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Each sale of the *Holy Bible*, New Living Translation, benefits Wycliffe Bible Translators, which completed its five hundredth New Testament in 1999 and plans to undertake translation work for every language that needs it by 2025. Tyndale House Publishers and Wycliffe Bible Translators share the vision for an understandable, accurate translation of the Bible for every person.

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••••● USER'S GUIDE

Welcome to the *Student's Life Application Bible*. God gave us his Word to tell us about himself and his plan for our life. When we read the Bible, we see God's love in action and we learn about what he wants us to do. "All Scripture is inspired by God and is useful to teach us what is true and to make us realize what is wrong in our lives. It straightens us out and teaches us to do what is right. It is God's way of preparing us in every way, fully equipped for every good thing God wants us to do" (2 Timothy 3:16-17).

You can see that reading the Bible is very important. In addition to reading, however, we should be studying the Bible. Then we can discover what God wants us to do and do it. That's what the word *application* means—putting into practice, obeying, *doing* biblical principles.

That's why the *Student's Life Application Bible* was written—to help you understand and apply God's Word. It is easy to use and packed with helpful notes and other features. You will find the notes within the text, at the beginnings and endings of books, and at the back of the Bible. These special features *are not* God's Word—only the Bible text itself speaks with God's authority. The notes and other features *are* a valuable help in understanding God's truth and seeing how the biblical principles apply to life, your life, today.

At the back of the Bible you will discover . . .

BIBLE-READING PLAN By following this simple plan, you will read all the major biblical themes and stories in a year.

FOLLOW-UP FOR NEW CHRISTIANS/14 APPOINTMENTS WITH GOD This course takes new believers through the basics of the Christian faith. Use it yourself or share it with a friend.

LIFE-CHANGER INDEX More than 100 topics are listed in this index. Each topic has a selection of relevant Bible passages and notes that relate. (The Scripture references listed for the notes in this section are given only to help you find the note. It may or may not actually relate to the Scripture listed.)

INDEXES FOR MORAL DILEMMAS, "I WONDER," ULTIMATE ISSUES, CHARTS, PERSONALITY PROFILES, MAPS, AND "HERE'S WHAT I DID"

Again, Scripture references listed for these notes are to help you locate the notes easily. The notes may or may not actually relate to the Scripture listed.

"WHERE TO FIND IT" INDEX More than 70 of the best-known Bible stories are listed in this index, along with Jesus' parables and miracles. Use either the Scripture references or the page numbers to quickly and easily find the story, parable, or miracle you want.

It's all here. Just about everything you will need to help you understand and apply God's Word. The next step—actually taking time to read and study the Bible—is yours. *GO FOR IT!*

The following spread is a quick look at each of the special features:

- 19th Century
- 20th Century
- 21st Century
- 22nd Century
- 23rd Century
- 24th Century
- 25th Century
- 26th Century
- 27th Century
- 28th Century
- 29th Century
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- 32nd Century
- 33rd Century
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- 41st Century
- 42nd Century
- 43rd Century
- 44th Century
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- 47th Century
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- 50th Century

Have you ever turned on a TV program a few minutes later? Chances are you'll turn it off before the show even gets going. You can't figure out what's going on. To understand a TV program, you have to see the beginning. Now think of the Bible. If you want to find out what's going on in this big book—to get the whole picture—it helps to start with Genesis. Why? Because Genesis is the book of beginnings. It explains how just about everything got started. If you don't understand how things in this world began, it will be harder to figure out why and how God is going to end things. ■ In Genesis we marvel at the awesome creation of the entire universe by the spoken word of God. God set our first glimpse into God's character: He set the stage through everything He has a definite beginning. God is eternal. He always has been and always will be. We notice God's oneness and power; we see his hand and judgment of sin; and we view his incredible love for his people even when they constantly disobey him. ■ Genesis is the book of beginnings: the beginning of the universe, of people, of sin, of salvation, and of an understanding of God. Take time to read Genesis. You will be amazed at how fascinating it is, and at how often other books in the Bible refer to something first mentioned in Genesis—the book of beginnings.



CHAPTER 1 THE ACCOUNT OF CREATION. In the beginning God created... the heavens and the earth. The earth was empty, a formless mass floating in darkness. And the Spirit of God was hovering over the water.

"And God said, 'Let bright lights appear in the sky to separate the day from the night. They will sign to mark off the seasons, the days, and the years.' 'Let their light shine down upon the earth.' And so it was. 'For God made two great lights,

BOOK INTRODUCTIONS

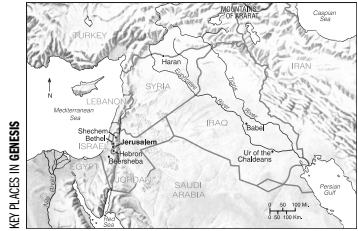
To get an overview of a specific Bible book, read the introduction material containing interesting summaries, timelines, and stats (the who, what, where, and when of the book).

PUBLISHER: To receive God's revelation of the world and His desire to have a people set apart to worship Him.
AUTHOR: Traditionally ascribed to Moses to whom Scripture, the account of Israel's history was given.
DATE WRITTEN: 1450-1450 B.C.
SETTING: The region presently known as the Middle East (see map).
KEY PEOPLE: Adam, Eve, Noah, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph.

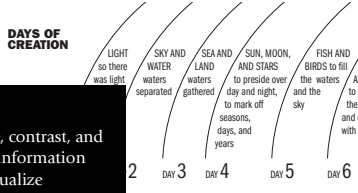
LIFE APPLICATION notes

On just about every page you'll find these concise mini-lessons. Each note helps explain a specific Bible passage and then tells ways you can put it into practice.

SELF-WORTH ● ● ● ● ●
 1. God created everything there is: the heavens, earth, plants, and animals were all made by God at the beginning of history. When God finished creating the earth, He then chose to make people in His image. The phrase "let us make man in our image" in Gen 1:26-28 means that God wanted to create His likeness, especially in a physical sense. Instead, we are reflections of God's glory. We are not God. Because He is our supreme Creator, our best hope is to reflect His character in our own, perfect, righteous, loving, and selfless ways.
 2. We are made like God and therefore share with His character. But, we were not created by His grace, His wisdom, His physical attractiveness, or popularity. Self-worth is knowing that God created us in His likeness. Criticizing or comparing ourselves to others is criticizing what God has made. Because we are the God, we can be neither above ourselves nor our abilities. Knowing that you are a piece of God's work gives you the freedom to love God, love His people, and make a valuable contribution to the world of this world and you.



KEY PLACES IN GENESIS
 Modern names and boundaries are shown in gray.
 God created the universe and the earth. Then he made man and woman, giving them a home in a beautiful garden. Unfortunately, Adam and Eve disobeyed God and were expelled from the garden (2:3).
Moment of Atonement: Adam and Eve's sin brought sin into the human race. Years later, we had our own moment and God decided to restore the earth with a great flood. He spared Noah, his family, and two of each animal who were saved in a huge boat. When the floods receded, the boat rested on the mountains of Ararat (8:4).
Boat: People went down. Again, sin obscured the paths of the people of the world to build a huge tower as a monument to their own greatness—always free had thought of God. As punishment, God scattered the people by giving them different languages (11:9).
City of the Chaldeans: Abraham, a descendant of Noah, was born in this great city (12:1, 9).
Haran: Terah, Lot, Abraham, and Sarai left Ur and, following the family custom of the Egyptians, Haran, headed toward the land of Canaan. Along the way, they settled in the land of Haran for a while (12:5).
Haran: God urged Abraham to leave Haran and go to a place where he would become the father of a great nation (12:1, 2). So Abraham, Lot, and Sarai traveled to the land of Canaan and settled near a city called Shechem (12:6-8).
Abraham: Abraham moved on to Hebron, to "the oak grove owned by Mamrei," where he put down his deepest roots (13:18).
Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob: All lived and worked where there was.



CHARTS
 These compare, contrast, and list important information to help you visualize difficult concepts or pull together related Bible facts.

MAPS

Located in the text, the maps help you find Bible locations quickly and easily.

God made a covenant with Abraham (21:3), Isaac later, as Isaac passed on to him the covenant he had made with his father. His blessing, Jacob left Beersheba and fled to Haran. Along the way the covenant he had made with Abraham and Isaac (28:10-22) (29:10-28). After a better meeting with his brother, Isaac, he returned to Beersheba.

In other brothers grew jealous, until one day, out of the envy, the brothers, Joseph and his brothers, were sold into slavery. His entire family moved from Canaan to Egypt and settled there.

Is ANYTHING too hard for the LORD

HIGHLIGHTED MEMORY VERSES

Key verses are artistically highlighted to help impress them in your mind.

ADAM & EVE

were the only two humans who never experienced being young. Depending on how you feel, they may or may not have missed a lot. But try to imagine starting out life as an adult—no memories, no mistakes, no past-life lessons to help you make adult decisions... Most of us don't realize how much we learn in our first few growing years until it's too late.
 For instance, we have many opportunities to learn as children that while there are some trustworthy people in our lives, not everyone can be trusted. We learn not to immediately trust new advice. We discover it is often helpful to compare it to wisdom we already have, or even to ask someone who has been trustworthy to evaluate the new advice. Eve got some new information: "The fruit is good... God is being selfish... you will be like him." She trusted new advice even though it went against what had been trustworthy. She ate the fruit. She failed to trust the one who had never failed her. Adam made the same mistake. New advice, no questions, no checking... he ate the fruit. Both of them disobeyed God. The result was death!
 Like Adam and Eve, we often have to live with the painful consequences of accepting bad advice. But

PERSONALITY PROFILES
 These are character sketches of key Bible people—both heroes and villains—highlighting their strengths, weaknesses, successes, failures, and life lessons.

- UPS:**
 - The first male and female, husband and wife, human beings.
 - First to farm (made it the image of God).
 - First caretakers of creation.
 - First to know God personally.
- DOWN:**
 - Mistakenly and sin by accusations of blaming others.
 - Acted without considering consequences.
 - Tried to lie.
 - Tried to kill.
- SEEN:**
 - Adam and Eve.
 - Relationships with God and other people.

VIOLENCE

On Friday nights at seven o'clock you're practically guaranteed to find Derek and Steve in one of two places. Check first at Derek's. If they're not there, munching pizza and watching horror movies on video, try the mall. They probably will be standing in line at the movie theater, anxiously waiting for the chance to purchase tickets for the newest cinematic tale of gore.

In the last couple of years, these guys have seen hundreds of violent movies. It doesn't matter what the plot is—deranged killers on the loose, murderous monsters on the rampage, savage mutants from outer space—as long as there are mutilated bodies, and blood, and

satisfied.
That one scene was one Friday.
"Which one?" Derek
"You know, the one grinder. . . . I mean, the
"Tell me about it!" I was just ripped off from
"Want to watch Bab
"Sure. But let me go
See how God feels a of violence—Genesis 6:

MORAL DILEMMA notes

These are real-life case studies, situations where kids like you had to make important decisions. In each of these notes, you will be told where to find a Bible passage that will help you understand what God has to say about the situations you face.



When I read about creation in the Bible, I get confused. How do science and the Bible relate?

The Bible and science debate has raged for many years. Conflicts arise when we look for spiritual answers from science or for scientific answers in the Bible.

A former Vietnam POW told of the time he was allowed to send a cassette tape home to his family. Realizing that it might be the last communication he would ever have with those he loved, he took extensive notes on what he would cover before he began to make the tape. His original notes to communicate the most important thing to his wife, he talked rearing, and relatives each message so the tions they would face up without him. To do how much he loved t

This is exactly the put the books of the know the most impo what to do in certain the extent of his lov For some reason h fusion, and gravity (ies). Instead he incl real struggles who fa of whom conquered

they realized that if God was for them, no one could be against them! Many other stories are included of those who rejected God and then experienced tragic consequences.

Most of these biblical examples tell us much more about living, surviving, and prospering in a complicated society than science could ever hope to promise.

Your mind matters to God—he wants you to think. Never be afraid to ask tough questions about the Bible or the Christian faith. But also consider the appropriateness of each question. Is this the kind of question the Bible should answer? And do the same with science, asking the right questions.

Creation and the resurrection of Jesus Christ are two of the most important tenets of the Christian faith. Although neither can be duplicated in a laboratory, they also cannot be proven to be false by science.

If God can create life from nothing, as well as raise

"I WONDER" notes

If you've ever wondered about what the Bible has to say about something, or about some aspect of the Christian life, you'll probably find your questions repeated in these notes. And you'll also find interesting and thoughtful answers.

"HERE'S WHAT I DID" notes

After interviewing tons of kids, we took some of their stories and included them here. These notes tell how other young people used the principles of God's Word in specific situations in their life.

"Here's what I did..."

Whenever I get discouraged because I can't persuade a friend of the truth of the gospel, I remind myself that we are never going to convince those who don't want to be convinced. This has been a tough thing for me to accept: there are some people I want so badly to become Christians. But Moses and Pharaoh. Nothing would convince the one true God—not plagues, not any of Egypt's farmers. If calamities of this Pharaoh to repent, I am no longer surprised that Christians fail to make a dent in the hearts of

that the best tactic is the slow, steady work with prayer and our attempts to live the to place the rest in God's hands.

Richard
PAGE 18

Ultimate Issues

THE ORIGIN OF HUMANITY

It is now commonly accepted in scientific circles that human beings have become what they are today as a result of millions of years of EVOLUTION. Beginning as a one-celled animal, . . . So reads the textbook used in biology classes in many public high schools today. "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. The earth was empty, a formless mass. . . ." So begins the book of Genesis. The Christian student faces a conflict: Whom to believe? Probably no other issue has drawn a sharper dividing line between religious and nonreligious thought in our society than that of the origin of the human race. Were we, as Genesis 1 and 2 state, placed here by SPECIAL DIVINE CREATION? Or did we, as many contemporary educators, philosophers, and others tell us, evolve from nothing into one-celled animals? Or perhaps a third option—God created people, using "ry." Many young people feel the UNEASY TENSION between spiritual authorities—the Bible, the church, the pastor or youth leader and the public educational system, their biology teachers, and even heavily toward the evolutionist viewpoint. **Who's right?** In precise detail how human beings came to be, does, and foremost, human beings, like all the rest of the universe, in fact in the clearest of terms—God is mentioned performing in Genesis 1 alone. The idea that we simply materialized out of possibility. THE FIRST LAW OF THERMODYNAMICS of destroyed by natural causes. For the strict naturalist/evolutionist dilemma. If only natural causes are involved, how did nothing become something become something personal—with intelligence, morality, personality, and spirituality? By chance? Impossible. Absolutely, scientifically, intellectually, and logically impossible. The Christian, then, turns to the supernatural: **God did it.** It is a simple but utterly profound rationale. "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth . . ." and that sums it up. It does not rule out the possibility of some kind of God-directed evolution; neither does it give any support. And frankly, honest evolutionists will admit that their beliefs involve as much faith and speculation—as not more—as the creationists'. Nobel Prize winner Ernst Chain said in 1970: "To postulate that the development and survival of the fetus is entirely a consequence of chance mutations seems to me a hypothesis based on no evidence and entirely incompatible with the facts. . . . It annoys me that [classical evolutionary theories] are swallowed so uncritically and readily, and for such a long time, by so many scientists without a murmur of protest." So the Bible, and Genesis in particular, gives us **ONE BEDROCK FACT** about the origin of humanity: God created us in his own image. Exactly how he did that remains a matter of faith, open to investigation by scientific inquiry. But the creationist position is an intellectually respectable as any of the alternatives. Every Christian can draw strength and confidence—and awe for his or her Creator—from knowing that.

ULTIMATE ISSUES notes

An "ultimate issue" is a tough question about life or God. These full-page notes bring up difficult questions and then give clear and helpful answers.

MEGA themes

BEGINNINGS Genesis introduces God as Creator of all that exists: the universe, water, and all of life, including people, who were created in God's own image. When God finished creating, the world was perfect. When God began his work of perfecting the world, he began to bring of in God's image. A good relationship between God and

1. What have you learned about the character of God from reading Genesis 1-3?
2. What does it mean to be created in the image of the God who is Lord of all?
3. How do you feel about yourself when you think about being created in God's image?
4. How about the fact that each person is truly created in God's image affect the way you act toward people who appear to be different from you (i.e., skin color, physical disability, unusual habits)?
5. As a person who is created in God's image, how can you glorify God in your relationships with others? With nature? With God?

MEGATHemes

At the end of each Bible book the main themes are presented. With each theme there is a set of questions that can be used for individual or group study.

Creation

Noah (undated)

**2166 B.C.
Abram born**

**2091
Abram enters Canaan**

**2066
Isaac born**

**2006
Jacob & Esau born**

**1929
Jacob flees to Haran**

**1915
Joseph born**

**1898
Joseph sold into slavery**

**1885
Joseph rules Egypt**

**1805
Joseph dies**

Have you ever turned on a TV program a few minutes late? Chances are you'll turn it off before the show is over because you can't figure out what's going on. To understand a TV program, you have to see the beginning. Now think of the Bible. If you want to find out what's going on in this big book—to get the whole picture—it helps to start with Genesis. Why? Because Genesis is the book of beginnings. It explains how just about everything got started. If you don't understand how things in this world began, it will be harder to figure out why and how God is going to end things. ■ In Genesis we marvel at the awesome creation of the entire universe by the spoken word of God. And we get our first glimpse into God's character. We see that though everything else has a definite beginning, God is eternal. He always has been and always will be. We notice God's creativeness and power, we see his hatred and judgment of sin, and we view his incredible love for his people even when they constantly disobey him. ■ Genesis is the book of beginnings: the beginning of the universe, of people, of sin, of salvation, and of an understanding of God. Take time to read Genesis. You will be amazed at how fascinating it is, and at how often other books in the Bible refer to something first mentioned in Genesis—the book of beginnings.

STATS

PURPOSE: To record God's creation of the world and his desire to have a people set apart to worship him

AUTHOR: Moses

TO WHOM WRITTEN: The people of Israel

DATE WRITTEN: 1450–1410 B.C.

SETTING: The region presently known as the Middle East

KEY PEOPLE: Adam, Eve, Noah, Abraham, Sarah, Isaac, Rebekah, Jacob, Joseph



CHAPTER 1 THE ACCOUNT OF CREATION. In the beginning God created* the heavens and the earth. ²The earth was empty, a formless mass cloaked in darkness. And the Spirit of God was hovering over its surface. ³Then God said, "Let there be light," and there was light. ⁴And God saw that it was good. Then he separated the light from the darkness. ⁵God called the light "day" and the darkness "night." Together these made up one day.

⁶And God said, "Let there be space between the waters, to separate water from water." ⁷And so it was. God made this space to separate the waters above from the waters below. ⁸And God called the space "sky." This happened on the second day.

⁹And God said, "Let the waters beneath the sky be gathered into one place so dry ground may appear." And so it was. ¹⁰God named the dry ground "land" and the water "seas." And God saw that it was good. ¹¹Then God said, "Let the land burst forth with every sort of grass and seed-bearing plant. And let there be trees that grow seed-bearing fruit. The seeds will then produce the kinds of plants and trees from which they came." And so it was. ¹²The land was filled with seed-bearing plants and trees, and their seeds produced plants and trees of like kind. And God saw that it was good. ¹³This all happened on the third day.

1:1 Or *In the beginning when God created, or When God began to create.*

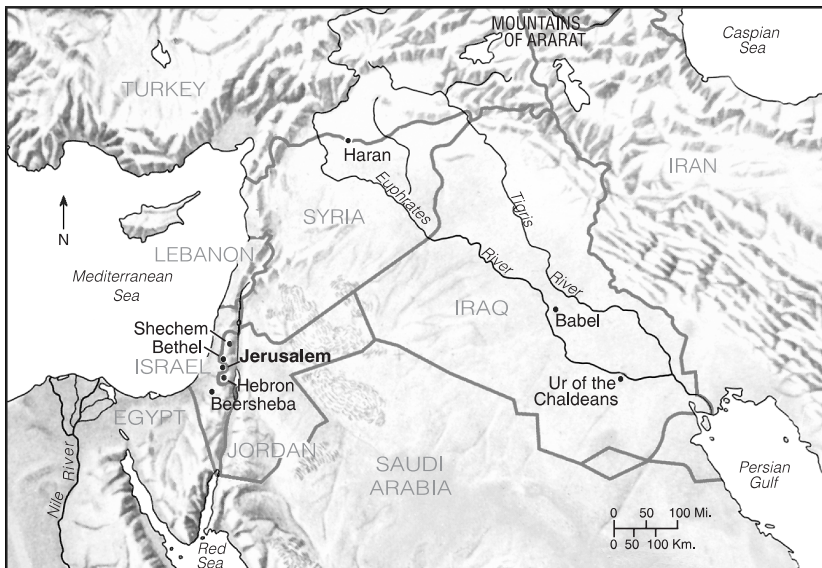
¹⁴And God said, "Let bright lights appear in the sky to separate the day from the night. They will be signs to mark off the seasons, the days, and the years. ¹⁵Let their light shine down upon the earth." And so it was. ¹⁶For God made two great lights, the

SELF-WORTH ● ● ● ● ●

1:1-26 **God created everything there is; the heavens, earth, plants, and animals were all made by God at the beginning of history. When God finished creating the earth, he then chose to make people in his image. The phrase "Let us make people in our image" in verse 26 does not mean that God created us exactly like himself, especially in a physical sense. Instead, we are reflections of God's glory. We will never be totally like God, because he is our supreme Creator. Our best hope is to reflect his character in our love, patience, forgiveness, kindness, and faithfulness.**

We are made like God and therefore share many of his characteristics. Our worth is not defined by possessions, achievements, physical attractiveness, or popularity. Self-worth is knowing that God created us in his likeness. Criticizing or downgrading ourselves is criticizing what God has made. Because we are like God, we can feel positive about ourselves and our abilities. Knowing that you are a person of infinite worth gives you the freedom to love God, know him personally, and make a valuable contribution to the lives of those around you.

KEY PLACES IN GENESIS



Modern names and boundaries are shown in gray.

God created the universe and the earth. Then he made man and woman, giving them a home in a beautiful garden. Unfortunately, Adam and Eve disobeyed God and were expelled from the garden (3:24).

Mountains of Ararat Adam and Eve's sin brought sin into the human race. Years later, sin had run rampant and God decided to destroy the earth with a great flood. All except for Noah, his family, and two of each animal who were all safe in a huge boat. When the floods receded, the boat rested on the mountains of Ararat (8:4).

Babel People never learn. Again sin abounded and the pride of the people led them to build a huge tower as a monument to their own greatness—obviously they had no thought of God. As punishment, God scattered the people by giving them different languages (11:8-9).

Ur of the Chaldeans Abram, a descendant of Shem, was born in this great city (11:27-28).

Haran Terah, Lot, Abram, and Sarai left Ur and, following the fertile crescent of the Euphrates River, headed toward the land of Canaan. Along the way, they settled in the city of Haran for a while (11:31).

Shechem God urged Abram to leave Haran and go to a place where he would become the father of a great nation (12:1-2). So Abram, Lot, and Sarai traveled to the land of Canaan and settled near a city called Shechem (12:5-6).

Hebron Abraham moved on to Hebron, to "the oak grove owned by Mamre," where he put down his deepest roots (13:18).

Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob all lived and were buried there.

Beersheba After a dispute over ownership of the well here, Abraham made a covenant with Abimelech (21:31). Years later, as Isaac was moving from place to place, God appeared to him here and passed on to him the covenant he had made with his father, Abraham (26:23-25).

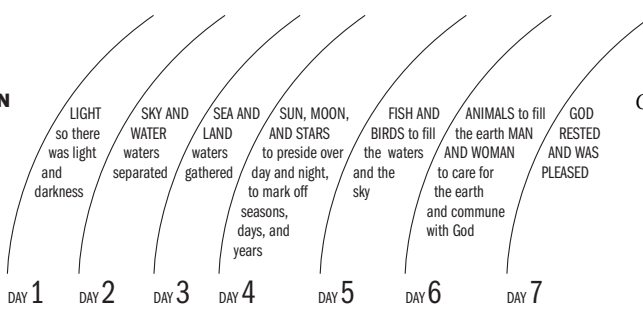
Bethel After deceiving his brother out of both his birthright and his blessing, Jacob left Beersheba and fled to Haran. Along the way God revealed himself to Jacob in a dream and again passed on the covenant he had made with Abraham and Isaac (28:10-22). Jacob lived in Haran, worked for Laban, and married Leah and Rachel (29:15-28). After a tense meeting with his brother, Esau, Jacob returned to Bethel (35:1).

Egypt Jacob had 12 sons, including Joseph, Jacob's favorite. The other brothers grew jealous, until one day, out in the fields, the brothers sold him to Ishmaelite traders who were going to Egypt. Eventually, Joseph rose from Egyptian slave to Pharaoh's "right hand man," saving Egypt and the surrounding country from famine. His entire family moved from Canaan to Egypt and settled there during the severe famine (46:3-4).

sun and the moon, to shine down upon the earth. The greater one, the sun, presides during the day; the lesser one, the moon, presides through the night. He also made the stars. ¹⁷God set these lights in the heavens to light the earth, ¹⁸to govern the day and the night, and to separate the light from

the darkness. And God saw that it was good. ¹⁹This all happened on the fourth day.

²⁰And God said, "Let the waters swarm with fish and other life. Let the skies be filled with birds of every kind." ²¹So God created great sea creatures and every sort of fish and every kind of bird. And God



saw that it was good. ²²Then God blessed them, saying, “Let the fish multiply and fill the oceans. Let the birds increase and fill the earth.” ²³This all happened on the fifth day.

²⁴And God said, “Let the earth bring forth every kind of animal—livestock, small animals, and wildlife.” And so it was. ²⁵God made all sorts of wild animals, livestock, and small animals, each able to reproduce more of its own kind. And God saw that it was good.

²⁶Then God said, “Let us make people* in our image, to be like ourselves. They will be masters over all life—the fish in the sea, the birds in the sky, and all the livestock, wild animals,* and small animals.”

²⁷So God created people in his own image; God patterned them after himself; male and female he created them.

²⁸God blessed them and told them, “Multiply and fill the earth and subdue it. Be masters over the fish and birds and all the animals.” ²⁹And God said, “Look! I have given you the seed-bearing plants throughout the earth and all the fruit trees for your food. ³⁰And I have given all the grasses and other green plants to the animals and birds for their food.” And so it was. ³¹Then God looked over all he had made, and he saw that it was excellent in every way. This all happened on the sixth day.

CHAPTER 2 **GOD MAKES ADAM AND EVE.** So the creation of the heavens and the earth and everything in them was completed. ²On the seventh day, having finished his task, God rested from all his work. ³And God blessed the seventh day and declared it holy, because it was the day when he rested from his work of creation.

⁴This is the account of the creation of the heavens and the earth.

When the LORD God made the heavens and the earth, ⁵there were no plants or grain growing on the earth, for the LORD God had not sent any rain. And no one was there to cultivate the soil. ⁶But water came up out of the ground and watered all the land. ⁷And the LORD God formed a man’s body from the dust of the ground and breathed into it the breath of life. And the man became a living person.

⁸Then the LORD God planted a garden in Eden, in the east, and there he placed the man he had created. ⁹And the LORD God planted all sorts of trees in the

garden—beautiful trees that produced delicious fruit. At the center of the garden he placed the tree of life and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.

¹⁰A river flowed from the land of Eden, watering the garden and then dividing into four branches. ¹¹One of these branches is the Pishon, which flows around the entire land of Havilah, where gold is found. ¹²The gold of that land is exceptionally pure; aromatic resin and onyx stone are also found there. ¹³The second branch is the Gihon, which flows around the entire land of Cush. ¹⁴The third branch is the Tigris, which flows to the east of Asshur. The fourth branch is the Euphrates.

¹⁵The LORD God placed the man in the Garden of Eden to tend and care for it. ¹⁶But the LORD God gave him this warning: “You may freely eat any fruit in the garden ¹⁷except fruit from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. If you eat of its fruit, you will surely die.”

¹⁸And the LORD God said, “It is not good for the man to be alone. I will make a companion who will help him.” ¹⁹So the LORD God formed from the soil every kind of animal and bird. He brought them to Adam* to see what he would call them, and Adam chose a name for each one. ²⁰He gave names to all the livestock, birds, and wild animals. But still there was no companion suitable for him. ²¹So the LORD God caused Adam to fall into a deep sleep. He took one of Adam’s ribs* and closed up the place from which he had taken it. ²²Then the LORD God made a woman from the rib and brought her to Adam.

²³“At last!” Adam exclaimed. “She is part of my own flesh and bone! She will be called ‘woman,’ because she was taken out of a man.” ²⁴This explains why a man leaves his father and mother and is joined to his wife, and the two are united into one. ²⁵Now, although Adam and his wife were both naked, neither of them felt any shame.

MARRIAGE ● ● ● ● ●

2:18-24 God’s creative work was not complete until he made woman. He could have made her from the dust of the ground, as he made man. God chose, however, to make her from the man’s flesh and bone. In so doing, he illustrated that in marriage man and woman symbolically become one flesh. This is a mystical union of the couple’s hearts and lives. Throughout the Bible, God treats this special partnership seriously. If you are planning to be married, are you willing to keep the commitment that makes the two of you one? The goal in marriage should be more than friendship; it should be oneness.

1:26a Hebrew man; also in 1:27. 1:26b As in Syriac version; Hebrew reads all the earth. 2:19 Hebrew the man, and so throughout this chapter. 2:21 Or took a part of Adam’s side.

THE ORIGIN OF HUMANITY

“It is now commonly accepted in scientific circles that human beings have become what they are today as a result of millions of years of **EVOLUTION**. Beginning as a one-celled animal. . . .” So reads the textbook used in biology classes in many public high schools today. “In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. The earth was empty, a formless mass. . . .” So begins the book of Genesis. The Christian student faces a conflict: Whom to believe? Probably no other issue has drawn a sharper dividing line between religious and nonreligious thought in our society than that of the origin of the human race. Were we, as Genesis 1 and 2 state, placed here by **SPECIAL DIVINE CREATION**? Or did we, as many contemporary educators, philosophers, and others tell us, evolve from nothing into one-celled animals and on up the zoological chain into *Homo sapiens*? Or perhaps a third option—God created people, using the process of evolution as his “laboratory.” Many young people feel the **UNEASY TENSION** that exists between these views. Their spiritual authorities—the Bible, the church, the pastor or youth minister—stand firmly in the creationist camp, while the public educational system, their biology teachers, and probably the majority of their peers lean heavily toward the evolutionist viewpoint.

Who's right? Unfortunately, the Bible doesn't spell out in precise detail how human beings came to be. It does, however, give us some basic truths. First and foremost, human beings, like all the rest of the universe, are creations of God. The Bible states that fact in the clearest of terms—God is mentioned performing some part of his creative work 31 times in Genesis 1 alone. The idea that we simply materialized out of nothingness is a logical and scientific impossibility. The **FIRST LAW OF THERMODYNAMICS** tells us matter can neither be created nor destroyed by natural causes. For the strict naturalist/evolutionist, this is an insurmountable dilemma. If only natural causes are involved, how did nothing turn into something? And then, how did that something become something personal—with intelligence, morality, personality, and spirituality? By chance? Impossible. Absolutely, scientifically, intellectually, and **logically impossible**. The Christian, then, turns to the supernatural: **God did it**. It is a simple but utterly profound rationale. “In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth . . . ,” and that sums it up. It does not rule out the possibility of some kind of God-directed evolution; neither does it give it any support. And frankly, honest evolutionists will admit that their beliefs involve as much faith and speculation—if not more—as the creationists'. Nobel Prize winner Ernst Chain said in 1970: “To postulate that the development and survival of the fittest is entirely a consequence of chance mutations seems to me a hypothesis based on no evidence and entirely irreconcilable with the facts. . . . It amazes me that [classical evolutionary theories] are swallowed so uncritically and readily, and for such a long time, by so many scientists without a murmur of protest.” So the Bible, and Genesis in particular, gives us **ONE BEDROCK FACT** about the origin of humanity: God created us in his own image. Exactly how he did that remains a matter of faith, open to investigation by scientific inquiry. But the creationist position is as intellectually respectable as any of the alternatives. Every Christian can draw strength and confidence—and awe for his or her Creator—from knowing that.

CHAPTER 3 THE MAN AND WOMAN SIN. Now the serpent was the shrewdest of all the creatures the LORD God had made. "Really?" he asked the woman. "Did God really say you must not eat any of the fruit in the garden?"

²"Of course we may eat it," the woman told him.

³"It's only the fruit from the tree at the center of the garden that we are not allowed to eat. God says we must not eat it or even touch it, or we will die."

⁴"You won't die!" the serpent hissed. ⁵"God knows that your eyes will be opened when you eat it. You will become just like God, knowing everything, both good and evil."

⁶The woman was convinced. The fruit looked so fresh and delicious, and it would make her so wise! So she ate some of the fruit. She also gave some to her husband, who was with her. Then he ate it, too.

⁷At that moment, their eyes were opened, and they suddenly felt shame at their nakedness. So they strung fig leaves together around their hips to cover themselves.

⁸Toward evening they heard the LORD God walking about in the garden, so they hid themselves among the trees. ⁹The LORD God called to Adam, "Where are you?"

¹⁰He replied, "I heard you, so I hid. I was afraid because I was naked."

¹¹"Who told you that you were naked?" the LORD God asked. "Have you eaten the fruit I commanded you not to eat?"

¹²"Yes," Adam admitted, "but it was the woman you gave me who brought me the fruit, and I ate it."

¹³Then the LORD God asked the woman, "How could you do such a thing?"

"The serpent tricked me," she replied. "That's why I ate it."

¹⁴So the LORD God said to the serpent, "Because you have done this, you will be punished. You are singled out from all the domestic and wild animals of the whole earth to be cursed. You will grovel in the dust as long as you live, crawling along on your belly.

¹⁵From now on, you and the woman will be enemies, and your offspring and her offspring will be enemies. He will crush your head, and you will strike his heel."

¹⁶Then he said to the woman, "You will bear children with intense pain and suffering. And though your desire will be for your husband,* he will be your master."

¹⁷And to Adam he said, "Because you listened to your wife and ate the fruit I told you not to eat, I have placed a curse on the ground. All your life you will struggle to scratch a living from it. ¹⁸It will grow thorns and thistles for you, though you will eat its grains. ¹⁹All your life you will sweat to produce food, until your dying day. Then you will return to the ground from which you came. For you were made from dust, and to the dust you will return."

²⁰Then Adam named his wife Eve,* because she

would be the mother of all people everywhere. ²¹And the LORD God made clothing from animal skins for Adam and his wife.

²²Then the LORD God said, "The people have become as we are, knowing everything, both good and



When I read about creation and miracles in the Bible, I get confused. How do science and the Bible relate?

The Bible and science debate has raged for many years. Conflicts arise when we look for spiritual answers from science or for scientific answers in the Bible.

A former Vietnam POW told of the time he was allowed to send a cassette tape home to his family. Realizing that it might be the last communication he would ever have with those he loved, he took extensive notes on what he would cover before he began to make the tape. His goal was to communicate the most important things that his family should know. To his wife, he talked of insurance, mortgages, child rearing, and relatives. To the kids, he personalized each message so that he touched on unique situations they would face the next few years as they grew up without him. To all of them he was careful to say how much he loved them.

This is exactly the purpose behind the Bible. God put 66 books together to let his creation know the most important things about life, about what to do in certain situations, and especially about the extent of his love for them.

For some reason he chose to leave out dinosaurs, fusion, and gravity (among other significant discoveries). Instead he included stories of real people with real struggles who faced hardship and trials, many of whom conquered fears and circumstances because they realized that if God was for them, no one could be against them! Many other stories are included of those who rejected God and then experienced tragic consequences.

Most of these biblical examples tell us much more about living, surviving, and prospering in a complicated society than science could ever hope to promise.

Your mind matters to God—he wants you to think. Never be afraid to ask tough questions about the Bible or the Christian faith. But also consider the appropriateness of each question. Is this the kind of question the Bible should answer? And do the same with science, asking the right questions.

Creation and the resurrection of Jesus Christ are two of the most important tenets of the Christian faith. Although neither can be duplicated in a laboratory, they also cannot be proven to be false by science.

If God can create life from nothing, as well as raise a man from the dead, he can lead us through this life and the next. We can trust him.

3:9 Hebrew the man, and so throughout this chapter. 3:16 Or And though you may desire to control your husband. 3:20 Eve sounds like a Hebrew term that means "to give life."

evil. What if they eat the fruit of the tree of life? Then they will live forever!" ²³So the LORD God banished Adam and his wife from the Garden of Eden, and he sent Adam out to cultivate the ground from which he had been made. ²⁴After banishing them from the garden, the LORD God stationed mighty angelic beings* to the east of Eden. And a flaming sword flashed back and forth, guarding the way to the tree of life.

CHAPTER 4 CAIN, ABEL, AND SETH. Now Adam* slept with his wife, Eve, and she became pregnant. When the time came, she gave birth to Cain,* and she said, "With the LORD's help, I have brought forth* a man!" ²Later she gave birth to a second son and named him Abel.

When they grew up, Abel became a shepherd, while Cain was a farmer. ³At harvesttime Cain brought to the LORD a gift of his farm produce, ⁴while Abel brought several choice lambs from the best of his flock. The LORD accepted Abel and his offering, ⁵but he did not accept Cain and his offering. This made Cain very angry and dejected.

⁶"Why are you so angry?" the LORD asked him. "Why do you look so dejected? ⁷You will be accepted if you respond in the right way. But if you refuse to respond correctly, then watch out! Sin is waiting to attack and destroy you, and you must subdue it."

⁸Later Cain suggested to his brother, Abel, "Let's go out into the fields."* And while they were there, Cain attacked and killed his brother.

⁹Afterward the LORD asked Cain, "Where is your brother? Where is Abel?"

"I don't know!" Cain retorted. "Am I supposed to keep track of him wherever he goes?"

BAD APPLE ●●●●●

4:8-10 Adam and Eve's disobedience brought sin into the human race. They may have thought their sin (eating a "harmless" piece of fruit) wasn't very bad, but notice how quickly their sinful nature developed in the lives of their children. Simple disobedience degenerated into outright murder. Adam and Eve acted only against God, but Cain acted against both God and man. A small sin has a way of growing out of control. Let God help you with your little sins before they turn into tragedies.

¹⁰But the LORD said, "What have you done? Listen—your brother's blood cries out to me from the ground! ¹¹You are hereby banished from the ground you have defiled with your brother's blood. ¹²No longer will it yield abundant crops for you, no matter how hard you work! From now on you will be a homeless fugitive on the earth, constantly wandering from place to place."

¹³Cain replied to the LORD, "My punishment* is too great for me to bear! ¹⁴You have banished me from my land and from your presence; you have

SATAN'S PLAN

Doubt	Makes you question God's Word and his goodness
Discouragement	Makes you look at your problems rather than at God
Diversion	Makes the wrong things seem attractive so you want them more than the right things
Defeat	Makes you feel like a failure, so you don't even try
Delay	Makes you put off doing something, so it never gets done

made me a wandering fugitive. All who see me will try to kill me!"

¹⁵The LORD replied, "They will not kill you, for I will give seven times your punishment to anyone who does." Then the LORD put a mark on Cain to warn anyone who might try to kill him. ¹⁶So Cain left the LORD's presence and settled in the land of Nod,* east of Eden.

¹⁷Then Cain's wife became pregnant and gave birth to a son, and they named him Enoch. When Cain founded a city, he named it Enoch after his son.

¹⁸ Enoch was the father of* Irad.

Irad was the father of Mehujael.

Mehujael was the father of Methushael.

Methushael was the father of Lamech.

¹⁹Lamech married two women—Adah and Zillah.

²⁰Adah gave birth to a baby named Jabal. He became the first of the herdsman who live in tents. ²¹His brother's name was Jubal, the first musician—the inventor of the harp and flute. ²²To Lamech's other wife, Zillah, was born Tubal-cain. He was the first to work with metal, forging instruments of bronze and iron. Tubal-cain had a sister named Naamah.

²³One day Lamech said to Adah and Zillah, "Listen to me, my wives. I have killed a youth who attacked and wounded me. ²⁴If anyone who kills Cain is to be punished seven times, anyone who takes revenge against me will be punished seventy-seven times!"

²⁵Adam slept with his wife again, and she gave birth to another son. She named him Seth,* for she said, "God has granted me another son in place of Abel, the one Cain killed." ²⁶When Seth grew up, he had a son and named him Enosh. It was during his lifetime that people first began to worship the LORD.

3:24 Hebrew cherubim. 4:1a Hebrew the man. 4:1b Cain sounds like a Hebrew term that can mean "bring forth" or "acquire." 4:1c Or I have acquired. 4:13 Or My sin. 4:16 Nod means "wandering." 4:8 As in Samaritan Pentateuch, Greek and Syriac versions, Latin Vulgate; Masoretic Text lacks "Let's go out into the fields." 4:18 Or the ancestor of, and so throughout the verse. 4:25 Seth probably means "granted"; the name may also mean "appointed."

CHAPTER 5 FROM ADAM TO NOAH. This is the history of the descendants of Adam. When God created people,* he made them in the likeness of God.² He created them male and female, and he blessed them and called them “human.”*

³When Adam was 130 years old, his son Seth was born,* and Seth was the very image of his father.*⁴After the birth of Seth,* Adam lived another 800 years, and he had other sons and daughters.⁵He died at the age of 930.

⁶When Seth was 105 years old, his son Enosh was born.⁷After the birth of Enosh, Seth lived another 807 years, and he had other sons and daughters.⁸He died at the age of 912.

⁹When Enosh was 90 years old, his son Kenan was born.¹⁰After the birth of Kenan, Enosh lived another 815 years, and he had other sons and daughters.¹¹He died at the age of 905.

¹²When Kenan was 70 years old, his son Mahalalel was born.¹³After the birth of Mahalalel, Kenan lived another 840 years, and he had other sons and daughters.¹⁴He died at the age of 910.

¹⁵When Mahalalel was 65 years old, his son Jared was born.¹⁶After the birth of Jared, Mahalalel lived 830 years, and he had other sons and daughters.¹⁷He died at the age of 895.

¹⁸When Jared was 162 years old, his son Enoch was born.¹⁹After the birth of Enoch, Jared lived another 800 years, and he had other sons and daughters.²⁰He died at the age of 962.

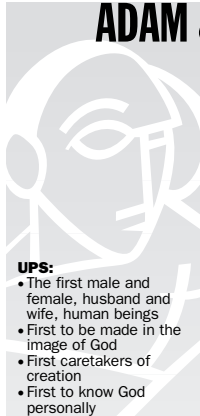
²¹When Enoch was 65 years old, his son Methuselah was born.²²After the birth of Methuselah, Enoch lived another 300 years in close fellowship with God, and he had other sons and

daughters.²³Enoch lived 365 years in all.²⁴He enjoyed a close relationship with God throughout his life. Then suddenly, he disappeared because God took him.

²⁵When Methuselah was 187 years old, his son Lamech was born.²⁶After the birth of Lamech, Methuselah lived another 782 years, and he had other sons and daughters.²⁷He died at the age of 969.

²⁸When Lamech was 182 years old, his son Noah

ADAM & EVE



UPS:

- The first male and female, husband and wife, human beings
- First to be made in the image of God
- First caretakers of creation
- First to know God personally

DOWNs:

- Both tended to handle mistakes and sin by excuses or blaming others
- Acted without considering consequences
- Together they brought sin into the creation

STATs:

- Where: Garden of Eden
- Occupation: Husband and wife, caretakers of Eden
- Relatives: Sons: Cain, Abel, Seth. Numerous other children.

were the only two humans who never experienced being young. Depending on how you feel, they may or may not have missed a lot! But try to imagine starting out life as an adult—no memories, no mistakes, no past little lessons to help you make adult decisions. . . . Most of us don't realize how much we learn or fail to learn during our growing years until it's too late.

For instance, we have many opportunities to learn as children that while there are some trustworthy people in our lives, not everyone can be trusted. We learn not to immediately trust new advice. We discover it is often helpful to compare it to wisdom we already have, or even to ask someone who has been trustworthy to evaluate the new advice. Eve got some new information: “The fruit is great. . . God's being selfish. . . you will be like him.” She trusted new advice even though it went against what had been trustworthy. She ate the fruit. She failed to trust the one who had never failed her. Adam made the same mistake. New advice, no questions, no checking. . . he ate the fruit. Both of them disobeyed God. The result was death!

Like Adam and Eve, we often have to live with the painful consequences of accepting bad advice. But consequences are reminders of hard lessons. They are not excuses to give up or to repeat the same mistakes.

How do you evaluate new advice? Are your past mistakes and successes helping you make better decisions? How often do you seriously consider the source as well as the advice?

LESSONS: As Adam and Eve's descendants, we all reflect to some degree the image of God

The basic tendency to sin goes back to the beginning of the human race

God wants people who are free to sin to choose instead to trust and love him

God's design for marriage was part of Creation

KEY VERSE: “So God created people in his own image; God patterned them after himself; male and female he created them” (Genesis 1:27).

Adam and Eve's story is told in Genesis 1:26–4:26. They are also mentioned in 1 Chronicles 1:1; Job 31:33; Luke 3:38; Romans 5:14; 1 Corinthians 15:22,45; 1 Timothy 2:13-14.

5:1 Hebrew man. 5:2 Hebrew man. 5:3a Or his son, the ancestor of Seth, was born; similarly in 5:6, 9, 12, 15, 18, 21, 25. 5:3b Hebrew was in his own likeness, after his image. 5:4 Or After the birth of this ancestor of Seth; similarly in 5:7, 10, 13, 16, 19, 22, 26.

was born. ²⁹Lamech named his son Noah,* for he said, "He will bring us relief from the painful labor of farming this ground that the LORD has cursed." ³⁰After the birth of Noah, Lamech lived 595 years, and he had other sons and daughters. ³¹He died at the age of 777.

³²By the time Noah was 500 years old, he had three sons: Shem, Ham, and Japheth.

CHAPTER 6 NOAH AND THE FLOOD. When the human population began to grow rapidly on the earth, ¹the sons of God saw the beautiful women of the human race and took any they wanted as their wives. ²Then the LORD said, "My Spirit will not put up with humans for such a long time, for they are only mortal flesh. In the future, they will live no more than 120 years."

⁴In those days, and even afterward, giants* lived on the earth, for whenever the sons of God had intercourse with human women, they gave birth to children who became the heroes mentioned in legends of old.



VIOLENCE

On Friday nights at seven o'clock you're practically guaranteed to find Derek and Steve in one of two places. Check first at Derek's. If they're not there,

munching pizza and watching horror movies on video, try the mall. They probably will be standing in line at the movie theater, anxiously waiting for the chance to purchase tickets for the newest cinematic tale of gore.

In the last couple of years, these guys have seen hundreds of violent movies. It doesn't matter what the plot is—deranged killers on the loose, murderous monsters on the rampage, savage mutants from outer space—as long as there are some gruesome torture scenes, lots of mutilated bodies, and gallons of blood and guts, Derek and Steve are satisfied.

"That one scene was so weak," Steve complains as he ejects a video one Friday.

"Which one?" Derek responds.

"You know, the one where he shoved the girl into that giant meat grinder. . . . I mean, the blood didn't even look real."

"Tell me about it!" Derek agrees. "Every scene in the whole movie was just ripped off from another movie."

"Want to watch *Babies with Rabies* now?"

"Sure. But let me go get some more cherry soda first."

See how God feels about individuals and societies that are tolerant of violence—Genesis 6:11-13.

⁵Now the LORD observed the extent of the people's wickedness, and he saw that all their thoughts were consistently and totally evil. ⁶So the LORD was sorry he had ever made them. It broke his heart. ⁷And the LORD said, "I will completely wipe out this human race that I have created. Yes, and I will destroy all the animals and birds, too. I

5:29 Noah sounds like a Hebrew term that can mean "relief" or "comfort."
6:15 Hebrew 300 cubits [135 meters] long, 50 cubits [22.5 meters] wide, and 30 cubits [13.5 meters] high. 6:16 Hebrew 1 cubit [45 centimeters].

WORRYWART ●●●●●

7:15-16 Many have wondered how this animal kingdom roundup happened. Did Noah and his sons spend years collecting them? In reality the creation, along with Noah, was doing just as God had commanded. There seemed to be no problem gathering the animals—God took care of the details of that job while Noah was doing his part by building the boat. Often we do just the opposite of Noah. We worry about details in our lives over which we have no control, while neglecting specific areas (such as attitudes, relationships, responsibilities) that are under our control. Like Noah, concentrate on what God has given you to do, and leave the rest to him.

am sorry I ever made them." ⁸But Noah found favor with the LORD.

⁹This is the history of Noah and his family. Noah was a righteous man, the only blameless man living on earth at the time. He consistently followed God's will and enjoyed a close relationship with him. ¹⁰Noah had three sons: Shem, Ham, and Japheth.

¹¹Now the earth had become corrupt in God's sight, and it was filled with violence. ¹²God observed all this corruption in the world, and he saw violence and depravity everywhere. ¹³So God said to Noah, "I have decided to destroy all living creatures, for the earth is filled with violence because of them. Yes, I will wipe them all from the face of the earth!

¹⁴"Make a boat* from resinous wood and seal it with tar, inside and out. Then construct decks and stalls throughout its interior. ¹⁵Make it 450 feet long, 75 feet wide, and 45 feet high.* ¹⁶Construct an opening all the way around the boat, 18 inches* below the roof. Then put three decks inside the boat—bottom, middle, and upper—and put a door in the side.

¹⁷"Look! I am about to cover the earth with a flood that will destroy every living thing. Everything on earth will die! ¹⁸But I solemnly swear to keep you safe in the boat, with your wife and your sons and their wives. ¹⁹Bring a pair of every kind of animal—a male and a female—into the boat with you to keep them alive during the flood. ²⁰Pairs of each kind of bird and each kind of animal, large and small alike, will come to you to be kept alive. ²¹And remember, take enough food for your family and for all the animals."

²²So Noah did everything exactly as God had commanded him.

CHAPTER 7 GOD SENDS THE GREAT FLOOD. Finally, the day came when the LORD said to Noah, "Go into the boat with all your family, for among all the people of the earth, I consider you alone to be righteous. ²Take along seven pairs of each animal that I have approved for eating and for sacrifice, and take one pair of each of the others. ³Then select seven pairs of every kind of bird. There must be a male and a female in each pair to ensure that every kind of

living creature will survive the flood. ⁴One week from today I will begin forty days and forty nights of rain. And I will wipe from the earth all the living things I have created.”

⁵So Noah did exactly as the LORD had commanded him. ⁶He was 600 years old when the flood came, ⁷and he went aboard the boat to escape—he and his wife and his sons and their wives. ⁸With them were all the various kinds of animals—those approved for eating and sacrifice and those that were not—along with all the birds and other small animals. ⁹They came into the boat in pairs, male and female, just as God had commanded Noah. ¹⁰One week later, the flood came and covered the earth.

¹¹When Noah was 600 years old, on the seventeenth day of the second month, the underground waters burst forth on the earth, and the rain fell in mighty torrents from the sky. ¹²The rain continued to fall for forty days and forty nights. ¹³But Noah had gone into the boat that very day with his wife and his sons—Shem, Ham, and Japheth—and their wives. ¹⁴With them in the boat were pairs of every kind of breathing animal—domestic and wild, large and small—along with birds and flying insects of every kind. ¹⁵Two by two they came into the boat, ¹⁶male and female, just as God had commanded. Then the LORD shut them in.

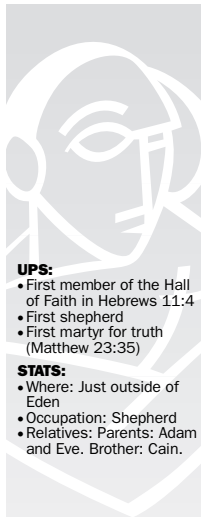
¹⁷For forty days the floods prevailed, covering the ground and lifting the boat high above the earth. ¹⁸As the waters rose higher and higher above the ground, the boat floated safely on the surface. ¹⁹Finally, the water covered even the highest mountains on the earth, ²⁰standing more than twenty-two feet* above the highest peaks.

²¹All the living things on earth died—birds, domestic animals, wild animals, all kinds of small animals, and all the people. ²²Everything died that breathed and lived on dry land. ²³Every living thing on the earth was wiped out—people, animals both large

and small, and birds. They were all destroyed, and only Noah was left alive, along with those who were with him in the boat. ²⁴And the water covered the earth for 150 days.

CHAPTER 8 THE FLOOD RECEDES. But God remembered Noah and all the animals in the boat. He sent a wind to blow across the waters, and the floods began to disappear. ²The underground water sources ceased thushing, and the torrential rains stopped. ³So the flood gradually began to recede. After 150 days, ⁴exactly five months from the time the flood began,* the boat came to rest on the mountains of Ararat. ⁵Two and a half months later,* as the waters continued to go down, other mountain peaks began to appear.

⁶After another forty days, Noah opened the



UPS:

- First member of the Hall of Faith in Hebrews 11:4
- First shepherd
- First martyr for truth (Matthew 23:35)

STATS:

- Where: Just outside of Eden
- Occupation: Shepherd
- Relatives: Parents: Adam and Eve. Brother: Cain.

ABEL No matter what parents do, their kids don't always get along. In most cases, all the squabbling and fighting that goes on eventually creates a strong bond between brothers and sisters. We love them even when we hate them. Sometimes, though, we find it's easier to hurt than to help. The death of Adam and Eve's son Abel shows us how bad this can get.

Abel was the second child born into the world, but the first one to obey God. He worshiped in a way that pleased God. That really bothered his brother Cain. We don't know how Abel felt, but he must have known Cain was angry at him. Brothers and sisters know things like that about each other. Yet Abel trusted his brother even when Cain suggested they go out to the field together. Abel was the kind of brother worth having. Once in a while we need to let our brothers and sisters know we think they're worth having and trusting.

The Bible doesn't tell us why God liked Abel's gift and disliked Cain's, but both brothers knew what God expected. Only Abel obeyed. He is remembered for his obedience and faith (Hebrews 11:4), and he is called "righteous" (Matthew 23:35). When we know what God wants, we need to obey like Abel, no matter what the cost, and trust God to make things work out right.

LESSONS: God hears those who come to him with a right heart

God recognizes the innocent person, and sooner or later he judges the guilty

KEY VERSE: "It was by faith that Abel brought a more acceptable offering to God than Cain did. God accepted Abel's offering to show that he was a righteous man. And although Abel is long dead, he still speaks to us because of his faith" (Hebrews 11:4).

Abel's story is told in Genesis 4:1-8. He is also mentioned in Matthew 23:35; Luke 11:51; Hebrews 11:4; 12:24.

7:20 Hebrew 15 cubits [6.8 meters]. 8:4 Hebrew on the seventeenth day of the seventh month; see 7:11. 8:5 Hebrew On the first day of the tenth month; see 7:11 and note on 8:4.

window he had made in the boat ⁷and released a raven that flew back and forth until the earth was dry. ⁸Then he sent out a dove to see if it could find dry ground. ⁹But the dove found no place to land because the water was still too high. So it returned to the boat, and Noah held out his hand and drew the dove back inside. ¹⁰Seven days later, Noah released the dove again. ¹¹This time, toward evening, the bird returned to him with a fresh olive leaf in its beak. Noah now knew that the water was almost gone. ¹²A week later, he released the dove again, and this time it did not come back.

¹³Finally, when Noah was 601 years old, ten and a half months after the flood began, * Noah lifted back the cover to look. The water was drying up. ¹⁴Two more months went by, * and at last the earth was dry! ¹⁵Then God said to Noah, ¹⁶“Leave the boat, all of you. ¹⁷Release all the animals and birds so they can breed and reproduce in great numbers.” ¹⁸So Noah, his wife, and his sons and their wives left the boat. ¹⁹And all the various kinds of animals and birds came out, pair by pair.

²⁰Then Noah built an altar to the LORD and sacrificed on it the animals and birds that had been approved for that purpose. ²¹And the LORD was pleased with the sacrifice and said to himself, “I will never again curse the earth, destroying all living things, even though people’s thoughts and actions are bent toward evil from childhood. ²²As long as the earth remains, there will be springtime and harvest, cold and heat, winter and summer, day and night.”

MURDERERS ●●●●●

9:5-6 Here God explains why murder is so wrong: to kill a person is to kill one made like God. Because human beings are made in God’s image, all people possess the qualities that distinguish us from animals: morality, reason, creativity, and self-worth. When we interact with others, we are interacting with beings made by God, beings to whom God offers eternal life. God wants us to recognize these special qualities in all people.

CHAPTER 9 GOD’S COVENANT WITH NOAH. God blessed Noah and his sons and told them, “Multiply and fill the earth. ²All the wild animals, large and small, and all the birds and fish will be afraid of you. I have placed them in your power. ³I have given them to you for food, just as I have given you grain and vegetables. ⁴But you must never eat animals that still have their lifeblood in them. ⁵And murder is forbidden. Animals that kill people must die, and any person who murders must be killed. ⁶Yes, you must execute anyone who murders another person, for to kill a person is to kill a living being made in God’s image. ⁷Now you must have many children and repopulate the earth. Yes, multiply and fill the earth!”

⁸Then God told Noah and his sons, ⁹“I am mak-

ing a covenant with you and your descendants, ¹⁰and with the animals you brought with you—all these birds and livestock and wild animals. ¹¹I solemnly promise never to send another flood to kill all living creatures and destroy the earth.” ¹²And God said, “I am giving you a sign as evidence of my eternal covenant with you and all living creatures. ¹³I have placed my rainbow in the clouds. It is the sign of my permanent promise to you and to all the earth. ¹⁴When I send clouds over the earth, the rainbow will be seen in the clouds, ¹⁵and I will remember my covenant with you and with everything that lives. Never again will there be a flood that will destroy all life. ¹⁶When I see the rainbow in the clouds, I will remember the eternal covenant between God and every living creature on earth.” ¹⁷Then God said to Noah, “Yes, this is the sign of my covenant with all the creatures of the earth.”

¹⁸Shem, Ham, and Japheth, the three sons of Noah, survived the Flood with their father. (Ham is the ancestor of the Canaanites.) ¹⁹From these three sons of Noah came all the people now scattered across the earth.

²⁰After the Flood, Noah became a farmer and planted a vineyard. ²¹One day he became drunk on some wine he had made and lay naked in his tent. ²²Ham, the father of Canaan, saw that his father was naked and went outside and told his brothers. ²³Shem and Japheth took a robe, held it over their shoulders, walked backward into the tent, and covered their father’s naked body. As they did this, they looked the other way so they wouldn’t see him naked. ²⁴When Noah woke up from his drunken stupor, he learned what Ham, his youngest son, had done. ²⁵Then he cursed the descendants of Canaan, the son of Ham:

“A curse on the Canaanites!
May they be the lowest of servants
to the descendants of Shem and Japheth.”

²⁶Then Noah said,

“May Shem be blessed by the LORD my God;
and may Canaan be his servant.
²⁷May God enlarge the territory of Japheth,
and may he share the prosperity of Shem,*
and let Canaan be his servant.”

²⁸Noah lived another 350 years after the Flood. ²⁹He was 950 years old when he died.

CHAPTER 10 This is the history of the families of Shem, Ham, and Japheth, the three sons of Noah. Many children were born to them after the Flood.

²The descendants of Japheth were Gomer, Magog, Madai, Javan, Tubal, Meshech, and Tiras.

³The descendants of Gomer were Ashkenaz, Riphath, and Togarmah.

8:13 Hebrew on the first day of the first month; see 7:11. 8:14 Hebrew The twenty-seventh day of the second month arrived; see note on 8:13. 9:27 Hebrew may he live in the tents of Shem.

⁴The descendants of Javan were Elishah, Tarshish, Kittim, and Rodanim. * ⁵Their descendants became the seafaring peoples in various lands, each tribe with its own language.

⁶The descendants of Ham were Cush, Mizraim, * Put, and Canaan.

⁷The descendants of Cush were Seba, Havilah, Sabtah, Raamah, and Sabteca. The descendants of Raamah were Sheba and Dedan.

⁸One of Cush's descendants was Nimrod, who became a heroic warrior. ⁹He was a mighty hunter in the LORD's sight. * His name became proverbial, and people would speak of someone as being "like Nimrod, a mighty hunter in the LORD's sight." ¹⁰He built the foundation for his empire in the land of Babylonia, * with the cities of Babel, Erech, Akkad, and Calneh. ¹¹From there he extended his reign to Assyria, where he built Nineveh, Rehoboth-ir, Calah, ¹²and Resen—the main city of the empire, located between Nineveh and Calah.

¹³Mizraim was the ancestor of the Ludites, Anamites, Lehabites, Naphtuhites, ¹⁴Pathrusites, Casluhites, and the Caphtorites, from whom the Philistines came. *

¹⁵Canaan's oldest son was Sidon, the ancestor of the Sidonians. Canaan was also the ancestor of the Hittites, ¹⁶Jebusites, Amorites, Girgashites, ¹⁷Hivites, Arkites, Sinites, ¹⁸Arvadites, Zemarites, and Hamathites. ¹⁹Eventually the territory of Canaan spread from Sidon to Gerar, near Gaza, and to Sodom, Gomorrah, Admah, and Zeboiim, near Lasha.

²⁰These were the descendants of Ham, identified according to their tribes, languages, territories, and nations.

²¹Sons were also born to Shem, the older brother of Japheth. * Shem was the ancestor of all the descendants of Eber. ²²The descendants of Shem

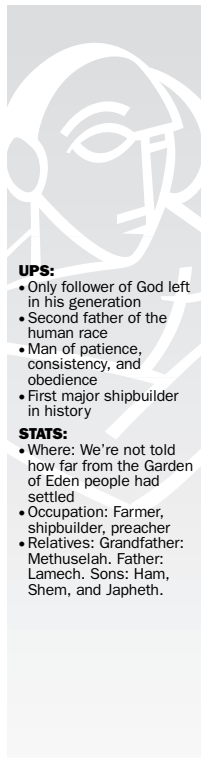
were Elam, Asshur, Arphaxad, Lud, and Aram.

²³The descendants of Aram were Uz, Hul, Gether, and Mash.

²⁴Arphaxad was the father of Shelah, * and Shelah was the father of Eber. ²⁵Eber had two sons. The first was named Peleg—"division"—for during his lifetime the people of the world were divided into different language groups and dispersed. His brother's name was Joktan.

²⁶Joktan was the ancestor of Almodad, Sheleph, Hazarmaveth, Jerah, ²⁷Hadoram, Uzal, Diklah, ²⁸Obal, Abimael, Sheba, ²⁹Ophir, Havilah, and Jobab. ³⁰The descendants of Joktan lived in the area extending from Mesha toward the eastern hills of Sephar.

³¹These were the descendants of Shem, identified according to their tribes, languages, territories, and nations.



UPS:

- Only follower of God left in his generation
- Second father of the human race
- Man of patience, consistency, and obedience
- First major shipbuilder in history

STATS:

- Where: We're not told how far from the Garden of Eden people had settled
- Occupation: Farmer, shipbuilder, preacher
- Relatives: Grandfather: Methuselah. Father: Lamech. Sons: Ham, Shem, and Japheth.

NOAH The story of Noah's life involved not one, but two great and tragic floods. The first was a flood of evil. The world had become so bad that there was only one person left who remembered the God of creation, perfection, and love. Noah was the last of God's people.

God's response to this flood of evil was a 120-year-long last chance. During those years, he had Noah build a large advertisement of what God was going to do. Nothing like a huge boat built on dry land to make a point! Of course, everyone thought Noah was crazy. Despite the jeers of his friends and neighbors, Noah continued to build. When the flood came, no one could say they hadn't been warned. For Noah, obedience to God meant a long-term courageous commitment to a project.

Many of us have trouble sticking to any project, whether or not it is directed by God. Or we back off when opposition occurs. Noah obeyed God and worked on one project longer than we even expect to live. The only project we have that is like Noah's is our life. Maybe this is the biggest lesson and challenge Noah's life can give us: we should live an entire lifetime of obedience, depending on God's help.

LESSONS: God is faithful to those who obey him

God does not always protect us from trouble, but cares for us in spite of trouble

Obedience is a long-term commitment

A man may be faithful, but his sinful nature always travels with him

KEY VERSE: "So Noah did everything exactly as God had commanded him" (Genesis 6:22).

Noah's story is told in Genesis 5:29–10:32. He is also mentioned in 1 Chronicles 1:4; Isaiah 54:9; Ezekiel 14:14,20; Matthew 24:37-38; Luke 3:36; 17:26-27; Hebrews 11:7; 1 Peter 3:20; 2 Peter 2:5.

10:4 As in some Hebrew manuscripts and Greek version (see also 1 Chr 1:7); most Hebrew manuscripts read *Dodanim*. 10:6 Or *Egypt*; also in 10:13. 10:9 Hebrew a *mighty hunter before the Lord*; also in 10:9b. 10:10 Hebrew *Shinar*. 10:14 Hebrew *Casluhites, from whom the Philistines came, Caphtorites*. Compare Jer 47:4; Amos 9:7. 10:21 Or *Shem, whose older brother was Japheth*. 10:24 Greek version reads *Aphaxad was the father of Cainan, Cainan was the father of Shelah*.

³²⁷These are the families that came from Noah's sons, listed nation by nation according to their lines of descent. The earth was populated with the people of these nations after the Flood.

CHAPTER 11 THE TOWER OF BABEL. At one time the whole world spoke a single language and used the same words. ²As the people migrated eastward, they found a plain in the land of Babylonia* and settled there. ³They began to talk about construction projects. "Come," they said, "let's make great piles of burnt brick and collect natural asphalt to use as mortar. ⁴Let's build a great city with a tower that reaches to the skies—a monument to our greatness! This will bring us together and keep us from scattering all over the world."

TOWERING PRIDE ● ● ● ● ●

11:4 The tower of Babel was a great human achievement, a wonder of the world. But it was a monument to the people themselves rather than to God. We often build monuments to ourselves (expensive clothes, big house, fancy car, important job) to call attention to our achievements. These may not be wrong in themselves, but when we use them to give us identity and self-worth, they take God's place in our lives. We are free to develop in many areas, but we are not free to think we have replaced God. What "monuments" are in your life?

⁵But the LORD came down to see the city and the tower the people were building. ⁶"Look!" he said. "If they can accomplish this when they have just begun to take advantage of their common language and political unity, just think of what they will do later. Nothing will be impossible for them! ⁷Come, let's go down and give them different languages. Then they won't be able to understand each other."

⁸In that way, the LORD scattered them all over the earth; and that ended the building of the city. ⁹That is why the city was called Babel, * because it was there that the LORD confused the people by giving them many languages, thus scattering them across the earth.

¹⁰This is the history of Shem's family.

When Shem was 100 years old, his son Arphaxad was born. This happened two years after the Flood. ¹¹After the birth of Arphaxad, Shem lived another 500 years and had other sons and daughters.

¹²When Arphaxad was 35 years old, his son Shelah was born.* ¹³After the birth of Shelah, Arphaxad lived another 403 years and had other sons and daughters.*

¹⁴When Shelah was 30 years old, his son Eber was born. ¹⁵After the birth of Eber, Shelah lived

another 403 years and had other sons and daughters.

¹⁶When Eber was 34 years old, his son Peleg was born. ¹⁷After the birth of Peleg, Eber lived another 430 years and had other sons and daughters.

¹⁸When Peleg was 30 years old, his son Reu was born. ¹⁹After the birth of Reu, Peleg lived another 209 years and had other sons and daughters.

²⁰When Reu was 32 years old, his son Serug was born. ²¹After the birth of Serug, Reu lived another 207 years and had other sons and daughters.

²²When Serug was 30 years old, his son Nahor was born. ²³After the birth of Nahor, Serug lived another 200 years and had other sons and daughters.

²⁴When Nahor was 29 years old, his son Terah was born. ²⁵After the birth of Terah, Nahor lived another 119 years and had other sons and daughters.

²⁶When Terah was 70 years old, he became the father of Abram, Nahor, and Haran.

²⁷This is the history of Terah's family. Terah was the father of Abram, Nahor, and Haran; and Haran had a son named Lot. ²⁸But while Haran was still young, he died in Ur of the Chaldeans, the place of his birth. He was survived by Terah, his father. ²⁹Meanwhile, Abram married Sarai, and his brother Nahor married Milcah, the daughter of their brother Haran. (Milcah had a sister named Iscah.) ³⁰Now Sarai was not able to have any children.

³¹Terah took his son Abram, his daughter-in-law Sarai, and his grandson Lot (his son Haran's child) and left Ur of the Chaldeans to go to the land of Canaan. But they stopped instead at the village of Haran and settled there. ³²Terah lived for 205 years* and died while still at Haran.

CHAPTER 12 THE CALL OF ABRAM. Then the LORD told Abram, "Leave your country, your relatives, and your father's house, and go to the land that I will show you. ¹I will cause you to become the father of a great nation. I will bless you and make you famous, and I

DON'T MISS OUT ● ● ● ● ●

12:2 God promised to bless Abram and make him famous, but there was one condition. Abram had to do what God wanted him to do. This meant leaving his home and friends and traveling to a new land where God promised to build a great nation from Abram's family. Abram obeyed, leaving his home for God's promise of even greater blessings in the future. God may be trying to lead you to a place of greater service and usefulness for him. Don't let the comfort and security of your present position make you miss God's plan for you.

11:2 Hebrew *Shinar*. 11:9 *Babel* sounds like a Hebrew term that means "confusion." 11:12 Or his son, the ancestor of Shelah, was born; similarly in 11:14, 16, 18, 20, 22, 24. 11:12-13 Greek version reads ¹³When Arphaxad was 135 years old, his son Cainan was born. ¹⁴After the birth of Cainan, Arphaxad lived another 430 years and had other sons and daughters, and then he died. When Cainan was 130 years old, his son Shelah was born. After the birth of Shelah, Cainan lived another 330 years and had other sons and daughters, and then he died. 11:32 Some ancient versions read 145 years; compare 11:26; 12:4.

will make you a blessing to others. ³I will bless those who bless you and curse those who curse you. All the families of the earth will be blessed through you.”

⁴So Abram departed as the LORD had instructed him, and Lot went with him. Abram was seventy-five years old when he left Haran. ⁵He took his wife, Sarai, his nephew Lot, and all his wealth—his livestock and all the people who had joined his household at Haran—and finally arrived in Canaan. ⁶Traveling through Canaan, they came to a place near Shechem and set up camp beside the oak at Moreh. At that time, the area was inhabited by Canaanites.

⁷Then the LORD appeared to Abram and said, “I am going to give this land to your offspring.” ⁸And Abram built an altar there to commemorate the LORD’s visit. ⁹After that, Abram traveled southward and set up camp in the hill country between Bethel on the west and Ai on the east. There he built an altar and worshiped the LORD. ¹⁰Then Abram traveled south by stages toward the Negev.

¹⁰At that time there was a severe famine in the land, so Abram went down to Egypt to wait it out. ¹¹As he was approaching the borders of Egypt, Abram said to Sarai, “You are a very beautiful woman. ¹²When the Egyptians see you, they will say, ‘This is his wife. Let’s kill him; then we can have her!’ ¹³But if you say you are my sister, then the Egyptians will treat me well because of their interest in you, and they will spare my life.”

¹⁴And sure enough, when they arrived in Egypt, everyone spoke of her beauty. ¹⁵When the palace officials saw her, they sang her praises to their king, the pharaoh, and she was taken into his harem. ¹⁶Then Pharaoh gave Abram many gifts because of her—sheep, cattle, donkeys, male and female servants, and camels.

¹⁷But the LORD sent a terrible plague upon Pharaoh’s household because of Sarai, Abram’s wife. ¹⁸So Pharaoh called for Abram and accused him sharply. “What is this you have done to me?” he demanded. “Why didn’t you tell me she was your wife? ¹⁹Why were you willing to let me marry her, say-

ing she was your sister? Here is your wife! Take her and be gone!” ²⁰Pharaoh then sent them out of the country under armed escort—Abram and his wife, with all their household and belongings.

CHAPTER 13 ABRAHAM AND LOT SEPARATE. So they left Egypt and traveled north into the Negev—Abram with his wife and Lot and all that they owned, ²for Abram was very rich in livestock, silver, and gold. ³Then they continued traveling by stages toward Bethel, to the place between Bethel and Ai where they had camped before. ⁴This was the place where Abram had built the altar, and there he again worshiped the LORD.

⁵Now Lot, who was traveling with Abram, was also very wealthy with sheep, cattle, and many tents. ⁶But the land could not support both Abram and Lot with all their flocks and herds living so close together. There were too many animals for the available pastureland. ⁷So an argument broke out between the herdsmen of

ABRAHAM

As you read about Abraham’s life, you will probably ask: “What on earth made God like this man so much?” Abraham made a lot of mistakes, and some of his mistakes had long-range consequences.

Yet what you will find if you read carefully is that in spite of his mistakes, Abraham trusted God with his life. This is the main fact the Bible tells us about him in both the Old and New Testaments (Genesis 15:6; Romans 4:3).

Early in life, Abraham had to make an important decision. God asked him to choose between staying at home or following God’s leading. It was a choice between doing what Abraham wanted to do or doing what God wanted Abraham to do.

Of course Abraham couldn’t see how much of future history was resting on his decision, but God used Abraham’s obedience to affect millions of people. It was through Abraham that the Jewish nation developed and eventually Jesus Christ came into the world.

God gives us exactly the same choice he gave Abraham. Once Abraham gave his life to God, he never tried to take it back. He may have taken some wrong turns on the journey . . . but he never turned around. What have you decided about the choice God has given you? Is your basic desire to trust God and live his way, or is your goal to live life your way?

LESSONS: God desires dependence, trust, and faith in him—not faith in our ability to please him

God’s plan from the beginning has been to make himself known to all people

KEY VERSE: “And Abram believed the LORD, and the LORD declared him righteous because of his faith” (Genesis 15:6).

Abraham’s story is told in Genesis 11–25. He is also mentioned in Exodus 2:24; Acts 7:2-8; Romans 4; Galatians 3; Hebrews 6–7:11.

UPS:

- His faith pleased God
- Became the founder of the Jewish nation
- Was a successful and wealthy rancher
- Usually avoided conflicts, but when they happened he let his opponent set the rules for settling the disputes

DOWN:

- Had a lifelong tendency to lie when under pressure

STATS:

- Where: Born in Ur of the Chaldeans; spent most of his life in the land of Canaan
- Occupation: Wealthy livestock owner
- Relatives: Brothers: Nahor and Haran. Father: Terah. Wife: Sarah. Nephew: Lot. Sons: Ishmael and Isaac.
- Contemporaries: Abimelech, Melchizedek

FAMILY FEUD ●●●●●

13:5-9 Facing a potential conflict with his nephew Lot, Abram took the initiative in settling the dispute. He gave Lot first choice and showed a willingness to risk being cheated. Abram's example shows us how to respond to difficult family situations: (1) take the initiative in resolving conflicts; (2) let others have first choice, even if that means not getting what we want; (3) put family peace above personal desires.

Abram and Lot. At that time Canaanites and Perizzites were also living in the land.

⁸Then Abram talked it over with Lot. "This arguing between our herdsmen has got to stop," he said. "After all, we are close relatives! ⁹I'll tell you what we'll do. Take your choice of any section of the land you want, and we will separate. If you want that area over there, then I'll stay here. If you want to stay in this area, then I'll move on to another place."

¹⁰Lot took a long look at the fertile plains of the Jordan Valley in the direction of Zoar. The whole area was well watered everywhere, like the garden of the LORD or the beautiful land of Egypt. (This was before the LORD had destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah.) ¹¹Lot chose that land for himself—the Jordan Valley to the east of them. He went there with his flocks and servants and parted company with his uncle Abram. ¹²So while Abram stayed in the land of Canaan, Lot moved his tents to a place near Sodom, among the cities of the plain. ¹³The people of this area were unusually wicked and sinned greatly against the LORD.

¹⁴After Lot was gone, the LORD said to Abram, "Look as far as you can see in every direction. ¹⁵I am going to give all this land to you and your offspring* as a permanent possession. ¹⁶And I am going to give you so many descendants that, like dust, they cannot be counted! ¹⁷Take a walk in every direction and explore the new possessions I am giving you." ¹⁸Then Abram moved his camp to the oak grove owned by Mamre, which is at Hebron. There he built an altar to the LORD.

CHAPTER 14 **ABRAM RESCUES LOT.** About this time war broke out in the region. King Amraphel of Babylonia,* King Arioch of Ellasar, King Kedorlaomer of Elam, and King Tidal of Goiim ²fought against King Bera of Sodom, King Birsha of Gomorrah, King Shinab of Admah, King Shemeber of Zeboiim, and the king of Bela (now called Zoar).

³The kings of Sodom, Gomorrah, Admah, Zeboiim, and Bela formed an alliance and mobilized their armies in Siddim Valley (that is, the valley of the Dead Sea*). ⁴For twelve years they had all been subject to King Kedorlaomer, but now in the thirteenth year they rebelled.

⁵One year later, Kedorlaomer and his allies arrived. They conquered the Rephaites in Ashteroth-karnaim, the Zuzites in Ham, the Emites in the

plain of Kiriathaim, ⁶and the Horites in Mount Seir, as far as El-paran at the edge of the wilderness. ⁷Then they swung around to En-mishpat (now called Kadesh) and destroyed the Amalekites, and also the Amorites living in Hazazon-tamar.

⁸But now the army of the kings of Sodom, Gomorrah, Admah, Zeboiim, and Bela (now called Zoar) prepared for battle in the valley of the Dead Sea* ⁹against King Kedorlaomer of Elam and the kings of Goiim, Babylonia, and Ellasar—four kings against five. ¹⁰As it happened, the valley was filled with tar pits. And as the army of the kings of Sodom and Gomorrah fled, some slipped into the tar pits, while the rest escaped into the mountains. ¹¹The victorious invaders then plundered Sodom and Gomorrah and began their long journey home, taking all the wealth and food with them. ¹²They also captured Lot—Abram's nephew who lived in Sodom—and took everything he owned. ¹³One of the men who escaped came and told Abram the Hebrew, who was camped at the oak grove belonging to Mamre the Amorite. Mamre and his relatives, Eshcol and Aner, were Abram's allies.

¹⁴When Abram learned that Lot had been captured, he called together the men born into his household, 318 of them in all. He chased after Kedorlaomer's army until he caught up with them in Dan. ¹⁵There he divided his men and attacked during the night from several directions. Kedorlaomer's army fled, but Abram chased them to Hobah, north of Damascus. ¹⁶Abram and his allies recovered everything—the goods that had been taken, Abram's nephew Lot with his possessions, and all the women and other captives.

¹⁷As Abram returned from his victory over Kedorlaomer and his allies, the king of Sodom came out to meet him in the valley of Shaveh (that is, the King's Valley). ¹⁸Then Melchizedek, the king of Salem and a priest of God Most High, brought him bread and wine. ¹⁹Melchizedek blessed Abram with this blessing:

"Blessed be Abram by God Most High,
Creator of heaven and earth.

²⁰And blessed be God Most High,
who has helped you conquer your enemies."

Then Abram gave Melchizedek a tenth of all the goods he had recovered.

GETTING IT RIGHT ●●●●●

15:6 Although Abram had been demonstrating his faith through his actions, it was simply believing the Lord that made Abram right with God (Romans 4:1-5). We too can have a right relationship with God by trusting him with our lives. Our outward actions—church attendance, prayer, good deeds—will not by themselves make us right with God. A right relationship is based on faith—the heartfelt inner confidence that God is who he says he is and does what he says he will do. Right actions follow naturally as by-products.

13:15 Hebrew *seed*. 14:1 Hebrew *Shinar*; also in 14:9. 14:3 Hebrew *Salt Sea*. 14:8 Hebrew in *Siddim Valley*; see 14:3.

²¹The king of Sodom told him, “Give back my people who were captured. But you may keep for yourself all the goods you have recovered.”

²²Abram replied, “I have solemnly promised the LORD, God Most High, Creator of heaven and earth, ²³that I will not take so much as a single thread or sandal thong from you. Otherwise you might say, ‘I am the one who made Abram rich!’ ²⁴All I’ll accept is what these young men of mine have already eaten. But give a share of the goods to my allies—Aner, Eshcol, and Mamre.”

CHAPTER 15 GOD’S COVENANT WITH ABRAM. Afterward the LORD spoke to Abram in a vision and said to him, “Do not be afraid, Abram, for I will protect you, and your reward will be great.”

²But Abram replied, “O Sovereign LORD, what good are all your blessings when I don’t even have a son? Since I don’t have a son, Eliezer of Damascus, a servant in my household, will inherit all my wealth. ³You have given me no children, so one of my servants will have to be my heir.”

⁴Then the LORD said to him, “No, your servant will not be your heir, for you will have a son of your own to inherit everything I am giving you.” ⁵Then the LORD brought Abram outside beneath the night sky and told him, “Look up into the heavens and count the stars if you can. Your descendants will be like that—too many to count!” ⁶And Abram believed the LORD, and the LORD declared him righteous because of his faith. ⁷Then the LORD told him, “I am the LORD who brought you out of Ur of the Chaldeans to give you this land.”

⁸But Abram replied, “O Sovereign LORD, how can I be sure that you will give it to me?”

⁹Then the LORD told him, “Bring me a three-year-old heifer, a three-year-old female goat, a three-year-old ram, a turtle dove, and a young pigeon.” ¹⁰Abram took all these and killed them. He cut each one down the middle and laid the halves side by side. He did not, however, divide the birds in half. ¹¹Some vultures

came down to eat the carcasses, but Abram chased them away. ¹²That evening, as the sun was going down, Abram fell into a deep sleep. He saw a terrifying vision of darkness and horror.

¹³Then the LORD told Abram, “You can be sure that your descendants will be strangers in a foreign land, and they will be oppressed as slaves for four hundred years. ¹⁴But I will punish the nation that enslaves them, and in the end they will come away with great wealth. ¹⁵(But you will die in peace, at a ripe old age.) ¹⁶After four generations your descendants will return here to this land, when the sin of the Amorites has run its course.”

¹⁷As the sun went down and it became dark, Abram saw a smoking firepot and a flaming torch pass between the halves of the carcasses. ¹⁸So the LORD made a covenant with Abram that day and said, “I have given this land to your descendants, all the way from the border of Egypt* to the great Euphrates River—¹⁹the

LOT Some people simply drift through life. They don’t really make choices; they just take the easiest way. Usually, that choice turns out to be the wrong way. Lot, Abram’s nephew, was a person like this. His life can help keep us from being drifters.

While still young, Lot lost his father. This must have been a difficult time for him, but he was loved and cared for by his grandfather Terah and his uncle Abram. Though they were good examples, Lot’s life was full of unwise decisions. Despite Abram’s attention and God’s help, Lot went his own way.

By the time Lot drifted out of the picture, his life had taken an ugly turn. He had become so blended into the culture of his day that he did not want to leave it. His wife was killed during Lot’s narrow escape, and his daughters committed incest with him. His drifting finally led him to destruction.

God gives us hope by showing us how he can bring good out of even failure and evil. The New Testament describes Lot as a righteous man (2 Peter 2:7-8). Even though he didn’t do much about the evil surrounding him, it still bothered him deeply. And Ruth—a descendant of Moab, the child born from the incest between Lot and one of his daughters—was an ancestor of Jesus Christ.

What is the direction of your life? Are you headed toward God or away from him? If you find it easy to drift, the choice to live for God may seem difficult, but it is the one choice that makes life fit together.

LESSON: God wants us to do more than drift through life; he wants people to be an influence for him

KEY VERSE: “When Lot still hesitated, the angels seized his hand and the hands of his wife and two daughters and rushed them to safety outside the city, for the LORD was merciful” (Genesis 19:16).

Lot’s story is told in Genesis 11–14; 19. He is also mentioned in Deuteronomy 2:9; Luke 17:28-32; 2 Peter 2:7-8.



UPS:

- He was a successful businessman
- Peter calls him a righteous man (2 Peter 2:7-8)

DOWN:

- When faced with decisions, he tended to put off deciding, then chose the easiest course of action
- When given a choice, his first reaction was to think of himself

STATS:

- Where: Lived first in Ur of the Chaldeans, then moved to Canaan with Abram
- Occupation: Wealthy sheep and cattle rancher, city official
- Relatives: Father: Haran. Adopted by Abram when his father died. The name of his wife, who turned into a pillar of salt, is not mentioned.

15:18 Hebrew the river of Egypt, referring either to an eastern branch of the Nile River or to the brook of Egypt in the Sinai (see Num 34:5).

land of the Kenites, Kenizzites, Kadmonites,²⁰Hittites, Perizzites, Rephaites,²¹Amorites, Canaanites, Girgashites, and Jebusites.”

CHAPTER 16 THE BIRTH OF ISHMAEL. But Sarai, Abram’s wife, had no children. So Sarai took her servant, an Egyptian woman named Hagar,² and gave her to Abram so she could bear his children. ³“The LORD has kept me from having any children,” Sarai said to Abram. ⁴“Go and sleep with my servant. Perhaps I can have children through her.” And Abram agreed. ⁵So Sarai, Abram’s wife, took Hagar the Egyptian servant and gave her to Abram as a wife. (This happened ten years after Abram first arrived in the land of Canaan.)

⁶So Abram slept with Hagar, and she became pregnant. When Hagar knew she was pregnant, she began to treat her mistress Sarai with contempt. ⁷Then Sarai said to Abram, “It’s all your fault! Now this servant of mine is pregnant, and she despises me, though I myself gave her the privilege of sleeping with you. The LORD will make you pay for doing this to me!”⁸

⁹Abram replied, “Since she is your servant, you may deal with her as you see fit.” So Sarai treated her harshly, and Hagar ran away.

¹⁰The angel of the LORD found Hagar beside a desert spring along the road to Shur. ¹¹The angel said to her, “Hagar, Sarai’s servant, where have you come from, and where are you going?”

RUNAWAY ● ● ● ● ●

16:8 As Hagar was running away from her mistress and her problem, the Angel of the Lord gave her this advice: (1) return and face Sarai, the cause of her problem, and (2) submit to Sarai’s authority. Hagar needed to work on her attitude toward Sarai, no matter how justified it may have been. Running away from our problems rarely solves them. It is wise to face our problems squarely, accept God’s promise of help, correct our attitude, and act as we should.

“I am running away from my mistress,” she replied.

⁹Then the angel of the LORD said, “Return to your mistress and submit to her authority.” ¹⁰The angel added, “I will give you more descendants than you can count.” ¹¹And the angel also said, “You are now pregnant and will give birth to a son. You are to name him Ishmael,* for the LORD has heard about your misery. ¹²This son of yours will be a wild one—free and untamed as a wild donkey! He will be against everyone, and everyone will be against him. Yes, he will live at odds with the rest of his brothers.”

¹³Thereafter, Hagar referred to the LORD, who had spoken to her, as ¹⁴“the God who sees me,”* for she said, “I have seen the One who sees me!” ¹⁵Later that well was named Beer-lahairoi,* and it can still be found between Kadesh and Bered.

REASON ENOUGH ● ● ● ● ●

17:1 The Lord told Abram, “I am God Almighty; serve me faithfully and live a blameless life.” God has the same message for us today. We are to obey him because he is God—that is reason enough. If you don’t think the benefits are worth it, consider who God is—the only one with the power and ability to meet your every need.

¹⁵So Hagar gave Abram a son, and Abram named him Ishmael. ¹⁶Abram was eighty-six years old at that time.

CHAPTER 17 GOD’S COVENANT WITH ABRAM. When Abram was ninety-nine years old, the LORD appeared to him and said, “I am God Almighty; serve me faithfully and live a blameless life. ²I will make a covenant with you, by which I will guarantee to make you into a mighty nation.” ³At this, Abram fell face down in the dust. Then God said to him, ⁴“This is my covenant with you: I will make you the father of not just one nation, but a multitude of nations! ⁵What’s more, I am changing your name. It will no longer be Abram; now you will be known as Abraham,* for you will be the father of many nations. ⁶I will give you millions of descendants who will represent many nations. Kings will be among them!

⁷“I will continue this everlasting covenant between us, generation after generation. It will continue between me and your offspring* forever. And I will always be your God and the God of your descendants after you. ⁸Yes, I will give all this land of Canaan to you and to your offspring forever. And I will be their God.

⁹“Your part of the agreement,” God told Abraham, “is to obey the terms of the covenant. You and all your descendants have this continual responsibility. ¹⁰This is the covenant that you and your descendants must keep: Each male among you must be circumcised; ¹¹the flesh of his foreskin must be cut off. This will be a sign that you and they have accepted this covenant. ¹²Every male child must be circumcised on the eighth day after his birth. This applies not only to members of your family, but also to the servants born in your household and the foreign-born servants whom you have purchased. ¹³All must be circumcised. Your bodies will thus bear the mark of my everlasting covenant. ¹⁴Anyone who refuses to be circumcised will be cut off from the covenant family for violating the covenant.”

¹⁵Then God added, “Regarding Sarai, your wife—her name will no longer be Sarai; from now on you will call her Sarah.* ¹⁶And I will bless her and give you a son from her! Yes, I will bless her richly, and she will become the mother of many nations. Kings will be among her descendants!”

¹⁷Then Abraham bowed down to the ground, but he laughed to himself in disbelief. “How could I become a father at the age of one hundred?” he wondered. “Besides, Sarah is ninety; how could she

16:5 Hebrew *Let the LORD judge between you and me.* 16:11 Ishmael means “God bears.” 16:13 Hebrew *El-roi.* 16:14 Beer-lahairoi means “well of the Living One who sees me.” 17:5 Abram means “exalted father”; Abraham means “father of many.” 17:7 Hebrew *seed*; also in 17:8. 17:15 Sarah means “princess.”

have a baby?"¹⁸ And Abraham said to God, "Yes, may Ishmael enjoy your special blessing!"

¹⁹But God replied, "Sarah, your wife, will bear you a son. You will name him Isaac,* and I will confirm my everlasting covenant with him and his descendants.²⁰ As for Ishmael, I will bless him also, just as you have asked. I will cause him to multiply and become a great nation. Twelve princes will be among his descendants.²¹ But my covenant is with Isaac, who will be born to you and Sarah about this time next year."

²²That ended the conversation, and God left Abraham.²³ On that very day Abraham took his son Ishmael and every other male in his household and circumcised them, cutting off their foreskins, exactly as God had told him.²⁴ Abraham was ninety-nine years old at that time,²⁵ and Ishmael his son was thirteen.²⁶ Both were circumcised the same day,²⁷ along with all the other men and boys of the household, whether they were born there or bought as servants.

CHAPTER 18 **ANGELS VISIT ABRAHAM.** The LORD appeared again to Abraham while he was camped near the oak grove belonging to Mamre. One day about noon, as Abraham was sitting at the entrance to his tent,¹ he suddenly noticed three men standing nearby. He got up and ran to meet them, welcoming them by bowing low to the ground.² "My lord," he said, "if it pleases you, stop here for a while.³ Rest in the shade of this tree while my servants get some water to wash your feet.⁴ Let me prepare some food to refresh you. Please stay awhile before continuing on your journey."

"All right," they said. "Do as you have said."

⁶So Abraham ran back to the tent and said to Sarah, "Quick! Get three measures* of your best flour, and bake some bread."⁷ Then Abraham ran out to the herd and chose a fat calf and told a servant to hurry and butcher it.⁸ When the food was ready, he took some cheese curds and milk and the roasted meat, and he served it to the men. As they ate, Abraham waited on them there beneath the trees.

⁹"Where is Sarah, your wife?" they asked him.

"In the tent," Abraham replied.

¹⁰Then one of them said, "About this time next year I will return, and your wife Sarah will have a son."

Now Sarah was listening to this conversation from the tent nearby.¹¹ And since Abraham and Sarah were both very old, and Sarah was long past the age of having children,¹² she laughed silently to herself. "How could a worn-out woman like me have a baby?" she thought. "And when my master—my husband—is also so old?"

¹³Then the LORD said to Abraham, "Why did Sarah laugh? Why did she say, 'Can an old woman like me have a baby?'"¹⁴ Is anything too hard for the LORD? About a year from now, just as I told you, I will return, and Sarah will have a son."¹⁵ Sarah was afraid, so she denied that she had laughed. But he said, "That is not true. You did laugh."

17:19 Isaac means "he laughs." 18:6 Hebrew 3 *seahs*, about 15 quarts or 18 liters.



¹⁶Then the men got up from their meal and started on toward Sodom. Abraham went with them part of the way.

¹⁷"Should I hide my plan from Abraham?" the LORD asked.¹⁸ "For Abraham will become a great and mighty nation, and all the nations of the earth will be blessed through him.¹⁹ I have singled him out so that he will direct his sons and their families to keep the way of the LORD and do what is right and just. Then I will do for him all that I have promised."²⁰ So the LORD told Abraham, "I have heard that the people of Sodom and Gomorrah are extremely evil, and that everything they do is wicked.²¹ I am going down to see whether or not these reports are true. Then I will know."

²²The two other men went on toward Sodom, but the LORD remained with Abraham for a while.²³ Abraham approached him and said, "Will you destroy both innocent and guilty alike?"²⁴ Suppose you find fifty innocent people there within the city—will you still destroy it, and not spare it for their sakes?²⁵ Surely you wouldn't do such a thing, destroying the innocent with the guilty. Why, you would be treating the innocent and the guilty exactly the same! Surely you wouldn't do that! Should not the Judge of all the earth do what is right?"

²⁶And the LORD replied, "If I find fifty innocent people in Sodom, I will spare the entire city for their sake."

LYING ●●●●●

18:15 Sarah lied because she was afraid of being discovered. Fear is the most common motive for lying. We are afraid that our inner thoughts and emotions will be exposed or our wrongdoings discovered. But lying causes greater complications than telling the truth and brings even more problems. If God can't be trusted with our innermost thoughts and fears, we are in greater trouble than we first imagined.