest of the Bible tells us about God's answer to sins: His salvation plan for mankind.

To keep us from sinning, God has provided:

- His Bible as His **guide** to do what is right and understand His holy laws for living.
- His covenant promises as a **guarantee** of His righteous judgement.
- His Holy Spirit as His **goad** (like a pointed stick) to encourage us to obey and to work hard.
- Our conscience as His **guard** against doing wrong.
- His son, Jesus, which He sent to Earth as His **gateway** to Heaven, since here is no other way or person to bring us close to God.

The first Adam brought sin into the world. The 'Second Adam' (Jesus) brought salvation into the world. His Hebrew name, Yeshua, means 'salvation'.

THE FIRST SIN

Satan saw that Eve was not sure. Her faith in God was not strong, so Satan quickly took control. He said to Eve, "You can be sure you will not die! For God knows when you eat the fruit of that tree, your eyes will be opened and you will know things you have never known before … both good and evil" (Genesis 3:5). Satan told Eve a lie. He is the 'father of lies'. Eve put out her hand and took some of the fruit and ate it. It was the fruit that God told them not to eat. Then she gave the fruit to Adam and he also ate some. That day, in the beautiful garden in Eden, a very bad thing happened.

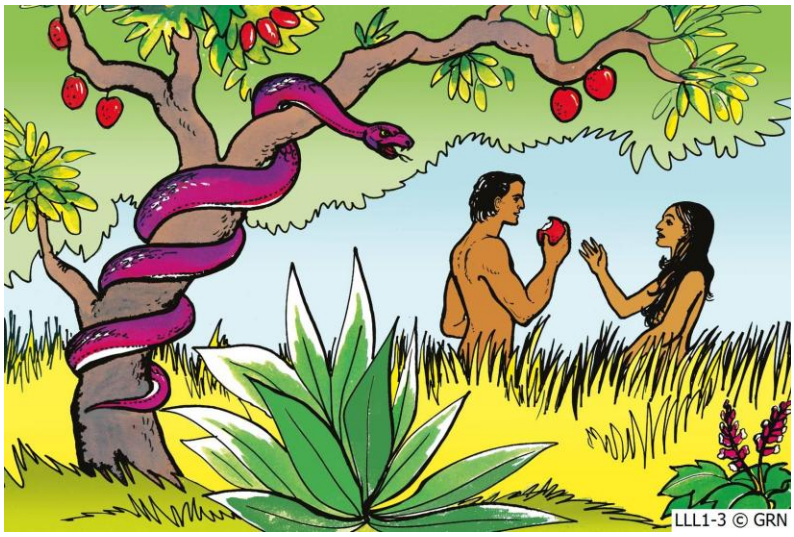
Adam and Eve disobeyed God's command. God had created them free to choose, but Satan came and tempted them. When they were tempted, Adam and Eve made the wrong choice. They listened to Satan and obeyed him instead of God.

They did wrong and their sin turned their hearts away from God. Sin separated them from the Creator who gave them life. God allowed them the freedom to choose to do right or to do wrong. To obey Him or to obey Satan.

Our fellowship with God was destroyed because of this sin of disobeying God. We call it the original sin. God knew it was not a good thing for mankind to know evil and to live for ever without Him. God wanted mankind to freely obey Him, to choose to do good even when tempted, to worship Him and have fellowship with Him.

The Bible tells us about the sins of mankind against God and about God's plans for us to choose the right way back to worshipping and obeying Him, freely, without force.

The Bible also tells us all about God's love for mankind and His hatred of evil and sin. It is the record of the greatest love story ever told, of God's love for us despite the destruction, poverty and terror caused by our sins. The Bible also tells how He worked in the lives of people like Adam, Abel, Enoch, Noah, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, Judah, Moses, David and the great prophets and judges of Israel. To these people He gave a 'way back to God from the dark paths of sin' through sacrifice and obedience to the Old Testament Law. Since the birth, death and resurrection of Jesus, the whole world has been given the opportunity to know God though accepting the sacrifice of Jesus on our behalf and our obedience to His Holy Spirit.



'Eve saw that the fruit of the tree was good to eat... and ate it and gave some to her husband. Then both of them knew things they had never known before.' (Genesis 3:6-7

ADAM AND EVE KNEW THEY HAD DONE WRONG

When God first made the world and everything in it, it was 'very good' (Genesis 1:10,21,31). There was nothing wrong: no pain, no suffering, no disease, no poverty, no famine, no fighting, no sin, and no death.

But things are NOT 'very good' in the world today. This is because nothing went right any more for Adam and Eve. They were afraid of their Creator-God. They were no longer innocent of the sin of disobedience and they felt shame because they were naked. They had listened to Satan and obeyed him (3:16). Now Satan was their master and sin held them tight. Sin had spoilt God's perfect world and His relationship with mankind.

It was God Himself who allowed Satan to tempt Adam and Eve. God wants people to choose freely and wisely between good and evil. Adam and Eve failed the test and chose to please themselves instead of pleasing God. They believed the lie of Satan instead of the truth of God.

How innocent blood covers over sin

God's Old Testament Law says, "The person that sins must die". They deserve punishment and will not go to Heaven unless they repent. Adam and Eve had done wrong. How could God be just and fair and still let them live?

God took an animal and killed it. Then He made coats for Adam and Eve from the animal's skin (Genesis 3:21). In this way, God used the blood of the animal that was killed to 'cover over' Adam and Eve's sin and shame. (They had tried to 'cover over' their bodies by making clothes from leaves.) God says that we cannot cover over our sin and shame by anything we can do ourselves. We cannot put right our sins. We must ask God to forgive us and then thank Him and trust Him for His wisdom in the future.

God continued to give Adam and Eve and their descendants His forgiveness through their own repeated sacrifices of innocent blood. God used the sacrificed blood of innocent animals as an illustration of the way He would use the sacrificed blood of Jesus to forgive sins in the future. Jesus was innocent. He did not sin. We are not innocent but by His blood we can be forgiven. God alone is able to save us from our sins through the blood of His Son. This is because of the grace and mercy and love of God. Jesus took the punishment for our sins and died on a cross that we may live for ever with Him through God's resurrection. After the death and resurrection of Jesus, there was no need for any other sacrifice of innocent blood.

Jesus was the perfect sacrifice for all people and for all times. If you believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God, then you can have your sins forgiven through the blood of Jesus. Read more about this in your Bible and in Manna Publications Bible commentaries (Mark's Gospel).

Adam and Eve knew that they had done wrong. They knew that they had sinned against God, and they felt very bad inside. They also knew that they were naked and they wanted to cover themselves and hide their bodies from God (3:7-8). They were now 'slaves to sin'.

God gave us a way to know when we do wrong. We do not feel good about ourselves. Something inside, called our conscience, says to us, "You have done wrong". God created us with a conscience that helps us know right from wrong.

Suffering though the Fall

The effect of yielding to Satan in the Garden of Eden:

1. Our relationship with God: separation.
2. Our relationship with ourselves: fear and shame.
3. Our relationship with others: violence.
4. Our relationship with creation: neglect.
5. Our relationship with Satan: persecution.

Talk about this:

1. Why did God make both men and women?
2. Why did God make us 'in His own image'?
3. Why did God allow Satan to tempt Adam and Eve?
4. What did God give us to help us to do what is right?
5. Did God make anything that was not good?

Think about this: God allowed Satan to tempt us. Is God fair to give us the choice of good and evil? Who is in control of your life? How do we suffer when we choose wrong?

THEY TRIED TO HIDE THEIR SHAME

God made Adam and Eve perfect. He made them in His own image. But they disobeyed God and ate fruit from the tree of good and evil. When they sinned, their eyes were opened. They looked at their naked bodies and tried to hide from God. They knew that they had done wrong. Their nakedness separated them from God. Today, men and women often choose to enjoy nakedness instead of enjoying God. Our bodies are wonderfully made with the power to create babies. But we must worship and enjoy our wonderful Creator, not our wonderful bodies!

Adam and Eve found some big leaves and sewed them together to make aprons (skirts). They tried to hide their shame by covering their nakedness with these aprons. They put on the aprons and crept away into the forest. They knew God would be coming to talk with them. He always came to the garden in the evening when it was cool (3:8). Would He come? Would He stop loving them? No! He did not stop loving them, but He was very sad. When we disobey God's laws it hurts God, it hurts us and it hurts others.

In the evening, God came to the garden to talk with His children. How foolish for them to think they could hide from God! The Bible says "No-one can hide from God. His eyes see everything we do. We must give an answer to God for what we have done" (Hebrews 4:13).

There is only one way for people who have lost their closeness with God to come back to Him. They must be sorry for their sin of doing wrong. They must repent. They must turn away from the wrong things they do and come back to their heavenly Father.

God wanted Adam and Eve to admit their sin and to be sorry for disobeying His command. He wanted Adam to confess his sin, so God came and called to Adam, "Where are you?" (Genesis 3:9)

THE EFFECT OF DOING WRONG

Adam was afraid. He did not want God to find him. He now feared fellowship with God. Sin destroys our relationship with God.

People ask, "How could God create a world with so much sin and sickness and suffering in it today?" The answer is that God created a perfect world. God said everything He created was 'very good'. But people have done wrong, and sin has become their master. They are sinners and sin stops people obeying God. It brings anger and war as well as destroying our relationship with God and each other.

Our bad ways have turned the world into a sad and troubled place. Paul says in the Bible says, "All people have done wrong and all people are far from being as good as God" (Romans 3:23). This happened because Adam and Eve disobeyed God. This is why Christians believe that we are born with sin in our lives. We are not perfect!

God did not forget about Adam and Eve, or the beautiful world He had created. He calls to all people to leave their sin and come back to Him. Many people do not want to seek after God, but God calls to us. God wants to as His friends.

In the Garden of Eden, God called, "Where are you, Adam?" Of course God knew where Adam was. He knew Adam and Eve were hiding.

God wanted Adam to come to Him and say that he had done wrong. He wanted to forgive Adam and Eve for what they had done and to be friends again. However, they would not take the blame for the sin in their lives (3:12-13). They blamed each other. Eve said it was the snake's fault and Adam blamed Eve and even blamed God for giving him Eve as his wife. Sin does that: one sin leads to another sin.

The Bible says we cannot blame others for the bad things we do. We cannot blame our parents, or say that we grew up in a poor part of the country, or that we had bad friends when we were young. God says, "Every person must give account…" (Matthew 12:36). We are responsible for every wrong thing.

Because God is true and fair, He must punish sin. So the LORD God spoke to the serpent. He said, "Because you have done this, I am putting a curse on you. You are cursed more than all of the livestock and all of the wild animals. You will crawl on the ground. You will eat dust all of the days of your life. I will put hatred between you and the woman. Your children and her children will be enemies. But her Son will crush your head. And you will crush His heel" (3:15).

This means God promised that one day a special Son of a descendant of Eve would crush and overthrow Satan. We believe this is a reference to the birth of Jesus Christ, Son of God, planned from the beginning by God to bring salvation and obedience of mankind and glory to God. God our Father, through the Holy Spirit visiting Mary, created the seed for the birth to His Son, who was in Heaven from the beginning. Jesus became a sinless human being for over 30 years who would suffer and die to experience the punishment we deserve. This happened

when Judas betrayed Jesus, the fulfilment of what it means to 'crush His heel'. Amazing grace!

Then the LORD God said to Eve, "I will greatly increase your pain when you give birth. You will be in pain when you have children. You will long for your husband. And he will rule over you" (3:16).

The LORD God said to Adam, "You listened to your wife. You ate the fruit of the tree that I commanded you about. I said, 'You must not eat its fruit.' So I am putting a curse on the ground because of what you did. All the days of your life you will have to work hard to get food from the ground. You will eat the plants of the field, even though the ground produces thorns and thistles. You will have to work hard and sweat a lot to produce the food you eat. You were made out of the ground. And you will return to it. You are dust. So you will return to it" (3:17-19).

SHUT OUT OF THE GARDEN OF EDEN

So God put Adam and Eve out of the garden and closed the way back. God punished all mankind for the original sin of Adam and Eve by shutting them out of the Garden of Eden (3:23). A mighty angel guarded the way back with a sword of fire (3:24).

That was the worst day in the history of the world. Pain and hard work would become a normal part of life.

From that day on, Adam had to work hard and dig the ground to get enough to eat. And every time Eve had a baby she had pain. All this was part of the curse that came on men and women because of their sin. Sin always makes trouble. Sin always causes us pain and suffering. Sin must be cut out before any sinner can enter Heaven.

GOD'S PLAN TO STOP US DOING WRONG

If God had fully punished Adam and Eve for their sin, they would have died (2:17). But we would not be here now! God is a holy God and does not allow sin. So God found other ways to help people to stay true to Him, avoid punishment and fulfil His purpose in Creation. The Bible tells us about the ordinary people who obeyed God. For example, Noah, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Moses, David… who we will read about later. And the Bible tells us about God's salvation plan for all whom He calls and who obey Him.

The Bible also tells us about the bad people who caused a lot of trouble in the world that He made. This is why God promised to send a Saviour (3:15). He called and anointed many good people to point the way back from sin for thousands of years. He gave commandments and chose the sacrifice of animal blood to encourage repentance and obedience and worship. Then one day, at a time fixed by God, Jesus took on the punishment for the sin of the world (1 Peter 2:24; 3:18). God sent His Son, Jesus Christ. Jesus came to remove all that was wrong in the heart of mankind. He came 'to seek and to save the lost' (Luke 19:10). For God said, "All have sinned…" (Romans 3:23). "God was in Jesus, His Son. He was

working through Jesus to bring back the whole world to Himself" (2 Corinthians 5:19).

When Adam sinned, he passed his sinful nature on to his children. And they passed the same sinful nature on to their children. The whole world was lost in sin and cut off from God. So the Bible says, "There is not one person who is right with God. No, not even one" (Psalm 14:3). We are all sinners. Only the repeated blood sacrifices and the final blood sacrifice of Jesus were sufficient to bring mankind back to God.

God's Truth in Genesis Chapter 3

These are the important **truths** that Genesis 3 teaches us:

- The first sin was to disobey God (v.6).
- The sinful nature of Adam and Eve has been passed on to their children and to all people in the world (Romans 3:23).
- Satan will be at war with all people (v.15).
- Women will suffer pain in childbirth (v.16).
- Women will submit to their husbands (v.16).
- Men will have to work hard in order to live (v.17).
- The ground will be cursed with weeds (v.18).
- The ground will supply enough food to live if we work hard (v.18).
- People's bodies will die and not live for ever (v.19,22).
- God allows animal skins to be used for clothing (v.21).

Today, people who do not want to believe God try to change or disagree with these things.

Notice that these things are a form of **punishment** for sin allowed by God:

- pain in childbirth (v.16).
- weeds growing with food (v.18).
- hard work to survive (v.17-19).
- There are also these **promises** of God:
- A son of woman will "crush the head of Satan" (v.15). This is the first time God speaks about His coming Saviour (Jesus Christ, born of the virgin Mary).
- Mankind will be able to eat the food they work for "all the days of your life" (v.17-19) if they work hard.

Most of the family of Adam and Eve sinned against their Creator. Evidence exists that God changed the axis of the planet Earth to punish and destroy the people through 'Noah's Flood'. This also created winter and summer seasons with desert land and pasture land.

THE WAY BACK TO GOD

Because we are sinners, like Adam, we hide from God. We try to cover up our sins. We blame others. Why is this? Because we have Adam's wrong nature inside. We have his sinful ways. We do not obey God and our hearts turn away from Him. We are not perfect. But God warned Satan that He would win the battle against sin (Genesis 3:15). Jesus, who never sinned, died to be the perfect sacrifice for sinful men and women.

"We were weak and could not help ourselves" (Romans 5:6-8). Then Christ came at the right time and gave His life for all sinners. He gave His own life in place of your life and mine.

He will take away our sin so that our friendship with God will be made right again. Then we can talk with Him just as Adam and Eve did at first in the garden. This is God's great salvation plan. His plan was that men and women should "believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and be saved" (Acts 16:31). "By this Good News you are saved" (1 Corinthians 15:2). It is often called 'the mystery of Christ'.

If you trust Jesus as your Saviour, you will go to Heaven when you die. Let Jesus save you from your sins. Ask God to forgive you. Then continue to read in the Bible more about God's plan for everyone in Jesus. You will find joy and peace when you are right with God. Our Almighty God, Yahweh, who created the world, will help you and will be your friend.

Talk about this:

1. Why do we say that sinful people are separated from God?
2. Why do we say that people are sinners from birth?
3. How can a sinful person come back to God today?
4. How can a holy God forgive a sinful person?
5. What is God's marriage law (Genesis 2:24)?

Think about this: Through God's punishment of pain at childbirth, comes new life; and through the punishment of hard work comes provision for life.

Bible reading: Genesis chapters 4 and 5

Learn about this: *The birth of Cain and Abel and their worship of God (Chapter 4 verses 1-7); how Cain murdered Abel and the punishment Cain received (8-16); the family line of Adam and Eve (v.17-26 and Chapter 5).*

ADAM AND EVE HAVE CHILDREN

Adam and Eve were the first husband and wife. At that time God gave us a marriage law and it has never changed. God's marriage law says, "A man will leave his father and mother, and will be joined to his wife. And the two of them will become one" (2:24).

Marriage and Divorce

God made only one marriage law. "A man will leave his father and mother to be joined to his wife. The two of them will become one" (Genesis 2:24). That is a wonderful law. If people keep God's marriage law it will solve many problems. God knew that men need a wife. And He knew that children need a father and mother. His law blesses a man and woman and it protects the family.

So it is God's plan for a man and a woman to marry. It is God's plan for them to have children when they are married. He made it a pleasure to 'make love' so that children could be born. If enjoying 'making love' was not a pleasure there would be no children and mankind would die and become extinct.

But if we seek pleasure in sex without marriage then that is against God's plan. And if we have children without being married, this can cause problems and sadness for the children. If we have sex in other ways then this is not part of God's plan. If a man has more than one wife, that causes jealousy and sadness, too. If a man changes his wife for another one, there is anger and sadness, also confusion for the children. Jesus knew it was God's plan for a man to be faithful to one wife, to have no-one else and to stay with that one wife if possible for life. In this way, children can be born and grow up in a loving home and not be saddened by parents who are not faithful to each other. Jesus said that this was God's plan from the beginning (Matthew 19:8). Divorce is man's idea. Children are also a gift from God. Sacrificing babies before or after birth is evil.

Often people who are married do not have children. Remember that if there are no children in a marriage, the marriage is still complete. Therefore, it is wrong to end a marriage because there are no children. Marriage is complete even without children. For a man and wife to seek pleasure together is good. Making love is a gift from God. However, remember it is God's purpose for us to increase the number of people on Earth through marriage (Genesis 9:7).

So marriage between a man and woman is God's law. But divorce is man's law. God's law cannot be broken without someone getting hurt. That is true about divorce and it is true about making love outside marriage.

A man should not force his wife to make love with him. They should love each other from the heart and make love as in the Bible, thinking only of each other. (Read Song of Songs, sometimes called Song of Solomon.)

Disobeying God's laws on sex and marriage and making love in ways that God did not plan at the beginning can also lead to early death, not life. Jesus warned us not to allow sexual immorality to spoil the good works of God's creation and grace (Revelation 2:22).

Some churches say that priests should not marry, but to forbid marriage is wrong (Genesis 2:18; 1 Timothy 4:3). However, we can choose not to marry if we choose not to make love to another person.

God made natural laws. He set the stars to follow a path. They do not wander all over the sky. They move in perfect order. The universe is full of God's order. The order in creation follows natural laws. When I fell out of a tree, I fell downwards, not upwards! This is one of God's natural laws. We call it gravity. All God's laws are for our good. And God's marriage law is most important. It is for our good.

Man is not complete without woman. Woman is not complete without man. They need each other. Marriage between man and woman is normal because it is necessary. That is God's plan. That is God's law. That is God's provision. That is how we populate the Earth to enjoy and give thanks for what He what He has created.

God told Adam and Eve to take charge of the Earth (3:23) and to care for it. They had work to do. They could not do this alone; they needed children to help them. And they had to teach their children about God. God wants order in our families.

'Adam made love to his wife. She became pregnant and gave birth to Cain' (4:1).

Soon after this, Adam and Eve had another son and they called him Abel (4:2).

God made Adam and Eve in His own likeness (5:1). But the children of Adam and Eve were born as sinful humans. Like them our hearts are 'always turned to what is evil'. The only other person to be born in the likeness of God was His own Son, Jesus Christ. Jesus was born through the Spirit of God to the virgin Mary. He was born as a human being but without sin from birth. Nor did he give in to temptation. Nor did He disobey His Father, Almighty God.

LIFE OUTSIDE THE GARDEN OF EDEN

I am sure that Adam told his two boys about the garden in Eden and the things that happened there, how God put him and their mother out of the garden because they did not obey His command. Now they were cut off from God's special life in the fertile garden. Eden was behind them and they would never be able to go back (3:23).

God sent mighty angels with swords of fire to close the way (3:24). It was a picture of God's judgement on sin, and of His curse on Satan and on all evil. There will always be war between those who follow Satan and those who have faith in God (3:15).

When Adam sinned and did not obey God, his mind and heart turned away from God. Sin changed Adam's whole nature. Sadly, he passed his sinful nature on to his children and they passed it to us (Romans 5:12). We all have Adam's sinful nature! We have all sinned through our father Adam and our selfish nature rules over us. Without the Spirit of God in our lives, sin is our master! Because sin is our master, we do wrong things. God's word to Paul said, "All have sinned…" (Romans 3:23).

Our thoughts remind us of sin but our desire must be for God. This is why we must understand God's great salvation plan. God accepted the sacrifice of Jesus for our sins. There is no other way back to God from the darkness of sin in order to live a holy life in His light and truth.

When Cain and Abel were young, they worked with their parents in the fields. They learned how to use the land to grow crops and care for the animals. As they grew older, Cain chose to grow food. It was hard work breaking up the ground, and weeds grew among his vegetables.

Abel chose to work with the sheep. Every morning, he took them out to find grass. In the evening, he brought them in to a safe place.

CAIN AND ABEL TRY TO FIND GOD'S WAY

One day, Cain and Abel brought an offering to God. It was to show that they wanted to worship Him and bring their gift of thanks to God.

That morning Abel went out into the field to find the best lambs to offer to God. They were the first to be born and were male lambs (4:4). He killed them and prepared the meat for the altar. It included the fat of the lambs which was pleasing to God.

Cain cut some of the ripe vegetables and brought them to the family altar. Cain was self-confident. He wanted to worship God in his own way (4:3).

The Bible tells us, "The LORD looked in favour on Abel and his offering. But He was not pleased with Cain and his offering" (4:5). Cain became angry and had an argument with God about it. So God spoke to Cain and gave him a chance to change his mind. God called Cain to repent and to do what was pleasing to God.

God always moves toward us in grace and mercy, even when we do wrong. His love and favour are always toward us. When God speaks to us we have two choices. We either believe Him and obey, or we do not! We all have to choose. People listen and obey God's Word, or they listen to the 'sinner's voice' in their own hearts. When they turn away from God's voice and go their own way, God is sad. He may allow them to have trouble in order to make them listen, but He does not force them to listen to Him.

Cain thought he could obey God in his own way, but God warned him, "If you do what is right, you will be accepted" (4:7). "Sin is always at the door wanting to control you."

Cain learnt from his parents that in everything we do, there is a right and a wrong way. How can we know what is right? God tells us in His word. His word is TRUTH. You can trust God's word! He has given us a conscience. He has also given believers His Holy Spirit to guide us.

But Cain rejected God's way of doing what is right. He then became angry. His life was spoilt by sin. He became the servant of sin.

God waited for Cain to repent. If Cain was sorry, then God could receive his true worship. Cain knew that God was not pleased with his offering. But he did not want to offer what Abel offered. He did not want to ask his brother for a lamb to

sacrifice to God. He was too proud to ask. He knew what was right to please God but failed to do it. He disobeyed God and became angry.

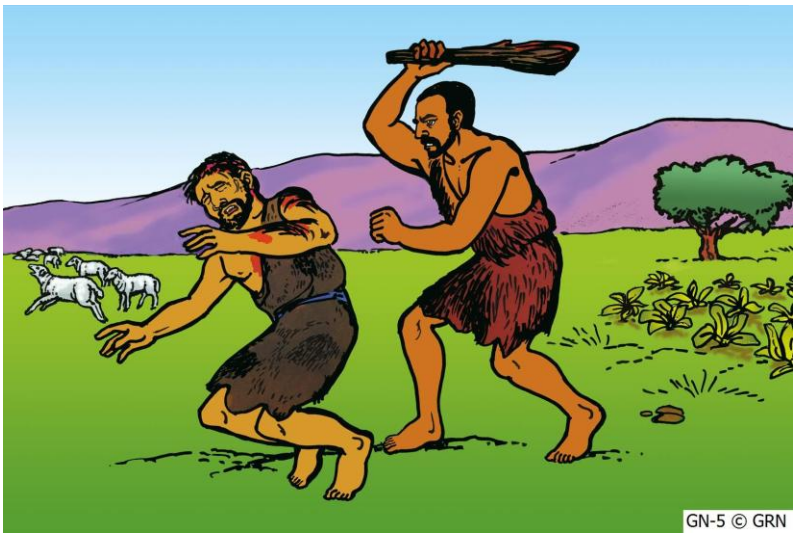
Cain also became angry with his brother. That was not right. It was not Abel's fault. It was Cain's fault.

"Why are you angry?" God asked. God told Cain, "Do what is right, then you will be accepted" (4:7). The Bible says: 'By faith, Abel offered God a better sacrifice than Cain did' (Hebrews 11:4). And also: 'Do not be like Cain who belonged to the evil one [Satan]' (1 John 3:12).

GOD GIVES CAIN ANOTHER CHANCE

God instructed Cain to live by faith in Him and be accepted. God said, "If you do not do what is right, sin is waiting at your door to grab you. But you must rule over it" (Genesis 4:7). Cain knew what was pleasing to God. He knew that the sacrifice of an animal was acceptable to God. But instead he became angry and would not ask his brother for one of his lambs to sacrifice.

Then out in the field, Cain killed his brother because he could not control his anger (4:8). Anger is like a fire. It burns deep in the hearts of mankind.



Cain attacked his brother Abel and killed him. Gen. 4:8

God spoke to Cain again. Oh, the mercy and grace of God! His sweet voice keeps coming to us sinners, again and again. Oh, the grace of God that He does not go on His way and leave us to suffer in our sin!

"Where is your brother?" God asked Cain.

Cain again had to make a choice. He could confess his sin and ask for pardon. But he chose to avoid God's question and he told a lie to cover up what he had done. How foolish! God knows all about us, and He knew all about Cain! He sees deep into our hearts and our lives (Hebrews 4:12-13).

So Cain copied Adam and chose to do wrong. Satan even put murder in his heart. Jesus said that those who follow Satan are 'sons of the devil' (John 8:44). Satan is 'the father of lies'.

God gave Cain time to repent and confess his sin. He told God that he did not know where his brother was. "Am I supposed to look after my brother?" (Gen. 4:9). From beginning to end, the Bible calls men to repent and confess their sin to God (Acts 17:30). And God waits for us to do this. But he does not wait for ever.

When God spoke to Cain again, it was in judgement. If we do not obey God's voice when He calls us to repent and trust Him, what is there left for us? Only His judgement! God told Cain, "Your brother's blood is crying out to Me from the ground" (4:10).

Cain was judged because of his sin against God, the giver of life, and for killing Abel, his brother, who was made 'in the image of God'. God told Cain, "When you work the ground, it will not produce its crops for you anymore. You will be a restless person who wanders around on the earth" (4:12).

"It is more than I can bear…" Cain said. He was too proud to say that he had sinned and that he deserved to be punished. "Today you are driving me away from the land. I will be hidden from You. I will be a restless person who wanders around on the earth. Anyone who finds me will [want to] kill me." But the LORD said to him, "No. Anyone who kills you will be paid back seven times" (4:14,15). The LORD put a mark on Cain. Then anyone who found him would stop from killing him.

So Cain went away from the LORD to another country east of Eden where no-one knew him. He and his sons built a city there (4:17). Cain named the city after his son Enoch.

Cain made a new start in his own strength and wisdom. Men in Cain's family learned science, art, and engineering (4:21-22). They spread out faster than the sons of Seth (Adam's third son), who were godly people. Cain's tribe did not care about God's laws and men began to take more than one wife. Under God's law a man must take only one wife (2:24), but Lamech married two women (4:19).

Cain's family were clever but they did not love God. They loved the things of this world that God had made but did not love God, the creator of all things (Romans 1:18-25).

However, there were times when people wanted to turn back to the LORD God and worship Him (4:26). We should pray that this will happen today before it is too late. There is time before Jesus returns for His second coming down to Earth.

FEW WANTED TO REPENT

Adam and Eve had many more sons and daughters (5:4). At that time, God allowed brothers and sisters to marry each other to populate the world without risk of harmful mutations which occurred later.

God showed mercy to Adam and Eve and gave them a son called Seth (4:25; 5:3). It was through the family line of Seth that a different Enoch was born and also Noah, both of whom trusted in Almighty God (5:24; 6:8). So God sent men of faith among the people to speak for Him, but most of the time no-one wanted to hear about Almighty God or to repent of their sin. We find:

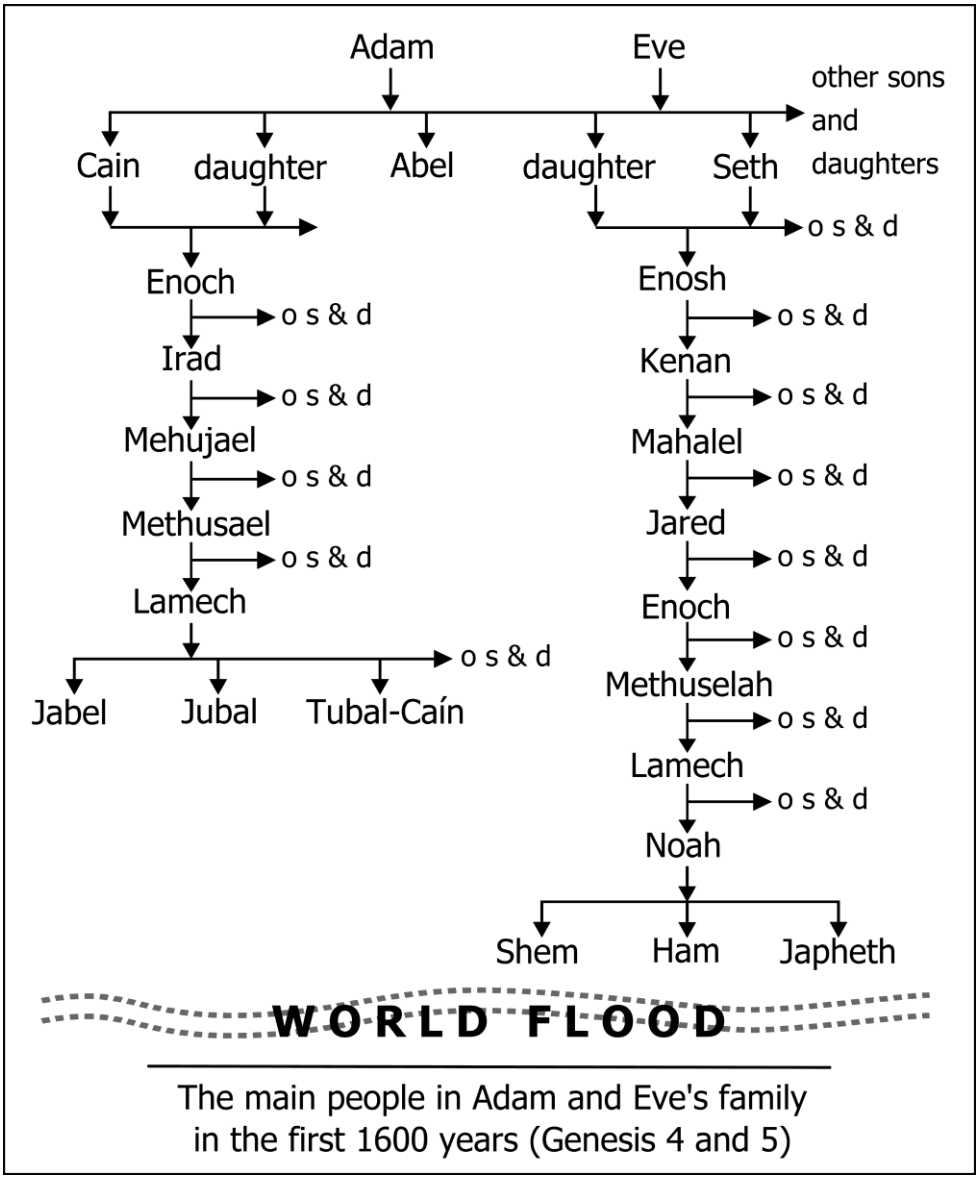
- no repentance in the days of Enosh, son of Seth, the third son of Adam and Eve (4:25);
- no repentance in the days when Enoch 'walked with God' (5:21-24; Jude 14,15);

- no repentance in the days of Lamech, only boasting of killing and man (Genesis 4:23) and complaining against God (5:29);
- no repentance in the days when Noah and his sons trusted in God and prepared for the worldwide flood (5:32).

Men became more violent and fought each other. No-one was safe. There were no laws or courts, so Lamech was not punished when he boasted of murder.

God's grace and patience waited (1 Peter 3:20).

Life began with disobedience and murder and resulted in the praise of murder. Human life was not held sacred, as God commanded it should be (9:5-6). In these early days, many believed in God but few repented.



The main people in Adam and Eve's family in the first 1600 years (Genesis 4 and 5)

Talk about this:

1. What choice did God give Cain (4:4-7) and why?
2. What do we learn about Cain's respect for God (4:3,5,9)?
3. How does the Bible describe the family of Cain (4:19-24)?

Think about this: Who was Cain angry with: himself, his brother, or God? How should we live in the knowledge that Jesus suffered and died for our sins and for others, and could return at any time?

Bible reading: Genesis chapters 6 and 7

Learn about this: *How God planned to destroy Earth because of its wickedness (Chapter 6 verses 1 to 7); God's plan to spare Noah and his family by building a great ark before sending a flood (v.8-22); how God used Noah and his family to save the birds, animals and insects using the ark during a 150-day flood (Chapter 7 verses 1 to 24).*

FROM BAD TO WORSE

The beginning of chapter 6 describes how much worse things became due to mankind's desire (lust, appetite) for sinning (6:5-6; 11-12).The LORD was sad that He had made man on Earth. 'His heart was filled with pain' (6:6). God loved His creation but Earth was filled with wickedness.

Although we do not understand all the events described in these early writings we know that God was very sad because:

- God saw it all (v.5). God is never so far away that He cannot see our sins.
- God suffers when we sin (v.6). He has feelings. Sin causes suffering and death for the people whom He created and loves.
- After many, many years, God judged sin and took action (v.7,13). He waits and acts when we or our family members fail to repent.

God decided to destroy every living thing. 'The LORD was very sorry that He had made man on Earth' (6:6). Sin deserves punishment, even death.

However, God changed His mind and decided to start again using Noah and his family (v.18). God is always preparing for our salvation. Amazing grace!

God at work during the time of great sin

Despite their sin, Adam and Eve witnessed the goodness of God. Their sin was passed on to their first son, Cain and to others, but they lived to see the righteousness of God at work in their third son, Seth and some of his descendants. Enoch went to Heaven (5:21-24) and after the death of Adam, God raised up Noah, a grandson for faithful Enoch. Noah's father Lamech said, "This son will comfort us when we are working. He will comfort us when our hands work so hard they hurt. That's because the LORD God Almighty put a curse on the ground" (5:29). Noah ignored his father's complaints and worked hard, trusted in God, and believed the promise given to Eve of a Saviour (3:15).

NOAH, A MAN OF FAITH, BUILDS GOD'S ARK

'The LORD God Almighty was pleased with Noah' (6:8). Noah trusted God in a world that was filled with hate and murder. He was married but we do not know his wife's name. He had three married sons, Shem, Ham and Japheth. He loved and obeyed God (6:9,22).

Noah was a man of great faith and courage. He told everyone that God would judge the Earth because of their wickedness. He warned them that God would send a great flood. He was not discouraged when his neighbours mocked him because his faith was in God alone (Hebrews 11:7).

In His grace and mercy God saved Noah and his family, eight people. God saved this small number of people from punishment and death. We call this small number a 'remnant'.

God then said to Noah, "I am going to put an end to all people… so make yourself an ark of pine or cypress wood… Here is how you will build it" (6:13-16).

God designed Noah's ark. The word 'ark' is very old. It is also used in Exodus 2:3, Deuteronomy 10:1 and Revelation 11:19.

The ark had ideal measurements given by God, nearly 150 m × 30 m × 20 m. In 1609 the Dutchman, Peter Jansen, built a ship one third the size. It was very stable in the water and carried much more goods than an ordinary ship of the same length at that time.

In Genesis 6:17, God repeats clearly His plan to destroy all life by a flood. He then introduces the word 'covenant' for the first time (6:18). This is not just a promise like the promises He made to Adam and Eve. God's covenant with Noah, and the later covenants, are more important as time goes on. They were all part of His developing salvation plan for sinful mankind. The first covenant of God mentioned in Genesis 6:18 was fulfilled in Genesis 8:21 to 9:17.

As the day came for God to send the Flood on Earth, He called to Noah, "Go into the ark, you and your whole family" (Genesis 7:1).

God's call is tender, like a father calling his children to come into the house away from a coming storm. "Come in! Come in!" God calls, but most people do not listen. Only Noah and his wife, their three sons and the three sons' wives went into the ark.

The four arks of God mentioned in the Bible

- Genesis 6:14. An ark or boat of pine wood to keep safe a faithful remnant of people from God's flood. We call this Noah's Ark.
- Exodus 2:3. An ark or basket of reeds to keep safe Moses who later became a leader and saviour of Israel.
- Deuteronomy 10:1. An ark or box of acacia wood to keep safe the Ten Commandments on the journey to the Promised Land and then in Solomon's Temple in Jerusalem.

Each ark was used to give God's people a new beginning. They are a part of God's covenants with mankind.

A fourth ark was shown to John by Jesus in a vision:

- Revelation 11:19. An ark of wood called the ark of the covenant of God in a temple in Heaven.

Two thousand years ago, Jesus prophesied that these 'last days' will be evil and violent as in the days of Noah (Luke 17:26-29). The faith and love of many believers will grow cold (Matthew 24:12). We must persevere and continue to grow in the love of Christ. God knows that through suffering we can come closer to Him. This will strengthen our faith in what Christ has suffered for our eternal salvation. Remember this in good times and bad!

Several animals and birds came to Noah in pairs, male and female. He did not have to go out to find them. God sent them. Noah also took extra animals to sacrifice to God and to use for food in place of vegetation.

Then God shut them in. Why was this necessary? To make sure that they were safe, and to keep all others out. Up to that moment, the door of the ark stood open. God's word to all people today is that anyone who repents can be saved through faith in His Son, Jesus Christ (Revelation 22:12-17).

God said to Noah, "Go into the ark with your whole family… Take seven of every kind of 'clean' animal. Take two of every kind of animal that is not 'clean'. Take male and female of them." Genesis 7:1-2.

God gave mankind a final seven days to accept His offer (Genesis 7:4). Would anyone else repent and go into the ark and be saved? No, not one person came forward to join Noah and his family. The seven days passed like every other day, with men and women 'eating, drinking and marrying…' (Luke 17:26-27).

A FLOOD COVERS THE EARTH

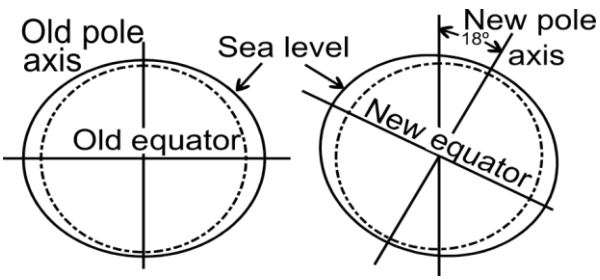
Then God shut the door of the ark. The day Noah was shut up in the ark, it began to rain. This was the first time that it rained on Earth. Also the waters from the deep parts of the oceans came up and flooded the land. Also, the waters trapped below the oceans burst out (7:11). Soon a large part of planet Earth was covered with water and the ark floated on the water close to the mountain tops.

How and why God sent a great flood

- During the first 10 or more generations from Adam to Noah, men developed new technology with skills in bronze and iron objects (Genesis 4:22) trading, farming and building (Luke 17:28) and music (Genesis 4:21). But they did not bring glory to God: they did many sinful things.
- They became obsessed with pleasure, sex, eating and drinking (Genesis 6:2; Luke 17:27).
- They thought and planned bad things all the time (Genesis 6:5).
- The spoke harsh words against God, grumbling, finding fault, boasting about themselves and speaking well of others to get advantage of them, following their own evil desires (Jude 14:15).
- Violence was common (Genesis 6:11,13).
- Society was completely corrupt (Genesis 6:12).
- They did not use the extra time God gave them while the ark was being built to turn to God and repent (Matthew 24:38; Hebrews 11:7; 2 Peter 2:5).

God allowed many years for the people to change their ways but they did not change (Genesis 6:5). God was patient (1 Peter 3:20). Only Noah and his family were faithful to God at this time. "Noah walked with God" (Genesis 6:9).

Many Christians believe that the times we live in are very similar to before Noah's Great Flood. This is also why many Christians believe that the Lord Jesus Christ will come again soon. We must get ready for His coming. We must warn people to get ready to repent.



The above diagram shows how the deep sea water at the equator moved when the Earth's axis changed. The sudden change caused flooding across the world and took many days to settle down.

The Bible says that water came from above the Earth and from deep places in the oceans. (Genesis 7:11,12). The greatest amount of water is always at the equator. When God moved the axis of the Earth, the deep water from the oceans moved with it and flooded across the land. The magnetic particles in the layers of rock prove that many years ago the Earth suddenly began to rotate 18 degrees away from its original axis. (Source: Victor Pearce, *Evidence for Truth.)* This also explains why we now have different seasons of weather since the Flood as promised by God (Genesis 8:22). This huge change in climate caused the extinction of many species and probably reduced the number of years we live.

All the mountains tops were covered with water and all living creatures died except fish. We notice the force of these words:

- 'Every living thing…' (7:21).
- 'Everything on dry land that had the breath of life that moved on Earth…' (7:22).
- 'Every living thing on the face of Earth…' (7:23).

'Only Noah was left, and those with him in the ark' (7:23). Noah did not know where he was. His life was in God's hands. This is a great example of a man's faith. When we trust ourselves to God, He takes care of us (1 Peter 5:7). For over 100 years, Noah obeyed God by building the ark ready for the day of the Flood. He kept faith in God.

For 150 days Noah waited for God to 'remember' him. 'The ark floated on the surface of the water' (Genesis 7:18). Noah did not try to steer the ark. In the same way, a Christian is lifted up above the evil, as our heavenly Father cares for us. We can trust Him to be in control of our lives.

Talk about this:

1. Why was God sorry that He had created people (6:6,13)?
2. What stopped God from destroying all the people and animals (6:8)? What is a remnant?
3. Who made the animals and people go into Noah's ark (7:7-9,13-16)? Who shut them in?

Bible reading: Genesis chapter 8

Learn about this: *How the ark rested on land after the flood (verses 1-14); God commanded Noah and the family and the creatures to leave the ark (v.15-19); Noah builds an altar and offers sacrifices to the LORD which He accepts and promises not to curse Earth again (v.20-22).*

EIGHT PEOPLE ARE SAVED

Now the waters from the deep parts of the oceans and the 'windows' of the heavens were closed (8:2). The water level went back down (8:3). At the end of 150 days, the ark came to rest on the mountains of Ararat, in Armenia, east of Turkey. After 40 days Noah opened a window at the top of the ark. He sent out a first a raven, then a dove.

Why did Noah wait 40 days? Because he 'walked with God'. He was in step with God (Amos 3:3). Noah asked God what he should do. He was not in a hurry. He waited for God's answer and God gave it to him. The dove came back to Noah with an olive leaf in her beak. Noah waited seven more days (Genesis 8:12), and sent the dove out again. This time it did not return. Then Noah took off 'the covering' and saw that the land was drying up.

Perhaps we would have jumped out of the ark, but Noah waited. Then God said, "Come out of the ark… Bring out every kind of living creature that is with you" (8:15-17).

NOAH BUILDS AN ALTAR TO THE LORD

Then Noah built an altar to the LORD and sacrificed some of the 'clean' animals as burnt offerings (8:20). Noah built the altar as a form of worship which God accepted. God accepted Noah's sacrifice. God had already told men how to walk by faith and how to worship Him. The word 'altar' means 'a place of sacrifice'. The blood of innocent animals had a special meaning to God. We understand now that this was a sign of innocent blood sacrificed for our salvation through Jesus Christ, the perfect, sinless, Son of God.

God forgave Noah's family and made them holy because of Noah's sacrifice. The sweet smell of the burning sacrifice pleased God. Noah's holy life pleased Him. In place of the sinner's punishment for sin or even death, God accepted the innocent blood of an animal sacrifice. The blood was a 'covering' or an 'atonement' for the sins of the people through disobedience, neglect, lack of love or by making mistakes. 'To atone' means 'to make peace with God' (Numbers 28:22).

These animal sacrifices were accepted by God for man's sin before the death of His Son, Jesus Christ (1 Peter 1:19-21; Hebrews 9:22). The blood sacrifice of animals was a picture or sign of the death of Jesus Christ on the cross for you and me (Romans 5:11). "God demonstrates His love for us in this: while we were still sinners, Christ died for us" (Romans 5:8). Jesus was innocent: we are guilty of sin.

The changes in the world after Noah's Flood

The old world before the Flood was destroyed by God (2 Peter 3:6). The world had changed forever because of man's sin and God's punishment through the Flood. Now there were:

- deep layers of hardened mud containing the bodies (fossils) of creatures which died in the Flood; also buried layers of vegetation to form coal and oil;
- no layers of water above to protect Earth causing areas of much heat by day and much cold by night;
- daily changes in weather with rain and storms followed by sunshine with rainbows (Genesis 9:14);
- annual changes in weather and seasons with fixed times for harvest (Genesis 8:22) caused by the change in the Earth's axis;
- many areas of land which became unsuitable to live in such as deserts and frozen wastelands;
- rapid build-up and advance of snow and ice sheets;
- harder living conditions which meant people and creatures did not live so long and many species did not survive.

(Source: H. Morris, *The Genesis Record,* Baker Books)

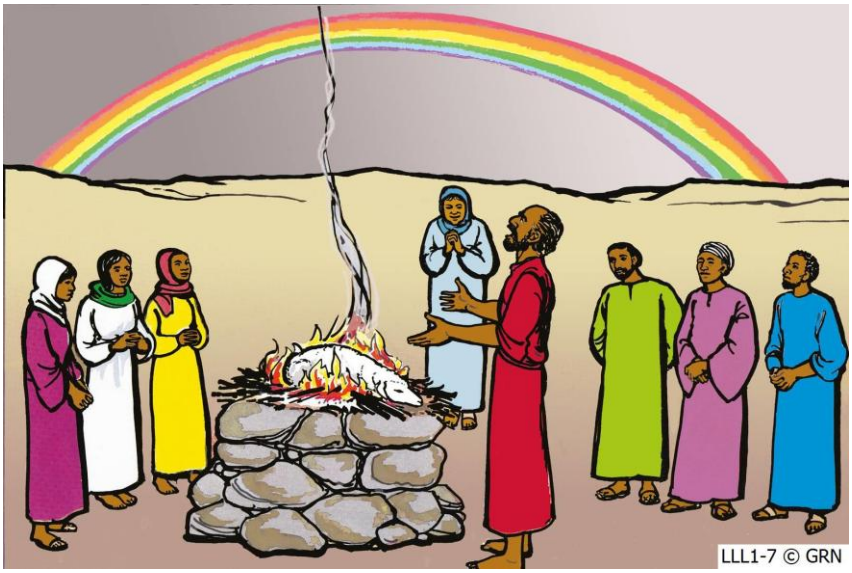
Bible reading: Genesis chapters 9 and 10

Learn about this: *God permits Noah to eat meat without the blood (Chapter 9 verses 1-7); the first rainbow and God's covenant with mankind (v.8-17); the repopulation of Earth begins (v.18-19); Ham sins against his father Noah so Noah curses Ham's family and blesses his other sons Japheth and Shem (v.20-29). The generations of Noah and his three sons (Chapter 10 verses 1 to 32).*

A NEW BEGINNING AND GOD'S COVENANT PROMISE

Noah was head of a new world, just the same as Adam was head at the beginning of God's creation. It was a new beginning. God made a new agreement or covenant with the Earth (Genesis 9:8-17) and gave Noah a sign. This sign was the rainbow. Noah saw it when it rained for the first time. The rainbow looked like a bridge from Earth to Heaven, and it made Noah remember God's promise: "Never again will the waters become a flood to destroy all life" (9:15). (Before the Flood, there was no rainbow because there was no rain, only water from under the ground.)

God's covenant with Noah was a promise that He made to all His creation which was probably around 5000 years ago. After nearly 2000 years without a written law, God began a new relationship with Noah and his family. God's goodness is shown in His words "As long as the Earth lasts, seed time and harvest, cold and heat, summer and winter, day and night will never cease" (8:22).



God said, "I am making My covenant with you and your children who will be born after you. I am also making it with every living thing that was with you in the ark... Sometimes when I bring clouds over the Earth, a rainbow will appear in them. Then I will remember My covenant between Me and you..." (9:9-15)

After the Flood, God gave a new beginning to Noah and the world:

- a new covenant with the Earth (8:20-22);
- new rules to live by to control the Earth (9:1-4);
- a warning: the punishment for murder (9:5-7);

- a new relationship with Him and a promise in the sign of the rainbow (9:8-17);
- a new test and a prophecy for mankind through the three sons of Noah (9:18-29).

In His covenant, God promised, "I will never put a curse on the ground again because of man. I will not do it even though his heart is always directed toward what is evil. His thoughts are evil from the time he is young. I will never destroy all living things again, as I have just done. As long as the Earth lasts, there will always be a time to plant and a time to gather the crops. As long as the Earth lasts, there will always be cold and heat. There will always be summer and winter, day and night" (8:21-22).

God renewed His covenant with Abraham. Later, He wrote down the laws of His covenant for Moses to share with the people of Israel.

The Covenants of God

In the Old Testament, the covenants of God are called **covenants of obedience**. (God promises to bless people if they obey Him.) In the New Testament, the new covenant of God is called the **covenant of grace**. (God promises to save people who believe in Christ.)

The covenants of God with man are a very important part of the message of the Bible. "I will make My covenant with you", in Genesis 6:18, is the first one. All covenants show God's loving grace and mercy towards sinful man.

A covenant with mankind is more than a promise or an agreement. It has to be kept by God Himself and never broken! We say it is guaranteed for ever and cannot be cancelled or changed.

In Old Testament times, a covenant was taken so seriously that often an animal was killed as a sacrifice and a sign was given to show that God would keep His promise. In God's covenant promise to Noah, it was fulfilled immediately after the Flood (8:20 to 9:17). Animals were killed as a sacrifice and God gave the sign of the rainbow (9:13-17).

5,000 years later the rainbow still means the same thing: the mercy of God to save the world He has created and we have polluted and failed to care for. There were many other covenants made by God pointing towards His final plan of salvation for all mankind in Jesus Christ, who died on the cross to save the world from the punishment that we deserve. He fulfilled all the covenants given to Noah, Abraham and Moses on our behalf.

NOAH'S THREE SONS

Noah's three sons, Shem, Ham and Japheth, had large families. God told them, "Have children and grow in number to fill the Earth" (9:1). They soon spread out over the world to repopulate the Earth with people from whom we are all descended (9:19).

At this time, a new temptation came to Noah. What happened changed every society. Before he began to build the ark, Noah was a farmer and a preacher. After the Flood, he went back to farming and caring for animals. He worked the ground and planted grape vines. When the grapes were ripe, he held a big party with his family, and Satan found a way to shame Noah. He was a sinner by birth, and showed it in his actions, just as we do.

Noah got drunk with new wine and Ham made fun of his father's naked body. Japheth and Shem covered their father's shame (9:23). God warns us not to make fun of sin (Proverbs 14:9). Also, God's command is, "Honour your parents" (Exodus 20:12).

Because Ham had no respect for his father, Noah spoke a curse on Ham's son: "Cursed be Canaan!" (Perhaps Canaan was with Ham and also sinned against Noah.) At the same time Noah blessed Shem (9:26).

Japheth was joined to Shem's blessing by the words: "May God extend the territory of Japheth; may Japheth live in the tents of Shem" (9:27). The family of

The Beginnings of World Religions

The peoples of the world descend from the three sons of Noah: Shem, Japheth and Ham. Through them, we can see how the nations and religions of the world were formed. The prophecies and curses of Noah came true (9:25-27):

1. The families of Canaan (son of Ham) were very evil and included the Amorites, Hivites and Jebusites. They sacrificed babies and did many bad things which angered God, including the sins of Sodom and Gomorrah. God sent the children of Israel to live in their land and to destroy or rule over the Canaanites.
2. Other sons of Ham moved into Africa and later formed the ancient people of Southern India, Australia and South America. They took with them a belief in the creator God but mixed the worship of spirits into their religion.
3. The families of Shem (Semitics) spread throughout Asia and probably across to North America. They took with them their belief in God the creator but later formed many new religions that we still see today. Only the Semitic people descending from Abraham's first marriage kept faithful to the one true God. These were the children of Jacob (called Israel), the grandson of Abraham.
4. The families of Japheth spread into Europe and at different times enlarged their empires or territories around the world. This included the empires of the Greeks, Romans, European and Scandinavian peoples. Later the British, Dutch, French, Spanish, Portuguese and Belgians extended their empires worldwide and took their faith in Jesus Christ with them, which had been established in the first and second century AD.

Source: Dave Hilsley, Tishrei Study Paper No. 3.

Shem were very religious people. Japheth would be blessed as he joined with Shem in trusting Yahweh, the only true, living God. They took their faith in God with them as they extended their territories around the world.

The family of Canaan were evil people who settled in what is now Israel.

God showed Noah what was going to happen to his three sons, and the peoples and nations that came from them. The history of the world has shown that the prophecies were true.

Noah said, "Blessed be the LORD, the God of Shem" (9:26). Did Noah know that Shem had more faith than his brothers in the one true Almighty God? Or that a new covenant based on God's Messiah would be established through the family of Shem which included Abraham and the mother of Jesus Christ?

Noah also asked God to bless the land and families of his son Japheth. Then he asked for the families of Japheth to have friendly relationships with the families of Shem (9:27). This is true today with European and North American nations supporting Israel.

However, Noah asked God to make the tribes of Canaan become slaves to the tribes of Shem and Japheth, which came true when God gave Israel victory over Canaan nearly 1000 years later and remains true today.

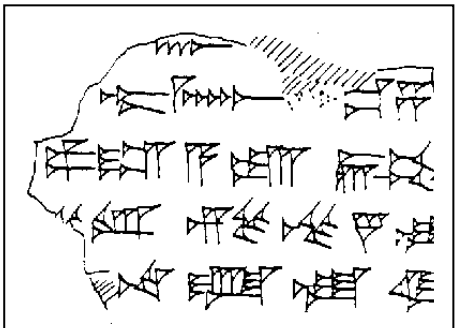
Salvation is possible for all of Noah's descendants today through faith in Jesus Christ (Luke 24:46-47).

NIMROD RULES WITHOUT GOD

From Ham's family, Canaan and Nimrod receive special mention in the Bible. Nimrod built an empire and cities (Gen. 10:8-12). The first and greatest city that Nimrod built was Babel (Babylon). Later, Nimrod built Nineveh.

Nimrod set up a government that was against God, and he started a new religion of idolatry. He was 'a mighty hunter'. At that time kings proved how strong and brave they were by hunting lions. Rock carvings show pictures of kings hunting lions.

After Nimrod's death people worshipped him as 'Belus', or Bel. Babel (Babylon) was the first of Nimrod's cities. Nimrod gathered the people into towns and built walls to protect them. Towns grew into cities which were called city-states or kingdoms (10:10).



Cuneiform writing

At this time men used:

- the decimal system of measurement used today;
- the science of mathematics;
- the twin sciences of astronomy and astrology (the study of stars and their meaning);
- the cuneiform system of writing using wedge-shaped marks in wet clay and then baked the clay tablets in the sun until they were hard;
- codes of laws which were copied onto clay tablets.

Talk about this:

1. After the Flood, what promises did God make (8:20-22; 9:8-17)?
2. What did God tell Noah and his family to do (9:1-7)?
3. What did Noah say to his three sons (9:24-27)?

Bible reading: Genesis Chapter 11

Learn about this: *The building of Babel by Nimrod, which God interrupted (verses 1-9); the generations of Shem and of Terah, the father of Abram (Abraham) before they moved north to Haran on the way to the land of Canaan (verses 10-32).*

THE PEOPLE FORGET GOD

At the time of Nimrod, "The whole world had only one language…" God commanded Noah to "increase in number and fill the Earth" (9:1). But most of the people moved to the valley of Babylonia. They stayed together to be safe and to help each other. One language helped them to stay close, communicate well and achieve together what they wanted to do.

The story of Babel (Babylon) tells us why God made a new beginning in history.

Many years had passed and thoughts of the Flood quickly went from people's minds. Men did not think about God (Romans 1:21-25). The people found a new way to build. They made clay bricks and baked them (Genesis 11:2-3). They used pitch (tar) to lay the bricks. Before this men lived in tents or built with stone.

Ziggurats (towers)

Clever ideas led clever men to build clever buildings especially towers to reach to the heavens. Why?

- ***Pride:*** man wants to be as big as God.
- ***Disobedience:*** God told Noah's family to move away and populate the world, but many did not obey and instead stayed together and used their skills to build great buildings and large cities.
- ***Selfishness:*** they wanted to 'make a name for themselves'.
- ***Idolatry:*** an excuse to worship great buildings and the sun, moon and stars instead of God.

Today men still love to build tall buildings. We must ask this question: is this to glorify God, is it to glorify man, or is it to worship other gods?

What they built is preserved in the great ziggurats which reached up towards the sun. They are like pyramids with steps on all sides, leading to the top. At the top, there was a place for men to worship the sun. Babel was probably a ziggurat. Another ziggurat rose into the sky at Ur of the Chaldees where Abram (Abraham) used to live.

GOD DESTROYS THE CLEVER THINGS OF MAN

The people said, "Come. Let us build a city for ourselves. Let us build a tower that reaches to the sky. We will make a name for ourselves. Then we will not be scattered over the face of the whole earth"

But the LORD came down to see the city and the tower the people were building. The LORD said, "They are one people. And all of them speak the same language. That is why they can do this. Now they will be able to do anything they plan to."

God's answer was: "Let Us go and confuse their language…" (Genesis 11:7). God came down from Heaven and judged the people of Babel (Babylon). He scattered the people over all the Earth and they stopped building the city (11:8). (Notice the word 'Us', a reference to our three-in-one God the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. This is called the Holy Trinity.)

God did not destroy these people at Babel (Babylon), but He mixed up (confused) their language. One day, they were all talking as one and working very hard. The work was going well when suddenly, and without warning, a builder could not understand the man working next to him! And he could not understand what many of the other men were saying. So the big building project at Babel (Babylon) suddenly stopped. This is why 'Babel' today means 'confusing noise of voices'.

GOD CALLS PEOPLE OF FAITH

The generations of Shem's family history are given next. The family line from Shem to Abram (Abraham) has 10 names in it (Genesis 11:10-27). From this we can build up a time chart which shows that God's creation could be less than 10,000 years ago and the Flood happened less than 5000 years ago. A lot of scientists today believe that the Earth and the expanding Universe are young, not millions of years old as taught in many schools.

During these early years of mankind, we have learnt that people yielded to the temptation of Satan and rarely obeyed God. Nor did they repent from their sins even when God instructed them.

We also know that God did not leave man to continue in his sinful ways. He sent punishment but also chose men of faith and made agreements (covenants) with them. A remnant of true believers would continue His truth and covenant into the future and be His witnesses in the Earth.

We also know that there have been great periods in history when the people have turned back to God (4:26).

When the time was right, God sent His Son, Jesus Christ, to save men from sin. He came to look for the lost and to save them (Luke 19:10). Now, by faith in Jesus, we can return to God. Saved sinners can go to Heaven because Jesus was punished in our place. God's judgement came against Him so that we can go free. Jesus Christ opened the gate to Heaven to all people (Revelations 22:17). God sent Jesus to take our punishment for sin.

God loves the world that He made. But at the time of Noah's Flood, He punished the people for spoiling what He had made. He said He would not do that again. At the time of Jesus He punished His own Son instead of punishing the people for their sins.

The remainder of Chapter 11 tells us about the 'generations of Terah' whose family obeyed God's call to move away. It included Abram, later named Abraham, who was called by God to move out, by faith, to live in the Promised Land, named after Canaan, the son of the unfaithful Ham (11:31). The main family of Terah moved as far as Haran where Terah stayed and died.

The story of what happened next to Abram (Abraham) and his son Isaac and his nephew Lot are the subject of Manna Publications Bible commentary, Genesis part 2. God used the family of Abram to prepare the way, over 500 years later, for a special people of God, the Israelites, and their home near Jerusalem. This also prepared the way, another 1700 years later, for the birth of Israel's Messiah, Jesus Christ, also near Jerusalem.

Men today enjoy building cities and towers for their glory. But they do not have the love or the truth of God within them. The righteous people of God do not seek to rebuild Babylon but instead, enjoy rebuilding Jerusalem in preparation for Christ's return to Earth. However, the most important thing is to rebuild our lives free from sin and then pray for revival. This begins through God's forgiveness and revival in us, His people.

Talk about:

1. Why did God confuse the language at the time of Babel (Babylon) (11:1-6)?
2. What happened as a result, and why was this part of God's plan (11:9)?
3. Whose family did Abram (Abraham) come from (11:10,27)?
4. What have you learnt from studying the first eleven chapters of Genesis? Has it changed your faith in God, your purpose in life and your understanding of what is wrong in the world God created?
5. Have you experienced the joy and peace of knowing Jesus as your Saviour and your sins forgiven by God for your eternal salvation?

God created the world in love

The Bible teaches us that God made the world and the creatures and mankind for His own pleasure. God is love (1 John 4:16) and God loved what and who He created (Genesis 1:10,25,31). It was all good in His sight, especially mankind (Ephesians 2:4). He made us so that we could have a special friendship with Him, so that He could provide for us, and so that we could live with Him forever. He also made us like Himself (in His image) so that we are able to love others like Him. True love must be given freely and willingly with the compassion of Christ and in the power of the Holy Spirit.

God made men and women, boys and girls, to love Him and to worship Him. But He does not force us to love Him. He made us so that we can choose to love Him or not to love Him. God made mankind free to go our own way: with God and with love for God, or without God and without love for God or for others.

When Adam and Eve first sinned, they chose to go their own way. And ever since, most people want to go their own way without God. Going against God is sin. We all start life as sinners (Romans 3:10,23). The Bible tells us about sin and tells us God loves us but must judge our sin. It shows how bad we are. But it also shows us how God helps sinners to come back to Him, to love Him and to live His way through accepting Christ's sacrifice and salvation for all who believe He is the Son of God. The Bible also tells us how to love God and to love each other instead of planning for ourselves.

The way back to God. God showed the way back to Himself through punishment, through hard work, through sacrifices of blood, through sacrifices of food and money, by examples of faith, by types of Christ, through promises and through laws. He showed the need for a way back through warnings and through exiles, through separation and through His calling. (We read about this in the Old Testament part of the Bible.) But none of these ways worked well because of the greatness of the sins of mankind. So finally, God showed the way back from sin through the sacrifice of the blood of His own dear Son, Jesus Christ. This was God's plan from the beginning. Through faith in Jesus, all sinners may now be forgiven by God and know His love. Such love is the righteous love of God our Father and the compassionate love of Christ our Saviour and the powerful love of the Holy Spirit of God. (We read about this in the New Testament part of the Bible.)

SUMMARY

This Bible commentary on Genesis Chapters 1-11 has taught us about the beginnings of everything. It also explains how sin spoilt God's wonderful world which made it necessary for Him to destroy so much of what He had created and start again with Noah's family.

Sadly, the new beginning God provided on planet Earth did not change the sinful nature inherited by Noah and his descendants. They too knew from their parents what was good and evil and often chose to do what was wrong. We see the results of sin all around us today. But we can have our sins forgiven by God through believing and following Jesus. He is our Lord and Saviour.

We have learnt about God's wonderful creation, our sin through the temptation of Satan, marriage, society, languages, the plans of God, the beginning and purpose of life, and God's provision for our eternal salvation. The next part of Genesis tells us about Abraham, the father of the Jews, through whom the Jewish Messiah, Jesus Christ, was promised to bless all nations of the world. This happens when people confess their sin, believe Jesus is the Son of God, and invite Him into their lives.

We praise God for the covenant He made with Noah as an example to all mankind and later renewed with Abraham and his family through Isaac and Jacob, later called Israel. We praise God that this covenant was written down and given to Moses on Mount Sinai for the Israelites to follow and obey. And we praise God that His covenant was finally and totally fulfilled in Jesus Christ, Israel's Messiah, who took upon Himself the punishment for our sins of disobedience and for our eternal salvation. Amen.

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