

## **A Study of the BOOK OF GENESIS**

“Now the LORD said to Abram, "Go forth from your country, and from your relatives, and from your father's house, to the land which I will show you. And I will make you a great nation, and I will bless you, and make your name great; and so you shall be a blessing. And I will bless those who bless you, and the one who curses you I will curse. And in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed."”

*-Genesis 12:1-3*

By Dr. Bob Reed

for

*Fellowship of Christian University Students (FOCUS)  
Wildwood Community Church*

NOTE: Additional copies of this study may be obtained from:  
[www.wildwoodfocus.org/genesis.html](http://www.wildwoodfocus.org/genesis.html)

## **INSTRUCTIONS**

**This study is formatted to be a daily study of Genesis to be done over a period of 11 weeks. I have tried to design questions that will require, on average, about 20 minutes a day to answer. That being said, please remember that the death of a good Bible study is a legalistic adherence to a “list” or schedule. Godly discipline requires a sensitivity to what the Holy Spirit wants to teach us. If you find yourself being led in a direction different from where my questions would take you, forget my questions, and listen to the “higher authority.” Most of all, enjoy the Word of God. There is no book like it in all of creation.**

*Note: I would very much appreciate any suggestions you might have to improve this study. Feedback on whether the questions are too vague, take too long to answer, are too academic, etc. is very much appreciated. Feel free to email me any thoughts you might have as they come up. My email address is [breed@ou.edu](mailto:breed@ou.edu). Thanks!*

## **BRIEF BACKGROUND NOTES ON GENESIS**

**Who wrote it?** The Book of Genesis does not explicitly identify who wrote it. Jewish tradition says that Moses was the author. This view is substantially strengthened by the fact that Jesus also identified Moses as the author (cf. Mark 12:26, John 5:46).

**When was it written?** A common dating of the book of Genesis is between 1440 and 1400 B.C., though other dates have also been hypothesized.

**Where does the name of the book come from?** Genesis takes its name from the first word of the original Hebrew text, which means “in the beginning of.”

**Why was it written?** Genesis is the first of five books known as the “Pentateuch,” which comprise the first five books of the Old Testament. While there are many themes in Genesis, a key theme is the idea of “covenants,” special agreements between two parties. The most important covenants in Genesis are those between God and man. In these covenants we see God’s character and purposes revealed. We learn that God created a world designed especially for man and woman. When humans failed to maintain their part of the relationship, God began a plan to salvage man from his own failures, and prepare a way for which the God-man relationship could be restored. We also see the two great New Testament themes of “faith” and “grace” previewed in this, the first book of the Old Testament. And through it all, Genesis supplies tantalizing “pictures/types” of God’s future plans for mankind. Most prominent among these is the coming of the Messiah, Jesus Christ.

## WEEK ONE: Genesis 1:1-2:25

***NOTE:** It is not the intent of this devotional study to get into the scientific details of creation. You probably wonder how evolution relates to the Bible's creation account. To address this and other issues, we have included a separate, optional section at the end of this week's study that tries to anticipate your questions and respond with scientifically honest answers, along with suggestions for further reading.*

### **Day One:**

1. Prepare your heart to be taught by God. Pray that God would cause the "eyes of your heart to be enlightened" (Ephesians 1:18) and that you would be responsive to the things God wants you to learn.
2. Read Genesis 1:1-2:25.
3. In the space below, briefly summarize the main events/actions/ideas contained in this week's Scripture reading. For example, one such summary of Genesis 1:1-2:25 is given below:

*God creates the world in "six days." When it is first created, the earth is "formless and empty with darkness on its surface." From this primordial earth, God formed the atmosphere, the continents and oceans, and populated the earth with plant and animal life, and then, finally, created man "in the image of God." On the "seventh day," God "rested."*

*The story then zooms in on God's creation and provision for the first man and woman. God prepares a "garden" for them in the land of Eden. He first creates man, and then has man name all the animals. In doing so, man discovers that there is no animal that can be a "suitable helper" for him. So God creates woman. The account closes with man and woman naked before God and unashamed.*

Write your own summary in the space below.

## **Day Two:**

1. Prepare your heart before God. Pray that God would teach you from His Word, and that you would be responsive to His teaching.
2. Read Genesis 1:1-2:25 again.

*Biblical Note #1:* Note the perspective of the narrative that begins in 1:2. The Spirit of God is hovering over the surface of the waters on the face of the earth. This serves as the indicator to our vantage point for the rest of the creation account that will follow. It lets us know that the formlessness, emptiness, and darkness that are described here are what was present on the surface of the earth. There is no definitive statement about the state of the rest of the universe at this time. It is quite probable (as we will see later), that in this time “of the beginning” God had already created the rest of the universe (including the sun, moon, and stars). It is only the earth and its inhabitants that are here being created.

*Biblical Note #2:* Genesis 1:11-13 states that God created plant life on the “third day” of creation. Genesis 1:14-19 states that God made the sun on the “fourth day” of creation. But how could plant life exist before the sun was created? The answer lies in the fact that the sun was created earlier. Most Biblical scholars believe that the sun, moon, and stars were created before day one, when God created “the heavens and the earth” in Genesis 1:1. In contrast, Genesis 1:14-19 speaks about an ordering of the interaction of the sun and the earth resulting in “seasons, days, and years.” But doesn’t it say that God “made” the sun, moon, and stars on the “fourth day” (Genesis 1:16f.)? It is important to note that Hebrew has no past perfect tense. Thus, 1:16 could just as well be translated, “God *had made* two great lights...” See the footnote below for a more detailed discussion.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> The following discussion comes from the *NIV Bible Commentary* in the *Zondervan Reference Software*: “The narration of events on the fourth day raises several questions. If the text states that the sun, moon, and stars were created on the fourth day, how could “the heavens and the earth,” which would have included the sun, moon, and stars, have been created “in the beginning” (v. 1)? ... Were there plants and vegetation on the land (created on the third day) before the creation of the sun? A common viewpoint is that though “the heavens and the earth” were created “in the beginning,” they were not completed until the fourth day or were even possibly obscured by the waters until the fourth day.

There is another way to look at this text that provides a coherent reading of Genesis 1:1 and 1:14-18. First, if “the heavens and the earth” means “universe” or “cosmos,” as is most probable, then (as already suggested) the whole of the universe--including the sun, moon, and stars--was created “in the beginning” and not on the fourth day.

The second step concerns the syntax of v. 14. Verse 6 suggests that when God said, “Let there be an expanse,” he was in fact creating an expanse where there was none previously (“creation out of nothing”). So clearly the author intended to say that God created the expanse on the second day. In v. 14, however, God does not say, “Let there be lights . . . to separate,” as if there were no lights before this command and afterward the lights were created. Rather the Hebrew text reads, “And God said, ‘Let the lights in the expanse of the sky separate.’” In other words, God’s command assumes that the lights were in existence and that in response to his command they were given a purpose, namely, “to separate the day from the night” and “to mark seasons and days and years.”

A third observation comes from the structure of vv. 15-16. At the end of v. 15, the author recounts, “and it was so.” This expression marks the end of the author’s “report” and the beginning of his “comment.”

*Biblical Note #3:* Genesis 2:4 does not begin another creation account! There is only one creation account in Genesis. Genesis 2:4a (“This is the account of the heavens and the earth when they were created”) is viewed by many scholars as the concluding statement of the creation account that began in Genesis 1:1. Genesis 2:4b-f. focuses on God’s provision for man in the garden of Eden.

*Biblical Note #4:* Genesis 2:5,6 make it sound like there were no plants before man, yet the creation account of Chapter 1 clearly states that plant life was created on the “third day”, and man was created later on the “sixth day.” What gives? Genesis 2:5,6 refers to “cultivated” plants. “Vegetation” was created on “day three.” “Plants” and “shrubs of the field,” i.e., cultivated plants, did not come into being until after the creation of man.

3. What observations do you have of Genesis 1:1-2:25? What most stands out to you about what you read this week?

4. Think of some questions that might lead to an important spiritual “discovery.”

For example, you might ask, “What was God’s purpose in creating “the heavens and the earth?”

Write your questions in the space below, then pray that God would answer your question(s).

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Thus v. 16 is not an account of the creation of the sun, moon, and stars on the fourth day but a remark that draws out the significance of what has previously been recounted: "So God [and not anyone else] made the lights and put them into the sky" (personal translation). Behind this narrative is a concern on the part of the author to emphasize that God alone created the lights of the heavens, and thus no one else (and certainly no other god) is to be given the glory and honor due only to him."

### **Day Three:**

1. Prepare your heart before God. Pray that God would teach you from His Word, and that you would be responsive to His teaching.
2. Read Genesis 1:1-2:25 again.
3. Write down *every verse* that communicates something about the character of God, along with a brief statement summarizing that truth. For example, Genesis 1:1 teaches that God existed before “the heavens and the earth.” Genesis 1:3 teaches that God is so powerful He made “light” merely by speaking it into existence. You take it from here!
  
4. Several commentators note that when Genesis states “And God saw that it was good” (e.g. Genesis 1:10b), it means that God affirmed that His creation was good/beneficial *for man*.<sup>2</sup> What do you think about this interpretation? Does it seem reasonable? What insight does this give this into the character of God?

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<sup>2</sup> The *NIV Bible Commentary* in the *Zondervan Reference Software* says this, “The “good” (GK H3202) is that which is *beneficial* for the human race. On the second day (vv. 6-8) the narrative does not say that “God saw that it was good,” for on that day nothing was created or made that was directly “good” or beneficial for humankind. The heavens were made and the waters divided, but the land where people were to dwell remained hidden under the “deep.” Only on the third day, when the sea was parted and the dry land appeared, does the word “good” (GK H3202) again appear (v. 10). Throughout chapter 1 God is depicted as the one who both knows what is “good” for the human race and is intent on providing the good for them. Thus the author prepares the reader for the tragedy of chapter 3, where the rebellious attempt by man and woman to gain the knowledge of “good and evil” for themselves is seen not only as sin but also as folly.”

5. What is significant about the fact that the creation account of Chapter 1 lists as God's final creative act the creation of man (cf. Genesis 1:27)? What insight does this give into why God created the "heavens and the earth?"

**Day Four:**

1. Prepare your heart before God. Pray that God would teach you from His Word, and that you would be responsive to His teaching.
2. Read Genesis 2:2,3.
3. Confirm that at the end of each of the first "six days," the Bible states, "And there was evening, and there was morning--the first day," etc. (cf. Genesis 1:5, 1:8, 1:13; 1:19; 1:23; 1:31). What does the Bible say about the "seventh day?" What is significant about this?
4. Genesis 2:2,3 states that God "rested" on the "seventh day." What insight does this give us into the character of God?
- 5A. God's rest on the "seventh day" raises the intriguing question of the spiritual implications of "Sabbath", or rest. Consider the following verses:

Hebrews 4:8-11a: *"For if Joshua had given them rest, He would not have spoken of another day after that. There remains therefore a Sabbath rest for the people of God. **For the one who has entered His rest has himself also rested from his works, as God did from His. Let us therefore be diligent to enter that rest.**"*

Matthew 11:28-30: *"Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and **I will give you rest.** Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and **you will find rest for your souls.** For my yoke is easy and my burden is light."*

John 15:4,5: *"**Abide in Me**, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, unless it abides in the vine, so neither can you, unless you abide in Me. I am the vine, you are the branches; he who abides in Me, and I in him, he bears much fruit; for apart from Me you can do nothing."*

- 5B. In light of the preceding verses, what does "God's rest" mean for your life?

**Day Five:**

1. Prepare your heart before God. Pray that God would teach you from His Word, and that you would be responsive to His teaching.
2. Read Genesis 1:1-2:25 again.
3. Write down *every verse* that communicates something about the nature of man, along with a brief statement summarizing that truth. For example, Genesis 1:27 states that God made man in “His own image.” Genesis 1:28 teaches that man was created to “subdue” the earth and “rule” over every living thing that moves on the earth. Now you do the rest!

4A. What is the significance of the fact that man was created in “God’s own image?”

4B. What implication does this have for how you view yourself?

4C. What implication does this have for how you view your relationship to/with God?

5. Read Psalm 139:13-16. These verses were written by King David long after the time of Adam and Eve. What do they have to say about how God views YOU?

### **Day Six:**

1. Prepare your heart before God. Pray that God would teach you from His Word, and that you would be responsive to His teaching.
2. Read Genesis 2:15.

*Biblical Note #1:* The Hebrew word that is translated “put” in Genesis 2:15 has the idea of rest/safety associated with it. For example, the same Hebrew word is translated “rest” in Joshua 23:1: “*Now it came about after many days, when the LORD had given rest to Israel from all their enemies on every side...*”

*Biblical Note #2:* The NASB and NIV translations state that man was put into the garden to “cultivate it” (NASB) / “work it” (NIV). However, this can be misleading. The first mention of difficult/frustrating work comes after the Fall, when man was forced to get his food through “painful toil” (Genesis 3:17) and by the “sweat of his brow” (cf. Genesis 3:19). In contrast, the garden in which God originally placed man was abundant with fruit-bearing trees. Thus, while there was work to do in the garden, it was of a different kind than what awaited man outside the garden.

It is interesting to note that the Hebrew word translated “cultivate/work” is most frequently translated “worship/serve” elsewhere in the Bible. For this reason, some commentators advise that a better interpretation of Genesis 2:15 has the idea of God putting man in the garden for the primary purpose of worshipping and serving Him.<sup>3</sup>

- 3A. Read Genesis 2:18-24.

*Biblical Note:* Genesis 2:18 states that woman is created to be a “suitable helper” for man. This may sound demeaning to women, but it is not. The Hebrew word for “helper” (“ezer”) appears 21 times in the Old Testament. Fifteen of those times it refers to God (e.g., Psalms 33:20, 70:5, and 115:9)! Thus, the emphasis in Genesis 2 is not on woman in a subservient role, but on her partnership with man in the tasks that God has for them in the world, though in complementary roles.

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<sup>3</sup> The *NIV Bible Commentary* in the *Zondervan Reference Software* says this, “Most translations have “to work it and take care of it.” Although that translation is as early as the LXX (2d century. B.C.), there are serious objections to it. For one, the suffixed pronoun in the Hebrew text rendered “it” in English is feminine, whereas the noun “garden” is masculine. Only by changing the pronoun to a masculine singular, as the LXX has done, can it have the sense of the English Versions, namely “to work” and “to keep.” Moreover, later in this same narrative (3:23) “to work the ground” is said to be a result of the Fall, and the narrative suggests that the author had intended such a punishment to be seen as an ironic reversal of the man’s original purpose. If such was the case, then “working” and “keeping” the garden would not provide a contrast to “working the ground.” In light of these objections, a more suitable translation would be “to worship and to obey.”

- 3B. Genesis 2:18-24 recounts for us the creation of woman, as a separate and distinct event from the creation of man. Why do you think God included this separate account of the creation of woman? Why not just say that God created people? Why the details?
- 3C. What do you think God wants us to learn about the relationship between man/woman/marriage from these verses in Genesis?
- 4A. Read Genesis 2:4b-2:25.
- 4B. In your own words, describe man's "original calling." That is, describe what life was supposed to be like for man and woman in the garden.
- 4C. Does this understanding of mankind's "original calling" affect how you view your life today? Should it? Elaborate in the space below.
5. Review this week's study. Did God teach you anything that spiritually impacted you this week? Elaborate in the space below.

## **APPENDICES TO WEEK ONE:**

Over the next few pages, you will find two articles from two different Evangelical Christians regarding an understanding of the Genesis 1 passage correlated with modern scientific evidence for the age of the earth. The first article is from Dr. Mike Strauss, Wildwood elder, and professor of Physics at the University of Oklahoma. Dr. Strauss will present a view of creation that views the earth as “old” with the days of creation being seven periods of time, as opposed to seven 24 hour days. The second article is from James Stambaugh, a graduate of Grace Seminary. Rev. Stambaugh wrote this article in correlation with the Institute for Creation Research, and presents a view of the earth as “young” with the days of creation being seven 24 hour days. Wildwood Community Church does not have an official position on the age of the earth. We ask that you read these articles and think through this issue for yourself. This is not the most critical issue for Christians today, and should not be a cause for division in the Body of Christ. On this issue good evangelical Christians hold to both positions. Understanding these truths, however, can help in correlating Biblical truth with information we process in this world pertaining to creation.

## Genesis, Science, and Creation

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*In this brief article, I will present different Biblical views on the creation account held by evangelical Christians. Still, the conclusions are my personal beliefs based on over 20 years of studying the Biblical record and the record of nature. Certainly, other Christians have come to different conclusions.*

When looking at the Biblical story of creation from a scientific point of view, it is important to carefully observe what the Bible actually says and what it doesn't say. At times, people have set up entire doctrines of creation based on false ideas about what the Bible says. The main thrust of the story of creation is that God created everything by his divine power based on his divine will. Many of the details of the story are not described. It would be impossible to describe the details of the creation of everything in the universe in a short one page description, like that in Genesis.

This short article will focus on answering a few questions: 1) When did God create the heavens and the earth? 2) What do the days of Genesis refer to? 3) Is the order of creation in Genesis consistent with current scientific ideas? 4) What about evolution?

In regards to the first question, the Bible simply does not say when God created the heavens and the earth. The Biblical scholar C. I. Scofield writes, "Scripture gives no data for determining how long ago the universe was created."<sup>4</sup> However, there are two major views among Bible-believing Christians regarding the age of the universe and the earth. Some Christians, "Young Earth Creationists (YEC)," believe that the earth was created about six to ten thousand years ago, while other Christians, "Old Earth Creationists (OEC)," believe that the universe and the earth were created billions of years ago.

The YEC idea is based primarily on two assumptions. The first is that the genealogies in Genesis are complete with no missing generations, and the second is that the days of creation in Genesis are each 24 hours. Both of these assumptions are not necessarily correct. By comparing different Biblical passages that record the same genealogies, it is obvious that Hebrew genealogies are incomplete. For instance, the genealogy of Jesus in Matthew 1:8 skips at least three generations, Ahaziah, Joash, and Amaziah that are recorded in 2 Chronicles 21-26. The genealogy of Genesis 11 skips Cainan (who was a descendent of Arphachshad). Compare the genealogy of Jesus in Luke 3:35, which lists Cainan, with the genealogy in Genesis 11:10-12 that does not list Cainan. Genesis states "...when Shem was 100 years old, he became the father of Arphachshad.... When Arphachshad had lived 35 years he became the father of Shelah..." It is apparent that even when the father's age is given, the son is not necessarily the immediate offspring of the father, but rather a descendent of the father. As C.I. Scofield says, "Genesis 11:10 means that, when Shem was 100 years old, his wife bore a child who was either Arphachshad or an ancestor to Arphachshad. Many links in the chain of ancestry may have been left unmentioned." So although the Biblical genealogies record a chain of ancestors all the way back to Adam and Eve, the Bible does

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<sup>4</sup> All quotes from C.I. Scofield come from comments in *The New Scofield Reference Bible*, 1967.

not say when Adam and Eve lived because the chain of ancestors is not complete, but could have many, many gaps.

The answer to the second major question, “what do the days of Genesis refer to” plays an important role in determining whether or not the Bible gives any information about the age of the earth. The Hebrew word *yom*, translated “day” has many different meanings, just like the English word “day.” Scofield says, “The word ‘day’ is used in Scripture in four ways: (1) that part of the solar day of twenty-four hours which is light (...); (2) a period of twenty-four hours (...); (3) a time set apart for some distinctive purpose, as ‘day of atonement’ (...); and (4) a longer period of time during which certain revealed purposes of God are to be accomplished (...). Cp. Gen 2:4, where the word ‘day’ covers the entire work of creation.” In English we have these same meanings. If I say that something happened in George Washington’s day, I mean a period of time when George Washington lived. It is perfectly reasonable to interpret the days of Genesis as long periods of time. In fact, ancient Hebrew has no other word that could be translated “era” or “epoch” except *yom*. The word *yom* is so widely used in Hebrew to mean a period of time that there are even instances when the various days are numbered (i.e. day one, day two, etc.), and the days in question still refer to a long period of time, (cf. Hosea 6:2 and Zechariah 14:6-8). The Presbyterian Church of America has done a very thorough study on the possible meaning of the “days” of creation and has identified ten possible interpretations of Genesis one (see <http://www.pcanet.org/history/creation/report.html>). Nine of the ten possible interpretations are compatible with OEC. One of the translators of the New American Standard Bible, Gleason Archer, insists that the days of creation can not be 24 hours. He writes, “On the basis of internal evidence, it is this writer’s conviction that *yom* in Genesis one *could not* have been intended by the Hebrew author to mean a literal twenty-four-hour day.”<sup>5</sup>

Even the phrase “evening and morning” in Genesis does not necessarily imply that the days of creation are 24 hours since the terms “evening” and “morning” are often used in Hebrew to indicate a beginning and ending, just as we would say, “the dawn of a new era” which means “the beginning of a new era.” There are other passages in the Bible that mention *both* evening and morning in the very same verse, where these terms do not refer to an actual 24 hour day. For instance, in Psalm 90 Moses uses evening and morning metaphorically to mean the beginning and ending of a human’s life. Of course, Moses is also the author of Genesis so it makes sense that he could have used evening and morning to mean a beginning and an ending in both Genesis and Psalms. C. I. Scofield says, “The use of ‘evening’ and ‘morning’ may be held to limit ‘day’ to the solar day; but the frequent parabolic use of natural phenomena may warrant the conclusion that it simply means that each creative day was a period of time marked off by a beginning and ending (cp. Ps 90:6).” Because we do not know how long the days of Genesis are, we cannot know when God created the heavens and the earth. The bottom line answer to questions (1) and (2), “when did God create the heavens and the earth,” and “what do the days of Genesis refer to” is that we do not know. The Bible is ambiguous about the answer to both questions.

However, the Bible is clear in stating that the record of nature declares God’s power and reveals his character, (Psalm 19:1, Romans 1:20). So possibly the best place to look when trying to answer the question of when God created the heavens and the

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<sup>5</sup> Gleason Archer: A Survey of Old Testament Introduction, 1995.

earth is by looking at the record of nature. The amazing thing about nature is that it reveals a very consistent record regarding the age of the universe through geology, astronomy, physics, and cosmology. Almost all Christian scientists, and all secular scientists see an unambiguous answer to the age of the universe. Nature reveals that the universe is about 14 billion years old and the earth is about 4.5 billion years old. The young earth creationists believes that both Christian and non-Christian scientists have completely misunderstood the record of nature and missed all of the signs pointing to a young universe. Although that is possible, it seems unlikely since Romans 1:20 clearly states that God has created nature in such a way that it should reveal his character even to unbelievers, so that “they are without excuse.”

At first glance, the answer to the 3<sup>rd</sup> question, “Is the order of creation consistent with current scientific ideas,” may seem to be “no.” After all, in the creation account both light and plants appear before the sun, which seems to totally contradict all modern scientific idea. But the key to understanding the story of creation is to notice the perspective described in Genesis. The story of creation must be told from the perspective of someone who was there at the creation. It must be told from God’s perspective. Most people think that God’s perspective would be from outside the universe looking in, but that is not the case. Genesis itself tells where God is and what his perspective is. Genesis 1:2 states, “And the earth was formless and void, and darkness was over the surface of the deep; and *the Spirit of God was moving over the surface of the waters.*” The Spirit of God is moving, or hovering, over the surface of the waters. He is near the surface of the earth. The story of creation is told from God’s perspective, on the surface of the planet earth, not from out in the universe looking down at the planet earth. We must interpret the events of the six days of creation from God’s perspective on the surface of the earth.

In verse 16, we again see that the story of creation is told from the perspective of someone on the surface of the earth. The verse says, “God made the two great lights, the greater light to govern the day, and the lesser light to govern the night.” These two “great lights” are, of course, the sun and the moon. But are the sun and the moon really “great lights?” After all, the sun is just an ordinary star and the moon is a tiny rock in the cosmos. The two objects only appear as great lights from one place in the whole universe, from on the earth. The story of creation only makes sense when you realize that it is told from the perspective of the surface of the earth.

From this perspective on the surface of the earth, the order of events in the story of Genesis perfectly coincides with the order of events as science understands them. For instance, Genesis 1:2 tells us the conditions that existed on the surface of the earth, not those that existed throughout the entire universe. It says that the *earth* is formless and void, and darkness is over the *surface of the deep*, and the Spirit of God is hovering over the surface of the earth that is covered with water. Although the universe and the earth are created in verse 1, most of the story of creation is about what God did to the earth to prepare it for humans.

Now this condition of being formless and empty, with darkness over the surface of the earth is identical to current scientific theories about the conditions on the early earth. When the earth first formed about 4.5 billion years ago, it was formless because it was still very hot and somewhat fluid. It was void because no life existed on it. It was dark on its surface because dust and debris in the atmosphere blocked out the sun, moon, and stars. The sun, moon, and stars, were already created and were in the heavens, but

because of dust and debris, they were not visible on the surface of the earth. Just as the Bible says, we now know that when the earth was first formed, darkness covered its surface. In outer space it would not have been dark at this time. The sun, moon, and stars would have been visible. But the Bible doesn't speak about what the conditions were like in outer space. The Bible only says that it was dark on the surface of the earth. We clearly see God's hand in inspiring these words that it was dark on the surface of the earth, but not necessarily dark in outer space. This careful attention to detail is quite noteworthy. Why would the writer of Genesis chose such careful words, that agree with modern science, unless they are truly inspired of God? If Moses had written that it was dark throughout the universe, skeptics might have dismissed this account of Genesis as a fabrication without reading any farther than verse 2. As it is, we have a remarkable statement about conditions on the earth when God first created it. When we understand that the story of creation is told from God's perspective, as he sees it on the surface of the earth, we see an indication of the inspiration of the Bible and a remarkable agreement between the words of Scripture and the record of nature. Both the Bible and observations of nature agree that the early earth was formless, empty, and dark on its surface.

On day one, God said "let there be light" and light appeared on the surface of the earth. The Hebrew word "*bara*," which means to create something that hasn't existed, is not used in this verse. Nothing new was created on this day. Instead, light appeared on the surface of the earth so that daytime could be distinguished from night time. Before day one, atmospheric and interplanetary debris filled the sky so that it was always dark on the surface of the earth. However, as that debris settled, the sky began to clear. Instead of being completely dark all the time on the surface of the earth, you could now distinguish daytime from night time. But like a cloudy day, you could still not see the sun, moon or stars. God calls the light "day" and he calls the darkness "night." We now have days and nights that are distinguishable on the surface of the earth. The Biblical record of day one completely agrees with the scientific record regarding one of the first events on the early earth. The sky changed from being completely opaque, allowing no light to reach the surface of the earth, to being translucent, allowing light to reach the surface, but still not clear enough to see the heavenly bodies that existed in outer space.

On day four, the sun, moon, and stars appear in the sky. Armed with the knowledge that the story is told from this perspective on the surface of the earth, the mystery of why the sun and moon appear on day four when light appeared on day one can be resolved. It is because the sun, moon, and stars first appeared to someone on the earth on day four even though they had been created by God when he created the heavens and the earth in verse 1. But because the earth had an atmosphere that resembled that of a cloudy day, they could not be seen on its surface until day four. Notice that the Bible does not say that God actually created the lights on day four. It says, "God said, 'Let there be lights in the expanse....'" Dr. Scofield affirms this idea in his Bible notes that describe the appearance of light on day one, "(1:3) Neither here [the appearance of light] nor in vv. 14-18 [the appearance of the sun, moon, and stars] is an original creative act implied. A different word is used. The sense is *made to appear, made visible*. The sun and the moon were created 'in the beginning.' The light came from the sun, of course, but the vapor diffused the light. Later the sun appeared in an unclouded sky."

From the perspective on the surface of the earth, the order of creation events completely agrees with the order that nature reveals to scientists. That order is:

1. The creation of the heavens and the earth. The earth is formless, void, and dark on the surface.
2. Light appears on the surface of the earth as the planetary and interplanetary dust clears
3. The water cycle begins
4. Continents form
5. Plants sprout from the ground
6. The atmosphere becomes transparent, making the sun, moon, and stars visible
7. Fish and birds fill the sea and air
8. Higher life forms fill the sea
9. Large mammals that will interact with humans fill the land
10. Humans are created

This brings us to the final question to be addressed. What about evolution? Christians have come to many different conclusions about this very controversial topic. When scientists speak about evolution, they usually mean that all life has come from a common ancestor through natural, unguided processes, with no purpose or plan. Certainly, this is opposed to what the Bible says, that God has a purpose for creation and that humans are an integral part of that purpose. Scientists usually assume that there is nothing outside of the natural world, and so evolution is wrapped up in a philosophy of naturalism, that there is no supernatural. Certainly, as believers in God, we reject naturalism. Most Christians and even some secular scientists agree that 4.5 billion years is not enough time for naturalistic processes to create life or the diversity of life we see on the earth. So in some sense, evolution is incompatible with Christianity, if we use the definition of evolution that most scientists would use, one that is synonymous with naturalism.

Still, the answer to this question of evolution may not be so simple because the Bible says very little about the mechanism that God used to create different life forms, and humans. The Bible says that God made humans from the dust of the earth, but that doesn't really tell us much about the mechanism. If I say that my car is made from the iron ore of the earth, that doesn't tell you if it was built by hand in my garage or built by robots on an assembly line. Since the Bible is not clear on the mechanism, it would make sense to look at the record of nature for hints about the mechanism.

The record of nature is clear that early life on earth was very simple, and that as time progressed, life became more complex. What the record of nature doesn't indicate is whether or not every new life form that appears is a supernatural creation of God, or the result of some kind of guided evolution. Most Christians believe that every new life form that appears in the fossil record is a supernatural creation by God, but some believe that the diversity of life is the result of some kind of guided, or theistic, evolution. Most scientists would say that "theistic evolution" is an oxymoron since evolution, by their definition, is unguided naturalism. Yet, even C.S. Lewis, in his book *The Problem of Pain*, proposes a scenario in which God uses some kind of guided evolution to create a human body, then breathes into that body the "breath of life" and creates the first spiritual beings on earth, Adam and Eve. Lewis realizes that what separates humans from all other animals is that we are created in the image of God. We have a spirit that can

commune with God, who is also a spirit. In some sense it is not important how God made our physical bodies. It is important to realize that humans are a special creation by God and that our spirit separates us from all other created things on earth.

Scripture teaches certain things that are definitely opposed to modern evolutionary theory.

1. Naturalism cannot account for the origin or diversity of life.
2. The entire universe is created by God, and not the result of simply naturalistic processes.
3. Humans are a special creation of God, created in his image with a spirit.
4. Adam and Eve were literal people, the first humans.

It seems to me that the mechanism God used to create our physical bodies is not that important. What is important is to realize that humans are more than just our physical bodies. We are spirit. It is also important to realize that whatever mechanism was employed, God was intimately involved in the process. Humans are not the result of purely unguided, naturalistic process. The Bible and science agree about some crucial aspects of humanity. Humans are the most recent animal to appear on the earth and the culmination of everything that came before them. The Bible says that God created humans as his final creation on earth. In addition, modern science and the Bible both agree that humans are unique among all of the creatures on the earth. Christians extend that uniqueness to the spiritual aspect of humanity.

God is a truthful God. Whether he reveals himself in nature or in his Word, that revelation should be accurate and consistent. A good, literal reading of the creation account is in good agreement with the facts of nature. The universe had a beginning and its cause was transcendent. Humans were created very recently in the history of the earth, are separate from all other created beings, and are the culmination of God's creative process.

For further study:

- One of the best resources to explore Old Earth Creationism is the organization "Reasons to Believe." They have many good resources including the books listed below that can be found on their web site at <http://www.reasons.org>.
  - A good book on the historical and Biblical understanding of the days of Genesis is *A Matter of Days* by Hugh Ross.
  - A good book on how the big bang actually gives evidence for the God of the Bible is *The Creator and the Cosmos*, by Hugh Ross.
- Other good resources are "Answers in Creation" at <http://www.answersincreation.org>, and "God and Science" at <http://www.godandscience.org>.

## **The Meaning of "Day" in Genesis**

by James Stambaugh, Master of Divinity

### ***Abstract***

The length of the "days" of creation in Genesis has involved a major controversy in Biblical interpretation among evangelicals for over 150 years. Many have sought to redefine the term in light of the naturalistic presuppositions of modern scientism. Therefore, let us attempt, honestly, to examine the evidence from Scripture.

The communication of language is through words and their use. We must ask ourselves why Moses was using the words he did, and not other words. What is the meaning he was trying to communicate to his original audience and to us, as well? Why did Moses use the word "day" and not the more generic term, "time?" Is there any significance to the repeated use of numbers in the account ("first day," "second day," etc.)? Why are these "days" bounded by the terms, "evening and morning?" As we examine the text of Genesis 1, answers to these questions become clear.

### **THE MEANING OF "DAY"**

Those who argue that the word "day" means "long age," point out that the Hebrew word, *yom*, can have a number of meanings, only one of which is "day of 24 hours."<sup>1</sup> They further seek to strengthen their position with the use of Psalm 90:4 and II Peter 3:8, comparing a day to a thousand years. Both of these verses, however, are simply using figures of speech (similes) to show that God is not constrained by the same time parameters as are humans. These verses are really irrelevant to the discussion of the meaning of "day," in Genesis 1.

It is recognized, of course, that the word "day" can be used with a number of variations. It can have any of five meanings: 1) a period of light; 2) a period of 24 hours; 3) a general, vague time; 4) a point of time; 5) a year.<sup>2</sup> The context determines which of these is intended by the writer. The English language also can have up to 14 definitions for the word "day."<sup>3</sup> The reader should be reminded that the purpose of language is to communicate. Moses wrote in a language that was meant to communicate to his readers. Words must be defined by their relationship to one another.<sup>4</sup> Word meaning must be determined from within its context. It will be shown how the context defines the word in Genesis 1.

The use of a number with the word "day" is very illuminating. This combination occurs 357 times outside of Genesis 1. The combination is used in four different ways, but each time it is used, it must mean 24-hour periods of time. If the combinations had been intended to mean long periods of time, both the texts and contexts then become meaningless. A typical verse is Genesis 30:36: "And he (Laban) set three days journey betwixt himself and Jacob." God frequently issued commands that the people were to do or not to do certain things on a given day. This use occurs 162 times. A good example is

Exodus 24:16: "And the glory of the Lord abode upon Mount Sinai, and the cloud covered it six days, and on the seventh day He called unto Moses out of the midst of the cloud." These are the most typical uses of the word "day" with a number. Four times the terms are used to show a starting point. Ezra 3:6 says, "From the first day of the seventh month they began to offer burnt offerings unto the Lord." A number may also be used with "day" to convey an ending point. An example is Leviticus 19:6: "It shall be eaten the same day ye offer it, and on the morrow: and if ought remain until the third day, it shall be burnt in the fire." It would appear, then, that whenever the Old Testament uses a number with the word "day," it means a 24-hour period of time without any demonstrable exception.

If the meaning of the word "day" with a number always means a 24-hour period of time outside of Genesis 1, then it should also mean a 24-hour period of time inside Genesis 1. The words that Moses used to communicate what God did during creation are very significant. If Moses had meant to signify that the "days" were more than 24 hours in length, he could easily have done so. If we are to understand what Moses wrote, then the language he used must be understood in its normal meaning. The normal meaning is that of 24-hour periods of time.

### **ABSENCE OF THE ARTICLE**

Once we have determined the meaning of the term "day," we need also to examine another problem connected with the days of Genesis 1. Some writers have observed the absence of the article from the mention of each of the first five days. They have concluded that Moses must have meant to convey to his readers that at least those days were long periods of time. They have noted that the normal use of the article is to make the noun definite.<sup>5</sup> Gleason Archer makes the following statement: "In Hebrew prose of this genre, the definite article was generally used where the noun was intended to be definite."<sup>6</sup> The genre, or the form of the literature (i.e., history as opposed to poetry) he is referring to here, is history. Let us see if he is correct in this use of the article.

The reader must be aware of two points regarding the use of the article in Hebrew. First, the article is usually present in the historical sections of the Old Testament for the sake of definiteness. But this is not always the case. Second, Hebrew has more peculiarities in its use of the article than most languages.<sup>7</sup> This should make the reader very sensitive to the nature of the Hebrew language. The Hebrew language is one that must be observed closely. The most common observation among Jewish and Christian commentators is that the use of the article on the last two days is to show the importance of the sixth and seventh days.<sup>8</sup> This also is in full accord with the Hebrew grammatical rule that the article may be used in this manner.<sup>9</sup> On the basis of grammar alone, then, we are still justified in our interpretation of "day" being 24 hours in length.

Also, there is another reason for the absence of the article. It appears that numbers in the Hebrew language have a definitive quality in themselves. Kautzsch refers to them as substantives,<sup>10</sup> yet the meaning is the same. A substantive is a noun that one can touch, such as a chair. He cites many examples where the number and noun occur without the

article, yet the meaning is definite. There are 13 other occurrences similar to Genesis 1, where the noun does not have the article but is with a number. In each of these other occurrences, the English translation uses the definite article.<sup>11</sup> Therefore, we must conclude that the absence of the article in Genesis 1 does not mean that the days are long periods of time. Moses' point is still very clear: The days are to be thought of as normal 24-hour days.

## **EVENING AND MORNING**

The meaning of the term "day" must be seen in conjunction with the use of "evening" and "morning." Those who would argue that the days are long periods contend that these terms can have figurative meanings.<sup>12</sup> But what is their meaning in the context of Genesis 1? We must ask ourselves, how would the people have understood these terms "evening" and "morning?" Is Moses, and by extension, God, trying to deceive us by not telling us the truth about the length of the "days?" The Old Testament records 38 times when these two words are used in the same verse. Each time they occur, the meaning must be that of a normal day. Here are a couple of examples to illustrate the point: Exodus 16:8 says, "And Moses said, this shall be when the Lord shall give you in the evening flesh to eat, and in the morning bread to the full." Also Exodus 18:13, "and the people stood by Moses from the morning until the evening." All the other occurrences are essentially the same. So then, it would appear that when the words "morning" and "evening" are used in the same verse, they must refer to a normal day.

## **STATEMENT BY GOD**

God did not leave the length of the creation days open to question. He told us the exact length of each day. In Exodus 20:11, He said that in "six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that is in them and rested on the seventh day." The context of the statement is an emphatic command. God tells the people, "remember" and "keep" the Sabbath. God then tells them how to keep the Sabbath in their daily lives. The people can tell whether they are keeping the Sabbath if they are resting on the seventh day. God then anchors the reality of the present days to the reality of the past days of creation. God has set the pattern of Israel's work week. The "days" are the same kind of days that the people would have readily known. As it has been demonstrated previously, "day," used with a number, means a 24-hour day. It seems obvious that all throughout Israel's history, the people have understood this to mean a 24-hour day. Even those who hold to the long ages of Genesis 1 acknowledge the "days" of Exodus 20:8-11 to be 24-hour days.<sup>13</sup> Therefore, the "days" of creation must also have been 24 hours in length.

## **REFERENCES**

<sup>1</sup> For typical arguments, examine Davis Young, *Creation and the Flood* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1977), pp. 83, 84

<sup>2</sup> *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament*, I:371.

<sup>3</sup> *Webster's 20th Century Dictionary, unabridged.*

<sup>4</sup> Beekman, John and John Callow. *Translating the Word of God* (Grand Rapids:

Zondervan, 1974), p.69.

<sup>5</sup> Kautzsch, E. *Gesenius' Hebrew Grammar*, 2nd ed. (Oxford: Clarendon Press 1980), p. 404.

<sup>6</sup> Archer, Gleason. *Encyclopedia of Bible Difficulties* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1982), p. 61.

<sup>7</sup> Kautzsch, pp.406,407

<sup>8</sup> One should consult Jewish commentators Cassuto, Rashi, and Cohen. Some of the Christian commentators are Keil, Leupold, and E.J. Young.

<sup>9</sup> Kautzsch, p.408.

<sup>10</sup> Kautas::h, p.432.

<sup>11</sup> The occurrences are Numbers 11:19; I Samuel 1:1; 1 Chronicles 12:39; II Chronicles 20:25; Ezra 8:15, 32; Nehemiah 2:11; Daniel 1:12, 14,15; 12:12, 13, and Jonah 3:4.

<sup>12</sup> Ross, Hugh. *Genesis One: A Scientific Perspective* (Sierra Madre: Wiseman Productions, 1983), p.16.

<sup>13</sup> Archer, pp. 116,117, also Henry Alford, *The Book of Genesis and Part of Exodus* (Minneapolis: Klock and Klock, 1979), pp.313, 314.

For more information on the Young Earth perspective, visit the Institute for Creation Research website at [www.icr.org](http://www.icr.org)

## **WEEK TWO: Genesis 3:1-3:24**

### **Day One:**

1. Prepare your heart to be taught by God. Pray that God would cause the “eyes of your heart to be enlightened” (Ephesians 1:18) and that you would be responsive to the things God wants you to learn.
2. Read Genesis 3:1-3:24.
3. In the space below, briefly summarize the main events/actions/ideas contained in this week’s Scripture reading. (For an example summary, see Week1/Day1.)

### **Day Two:**

1. Prepare your heart before God. Pray that God would teach you from His Word, and that you would be responsive to His teaching.
2. Read Genesis 3:1-3:24 again.
3. What observations do you have of Genesis 3:1-3:24? What most stands out to you about what you read this week?

4. Think of some questions that might lead to an important spiritual “discovery.” (For examples, you could review questions from last week’s study.) Write your questions in the space below, then pray that God would answer your question(s).

**Day Three:**

1. Prepare your heart before God. Pray that God would teach you from His Word, and that you would be responsive to His teaching.
- 2A. Read Genesis 2:15-17.
- 2B. What command does God give Adam in these verses?

***NOTE:** The biblical account tells us that the “tree of the knowledge of good and evil” was an actual tree; and that by eating its fruit, man would gain an understanding of good and evil. This understanding would both make man like God, and lead to death. There is so much that we could talk about, but in the interests of time today’s study will restrict ourselves to two questions: (i) Why did God put the “tree of the knowledge of good and evil” in the garden, only to forbid man to eat of it?; and (ii) Why did Eve and Adam choose to disobey God’s commandment?*

- 3A. Read James 1:13. In light of this verse, do you think God’s purpose in putting the tree of the knowledge of good and evil in the garden was to “tempt” man?
- 3B. Let us take as our starting point that everything God did in the garden was “good” for man. How could the tree of the knowledge of good and evil have been “good?” In other words, suppose Adam and Eve had obeyed God and never eaten of its fruit. How could this tree have been beneficial for them? (NOTE: This is a tough question. You’ll have another crack at it below.)

- 3C. If the tree of the knowledge of good and evil were only a bad thing, God surely would not have chosen to place this tree in the “middle of the garden” (cf. Genesis 2:10), where man was certain to come across it often. This tree must have been placed as a reminder to man about something. What do you think that “something” was?
- 3D. If having the knowledge of good and evil made man “like God” (cf. Genesis 3:22), then being reminded of one’s ignorance about good and evil was a constant reminder that man was not “like” God. How could that be “good” for man?
- 3E. Review “Biblical Note #2” on Day 6 of the Week One study. In light of this and the preceding questions, explain how the tree of the knowledge of good and evil helped Adam and Eve to worship God.
- 3F. Do the preceding questions help you to see how obeying God’s commands can lead *you* to have a more worshipful heart? Elaborate in the space below.
- 4A. Read Genesis 3:1-6.
- 4B. In your opinion, what was the root reason why Adam and Eve disobeyed God?
- 4C. Do you think the root reason why you disobey God is the same as Adam and Eve’s? Elaborate in the space below.

**Day Four:**

1. Prepare your heart before God. Pray that God would teach you from His Word, and that you would be responsive to His teaching.

2. Read Genesis 3:1-3:24 again.
  3. Identify all the consequences that Adam and Eve experienced as a result of their sin. Report them in the space below.
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- 4A. Read Genesis 3:6,7.
  - 4B. The first thing that happened after Adam and Eve ate the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil is that they realized they were naked, and therefore covered themselves with fig leaves. What do you think is significant about this? (HINT: Was there anything wrong or sinful about Adam and Eve being naked?)
  - 4C. Some have said that this incident represents the first occurrence in human history of “man-made religion.” Can you see why covering themselves with fig leaves could be thought of as “man-made religion?” Elaborate your answer in the space below.
  - 4D. How do you think God feels about “man-made religion?” Elaborate on your answer in the space below.
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- 5A. Read Genesis 3:8-10.
  - 5B. One consequence of Adam and Eve’s perceived sin was that they felt ashamed to be in God’s presence. Have you ever felt that you wanted to avoid God because of some sin/perceived sin in your life? Just between you and God, elaborate your answer in the space below.

**Day Five:**

1. Prepare your heart before God. Pray that God would teach you from His Word, and that you would be responsive to His teaching.
2. Read Genesis 3:1-3:24 again.
3. Identify all the consequences for mankind that resulted from Adam and Eve's sin. Report them in the space below.

- 4A. Consider the following excerpts taken from the fifth chapter of the Book of Romans:

Romans 5:12,15,16,17,18,19: "...through one man sin entered into the world, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men ... by the transgression of the one the many died ... judgment arose from one transgression resulting in condemnation ... by the transgression of the one, death reigned through the one ... through one transgression there resulted condemnation to all men ... through the one man's disobedience the many were made sinners."

- 4B. What do these verses say about the consequences for mankind that resulted from Adam and Eve's sin?

- 5A. Read Genesis 2:17.

Biblical Note: When the Bible speaks of "death," it can often have the idea of spiritual death.<sup>6</sup> Most likely, when God tells Adam that he "will surely die" when he eats of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, God's emphasis is on spiritual death – i.e., the "death" of the relationship that man enjoyed with God in the garden.

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<sup>6</sup> The *Expository Dictionary of the Zondervan Reverence Library* states it this way, "Death involves, but is more than, physical corruption. 'Death' includes the process of dying and also all the pain and suffering associated with decay. Mankind is cut off from intimate fellowship with God, and human interpersonal relationships are warped and twisted. Genesis 3-4 demonstrates over and over again the nature of this death that is rooted in sin ... We see Adam and Eve run in fear from God and blame and betray each other. ... We see hatred and murder in the first family as Cain kills Abel. We see Lamech distort God's ideal by taking two wives, and we see him justify murder by claiming he was injured. The bright potential of humanity is suddenly darkened, as every gift of personhood is misused. It is all this, not simply the ending of existence on earth, that the Old Testament views as death."

- 5B. Consider the following statement:  
*When Adam and Eve ate from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, their very natures were altered. Their changed natures caused (i) them to avoid God and (ii) God to expel them from fellowship with Him (i.e., their relationship “died”).*  
Which specific verses in Genesis 3:1-24 can you find to support this statement? Report them below.
- 5C. Review the excerpt from Romans 5 in (4A) above. What evidence do you see in these verses that the “natures” of all men and women were changed as a result of Adam and Eve’s sin in the garden? Elaborate in the space below.
- 6A. J. Gresham Machen (1881-1937) was a famous Bible scholar and author. Consider what he says about the consequences of Adam and Eve’s sin for mankind: *“The dreadful penalty of that sin of Adam was that Adam and his descendants became dead in trespasses and sins. As a just penalty of Adam's sin, God withdrew his favor, and the souls of all mankind became spiritually dead. The soul that is spiritually dead, the soul that is corrupt, is guilty not only because of Adam's guilt but also because of its own sin. It deserves eternal punishment.”*  
[Source: <http://members.aol.com/rsigrace/conseq.html>]
- 6B. In your own words, summarize the significance for mankind of Adam and Eve’s sin in the garden of Eden.

**Day Six:**

1. Prepare your heart before God. Pray that God would teach you from His Word, and that you would be responsive to His teaching.
2. Read Genesis 3:21-3:24.
3. Describe how God cared for Adam and Eve even after they have disobeyed Him.



### WEEK THREE: Excerpts from Genesis 4:1-11:9

*NOTE: It is not the intent of this devotional study to get into the scientific details of the great flood discussed in Genesis Chapters 6 through 9. To address this and other issues, we have included a separate, optional section at the end of this week's study that tries to anticipate your questions and respond with scientifically honest answers, along with suggestions for further reading.*

#### **Day One:**

1. Prepare your heart to be taught by God. Pray that God would cause the “eyes of your heart to be enlightened” (Ephesians 1:18) and that you would be responsive to the things God wants you to learn.
2. Read the following excerpts from Genesis 4:1-11:9:
  - Genesis 4:1-4:16
  - Genesis 4:17-4:24
  - Genesis 6:1-6:8
  - Genesis 6:9-8:22
  - Genesis 9:8-9:17
  - Genesis 11:1-11:9

*Biblical Note:* Several genealogies are presented in these excerpts. Note that the Hebrew word for “son” can also mean “grandson” or “descendant.” Likewise, when Genesis reports that somebody “bore” or “begat” somebody else, that also could mean that the latter person was a generation or more removed from the former.<sup>7</sup> Consequently, the genealogies do not give us a precise date for the first humans.

3. In the space next to each of the Scripture excerpts below, briefly summarize the main events/actions/ideas contained in the respective biblical passage. (For an example summary, see Week1/Day1.)

-Genesis 4:1-4:16

-Genesis 4:17-4:24

-Genesis 6:1-6:8

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<sup>7</sup> In his commentary on Genesis, Peter Pett writes the following, “The Bible (and other ancient literature) often refers to someone as being “born of” someone when the former is a descendant rather than the actual son. ... The ancients were not as particular in their definitions of relationship as we are. They would find no difficulty in saying ‘so and so bore so and so’ when they mean ‘the ancestor of so and so’ ” [Source: [www.geocities.com/genesiscommentary/genesis3.html](http://www.geocities.com/genesiscommentary/genesis3.html)].

-Genesis 6:9-8:22

-Genesis 9:8-9:17

-Genesis 11:1-11:9

**Day Two:**

1. Prepare your heart before God. Pray that God would teach you from His Word, and that you would be responsive to His teaching.
2. Read the following excerpts from Genesis 4:1-11:9 again:
  - Genesis 4:1-4:16
  - Genesis 4:17-4:24
  - Genesis 6:1-6:8
  - Genesis 6:9-8:22
  - Genesis 9:8-9:17
  - Genesis 11:1-11:9
3. What observations do you have of these excerpts from Genesis 4:1-11:9? What most stands out to you about what you read this week?
4. Think of some questions that might lead to an important spiritual “discovery.” (For examples, you could review questions from last week’s study.) Write your questions in the space below, then pray that God would answer your question(s).

### **Day Three:**

1. Prepare your heart before God. Pray that God would teach you from His Word, and that you would be responsive to His teaching.

2. Read the following excerpts from Genesis 4:1-11:9:

-Genesis 4:1-4:16

-Genesis 4:17-4:24

-Genesis 6:1-6:8

*Biblical Note:* There are several possibilities concerning the identity of the “sons of God” in Genesis 6:2 and 6:4 and, correspondingly, the “nephilim” in Genesis 6:4. One hypothesis is that the “sons of God” were fallen angels who engaged in demon possession/occult practices with human women to create unholy progeny, which subsequently became known as the “nephilim.”<sup>8</sup>

3. In the space below, elaborate on how each of the following Genesis passages describes the descent of mankind into deeper and deeper sin:

-Genesis 4:1-4:16

-Genesis 4:17-4:24

-Genesis 6:1-6:8

4A. Read Genesis 6:6,7.

4B. What do these verses say about how God feels about sin?

4C. How do you think God feels about our sins when we disobey or ignore God?

4D. Since God is all-knowing, and knew that Adam and Eve’s sin would ultimately force Him to wipe out most of mankind in the Flood, what was the purpose of this episode in human history? Why not just “start” with Noah and his family?

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<sup>8</sup> This interpretation is consistent with the apocryphal text 1 Enoch (cf. [www.deliriumsrealm.com/delirium/mythology/watchers.asp](http://www.deliriumsrealm.com/delirium/mythology/watchers.asp)). Peter Pett, in his commentary on Genesis, writes the following: “The idea here is probably that the women were married to humans, but that their occult practices resulted in the children born of these human marriages being somehow ‘infected’ by their demonic partners. The phrase ‘came into –’ regularly refers to intercourse, and this stresses the deeply personal depth of demonic experience into which these women threw themselves. It further explains why the destruction of all human beings was required” [source: [www.geocities.com/genesiscommentary/genesis4.html](http://www.geocities.com/genesiscommentary/genesis4.html)].

#### **Day Four:**

1. Prepare your heart before God. Pray that God would teach you from His Word, and that you would be responsive to His teaching.
2. Read Genesis 6:9-8:22.

*Biblical Note:* The Hebrew word translated ‘earth’ in Genesis 6:9-8:22 is “*eretz*”. It is most frequently translated into English as “land,” but is also translated as “earth,” “ground,” “country,” “world,” “region,” and “territory” (among other things) depending on the context.

Peter Pett’s commentary on Genesis has this to say about the extent of the Flood: “*There is no question but that it is a huge flood of a type never known before or since, but how far did it in fact reach? In Hebrew the word translated ‘earth’ (eretz) even more often means ‘land.’ ... It is thus quite in accordance with the Hebrew that what is described in this passage occurred in just one part of what we would call the earth, occurring in ‘Noah’s earth’ where Noah was living with his family. ... Thus [the Hebrew allows] three possible answers to the question as to how far the flood stretched:*

- 1) *That all mankind was involved and that the Flood was global.*
- 2) *That all mankind was involved, but that they were still living within a certain limited area and were therefore all destroyed in a huge flood, which was not, however, global ...*
- 3) *That it was only mankind in the large area affected by the demonic activity (Noah’s ‘earth’ or ‘world’) that were to be destroyed, and that the Flood was therefore vast, but not necessarily destroying those of mankind unaffected by the situation described.”*

3. What would you say is the main point of Genesis 6:9-8:22? Elaborate in the space below.

4A. Read Romans 11:5,6.

4B. Noah represents a familiar storyline in the Bible in which God preserves a “remnant” of faithful followers. Consider the following discussion from the *Expository Dictionary in the Zondervan Reference Software*: “The theme of “a remnant” runs through the Old Testament. This is an important theme, for it affirms that however great Israel’s apostasy and God’s judgment, a core of the faithful will still exist (e.g., 1 Kings 19:18; Malachi 3:16-18). It is prophetically important, for it pictures the fulfillment of the divine purpose in only a part of the people of Israel. Apostasy, even by the majority of the Jews, could not nullify the divine promise. Over and over the prophets pictured contemporary or coming judgments in which the majority died, and only a believing minority remained.”

4C. From the perspective of the New Testament looking backwards, how does the story of Noah represent an example of “God’s gracious choice” (cf. Romans 11:5,6)?

4D. What can we learn about the character of God from this story of Noah and the Flood? Do you see any parallels or applications to your life from the account of God’s dealings with Noah?

**Day Five:**

1. Prepare your heart before God. Pray that God would teach you from His Word, and that you would be responsive to His teaching.

2. Read Genesis 9:8-9:17.

*Biblical Note:* The Hebrew word that is translated “covenant” in Genesis 9:9 is “*berith*” and it occurs over 250 times in the Old Testament. It is a very important concept! Indeed our Bibles are divided into “Old Testament = Old Covenant” and “New Testament = New Covenant.” Most Bible scholars identify 6 major covenants in the Bible:

1. The Noahic Covenant (Genesis 9:9)
2. The Abrahamic Covenant (Genesis 15:18)
3. The Mosaic Covenant (Exodus 19:5,6)
4. The Priestly Covenant (Numbers 25:12,13)
5. The Davidic Covenant (2 Samuel 23:5)
6. The New Covenant (Jeremiah 31:33,34; Hebrews 8:6-13)

3. In the space below, describe the covenant that God made with Noah in Genesis 9. Be sure to identify the promise that God made to Noah as part of this covenant.

4. An important distinction among the covenants is whether they are “conditional” or “unconditional.” A “conditional covenant” is one that requires man to maintain his obligation in order for the covenant to remain in effect. An “unconditional covenant” is one that remains in effect independent of any actions on man’s part. Is the Noahic Covenant a “conditional” or “unconditional” covenant? Explain in the space below.
  
5. Why do you think God made this covenant with Noah? What did He want Noah – and by extension, us – to learn from this?

**Day Six:**

1. Prepare your heart before God. Pray that God would teach you from His Word, and that you would be responsive to His teaching.
2. Read Genesis 11:1-11:9.

*Biblical Note #1:* The Peter Pett commentary on Genesis has this to say about Genesis 11:4 where it says that the people wanted to build “*a tower whose top will reach into heaven*”: “This is a graphic way of saying a very high tower (cf. Deuteronomy 1:28), but it probably contains in it the idea of connecting with the gods. It was not the height of the tower but the type of tower that was significant. It was almost certainly a ziggurat. These buildings, which became a regular feature of life in Mesopotamia, were stepped buildings which were meant to represent a mountain, and at the top of it was a sanctuary. It was felt that the gods dwelt on mountains, so that provision is being made for them to dwell in the city. Thus, this represented idol worship.”

[Source: [www.geocities.com/genesiscommentary/genesis6](http://www.geocities.com/genesiscommentary/genesis6)]

*Biblical Note #2:* The Hebrew expression in Genesis 11:6 that “nothing which they purpose to do will be impossible for them” can have the idea that “there is nothing to restrain them from pursuing their [sinful] desires.”

3. What was so bad about the people wanting to live together in the same place and to build a tower that would “reach into heaven?”

- 4A. Read Genesis 11:10.
- 4B. The Genesis account now shifts to Shem (from which we get the word “semitic”). Shem will become the progenitor of Abraham, from which the Jewish nation will derive. Note that God now shifts from working with all people, to intensively revealing Himself to a particular subset of people (the Jews). Given the preceding biblical account, why do you think God chose to do this?
5. Review this week’s study. Did God teach you anything that spiritually impacted you this week? Elaborate in the space below.

### **APPENDICES TO WEEK THREE:**

Over the next few pages, you will find two articles from two different Evangelical Christians regarding an understanding of the flood narrative. The first article is from Dr. Mike Strauss, Wildwood elder, and professor of Physics at the University of Oklahoma. Dr. Strauss will present an understanding of the flood as being “universal” to wipe out all of mankind and everything mankind has touched, yet not necessarily global in its coverage of the entire earth. The second article is from Dr. John Morris, a geologist and president of the Institute of Creation Research. Dr. Morris will present a view of the flood as being global in its coverage of the earth and universal in its destruction of mankind (except Noah’s family.) Wildwood Community Church does not have an official position on the extent of the flood. We ask that you read these articles and think through this issue for yourself. This is not the most critical issue for Christians today, and should not be a cause for division in the Body of Christ. On this issue good evangelical Christians hold to both positions. Understanding these truths, however, can help in correlating Biblical truth with information we process from science.

## Noah's Flood

Mike Strauss, Ph.D.

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One of the most widely known, and most often criticized, stories in the Bible is the story of the flood and Noah's ark. Critics of the Bible argue that there is no evidence of a worldwide flood that destroyed all of humanity, while some Christians continue to look for evidence of the ark locked in the ice of Mount Ararat. Is there any evidence to either confirm or contradict the story of the flood? Should we expect to find remnants of the ark today? Is there any scientific evidence for the Biblical flood and is there any objective reason to believe it actually happened?

There are actually good reasons, other than the Biblical account itself, to accept the veracity of the flood account. For instance, it is interesting to note that over 200 different cultures on all continents (and possibly as many as 500 cultures) have stories about some kind of flood destroying humanity.<sup>9</sup> It makes sense that these various accounts of the flood may come from a common origin.

Additionally, as Christians we believe that the Bible is God's inspired word (2 Timothy 3:16) and that the stories of the Bible can be taken at face value. When the Bible tells a story in a historical genre, we affirm that it is an historical story. Consequently, it is perfectly reasonable to believe that the story of Noah and the flood is an accurate and true story. In fact, Jesus himself affirmed that this story is true (see Matthew 24:37-39).

One of the difficulties in understanding the Biblical record of the flood, and one of the reasons the story of the flood is attacked by critics, is the inclusive language used in Genesis 6 through 9. It is clear that God's judgment on the earth is universal. God will destroy all of the effects of man's sin, all human life on earth and everything that has been touched by man and his sin. The language is broad in scope and universal in extent. For some Christians that language makes everything clear. The flood must have covered the entire earth and if there is any apparent discrepancy between that Biblical account and how scientists interpret the geological record, then the scientists must be wrong.

But the complication in this is that sometimes in the Bible inclusive language is not used the same way we use that language in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. For instance, in Daniel 4:1, King Nebuchadnezzar sends out a proclamation to "all the peoples, nations, and men of every language that live on all the earth." In Daniel 4:22, Daniel proclaims that the king's "majesty has become great and reached to the sky and your dominion to the end of the earth." In both these passages, the great extent "all the earth" and "the end of the earth" doesn't refer to the earth as we now know it, but to a large fraction of the known earth of Daniel's day. In Colossians 1:6 Paul proclaims that the gospel "has come to you, just as in all the world..." Again we see that Paul's use of the phrase "all the world" is different than how we would use that term. Paul doesn't mean every corner of the seven continents of the world, but rather a large fraction of the known world of his day.

So we see that in ancient times, inclusive phrases like "all the world" can really mean "a large fraction of the known world." This is quite different than the way we

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<sup>9</sup> To find information on many of these stories, search Google for "flood legends" or the like.

would use such a phrase in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Consequently, it is possible that the inclusive language about the flood has a similar meaning. In such a scenario, the Biblical record would be describing a universal flood, though not a worldwide flood. That means that the flood did not cover all of the land on the earth but did destroy all of humanity and everything that humanity had touched or influenced. A local flood, one that did not cover the whole world, that was universal, destroying all of humanity and human influence, would be compatible with the Biblical text.

In addition, the English translation of the original Hebrew seems to indicate that the whole earth was flooded, but the original Hebrew language is not so clear. The Hebrew phrase which is translated as "the whole earth" or "all the earth" is *kol erets*. The word *kol* means "all," but the word *erets* has many meanings, including land, ground, earth, territory, and even inhabitants or people of the land. The Old Testament uses the phrase *kol erets* about 207 times, and it might refer to the whole planet earth in somewhat less than 40 of those. In all of the other times it is used it refers to something else. For instance, the first two times the phrase is used in the Bible is in Genesis 2:11 and 2:13, "The name of the first is Pishon; it flows around the whole land [*kol erets*] of Havilah, where there is gold... And the name of the second river is Gihon; it flows around the whole land [*kol erets*] of Cush." Clearly, the meaning of *kol erets* here is simply the land around the Garden of Eden, not the whole earth.

In each of the above cases, *kol erets* has a qualifier that indicates it is not the whole planet earth, but even without that qualifier, the phrase usually means a local region. For instance, Abraham is only referring to the land of Canaan when he states in Genesis 13:9, "Is not the whole land [*kol erets*] before you? Please separate from me: if to the left, then I will go to the right; or if to the right, then I will go to the left." Further, the prophet Samuel only means the land of Palestine when he writes, "So when they had gone about through the whole land [*kol erets*], they came to Jerusalem at the end of nine months and twenty days" (2 Samuel 24:8). Thus, we see that in the Bible, the phrase *kol erets* usually does not refer to all of the planet earth.

We see a different use of *kol erets* in Genesis 11, where the text says, "the whole earth [*kol erets*] used the same language." In this context, the phrase means the population of the earth, not a geographic location, at all. In fact, many times in the Bible, *kol erets* actually means "people" and not land, territory, or earth.<sup>10</sup>

The point of the last few paragraphs is to show that while most English translations seem very clear that the flood waters covered the entire globe, the original Hebrew is much more ambiguous. The original Hebrew only indicates that the flood necessarily covered a local region and that its effect destroyed all of mankind and everything mankind had influenced. Some scholars call this a universal flood, though it was not necessarily a global flood. In other words, the flood universally destroyed everything on the earth that man had contacted, except Noah and his family, but the flood did not necessarily cover the entire planet.

Once it has been established that the flood did not necessarily cover the whole planet, then there aren't any major obstacles between the Biblical account of the flood and the current scientific geological record. Geologists tell us that there is no record of a

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<sup>10</sup> You can find many examples of the phrase *kol erets* in the Bible where it cannot mean the whole earth at <http://www.geocities.com/CapeCanaveral/Lab/6562/apologetics/localflood.html>.

flood ever covering the whole earth. In fact, there is not even enough water on the earth to cover the whole earth. But there are many records of huge local floods in the past. Since we don't know when Noah's flood took place, and exactly what area of the planet humans had occupied when the flood occurred, there are many possibilities for local floods that could have destroyed all of humanity. There are no inconsistencies between the Biblical account of the flood and the geological record.

Some Biblical scholars believe that the language in Geneses even requires that the flood be a local flood, not covering the whole earth. Others believe the language points to a global flood. I think that the language could easily be interpreted either way, so I look to the geological record to determine which it was. According to Christian and non-Christian geologists, the geological record is unambiguous, that there was never a global flood.<sup>11</sup>

Finally, let's answer the question of whether or not we should expect to find any physical evidence of the flood other than the flood stories from many different cultures. For instance, should we expect to find Noah's ark? My personal opinion is that we will not find any remnants of the flood today. The Bible says that the ark rested on the "mountains of Ararat," not necessarily on Mount Ararat itself. This term the "mountains of Ararat" could refer to almost any of the mountains or foothills in the Middle East. My personal opinion is that after such a huge flood that had such a devastating effect on the environment, the timber in the ark would have been so valuable for rebuilding, that the ark was probably dismantled to use its wood to rebuild structures for human and livestock habitation. Therefore, I don't think we will find evidence of the ark today.

For Further Study:

- A very nice web site that discusses the Biblical case for a local, but universal, flood is the web site given in the second footnote below,  
<http://www.geocities.com/CapeCanaveral/Lab/6562/apologetics/localflood.html>

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<sup>11</sup> See the Affiliation of Christian Geologists web page at <http://www.wheaton.edu/ACG/>

**The Global Flood of Noah's Day**  
Dr. John Morris, Geologist and President of ICR

***Biblical Arguments for a Global Flood***

1. **The depth and duration of the Flood** The flood waters covered the mountains to a depth of at least the draft of Noah's Ark (Genesis 7:19,20). Today's mountains in the Ararat region include Mount Ararat which rises to 17,000 feet in elevation. The flood lasted for a year, peaking 150 days after it started (7:11, 8:3,4), then it began to abate. A year-long mountain-covering flood is *not* a local flood.
2. **The Physical Causes for the Flood.** The Bible explains that the breaking open of "all the fountains of the great deep" and the "windows of heaven" (7:11) were the primary causes. The "deep" is the ocean; thus the "great deep" could hardly be the cause of a limited local flood. The "windows" seem to refer to the "waters above the (atmospheric) firmament" (1:7). These were global causes, producing a global effect.
3. **The Need for an Ark** Noah was given many years of warning, long enough to walk anywhere on earth. The animals also would have lived globally and so could have migrated anywhere. There was no need for an Ark if the flood was local.

The Ark's size, big enough to carry two (or seven for some) of each land-dwelling, air-breathing animal, testifies for a global flood. Building such a huge ship for a local flood for which there was ample warning would be ludicrous.

4. **Destruction of All Mankind** The flood's primary purpose was to destroy sinful mankind. While the earth's pre-flood population is not given, reasonable assumptions based on Biblical data for average family size, life spans, and age of parent at time of first-born yield a population far in excess of the maximum mesopotamian population. The earth was "filled with violence" (6:11-13), and while this may have included animal violence, it certainly included human violence. An earth filled with violence would necessitate an earth filled with people. Only a global flood to accomplish its primary purpose.

Not only were violent inhabitants under condemnation, the earth itself was to be destroyed (6:13). The word for "earth" was the same word as used in the creation account (1:1). Surely it means the planet, not just a local area.

5. **Promise of No More Floods.** At the end of the flood, God promised that there would never again be such a flood (9:15). But there have been many floods, even regional floods, especially in mesopotamia, since Noah's day. If this was merely a local flood, then God broke His promise, and the rainbow covenant means nothing.

6. **The Testimony of Jesus Christ** Christ compared the days immediately prior to His second coming to the days prior to the flood. He reminded us that "the flood came and destroyed them *all*" (Luke 17:27). The coming judgment will be similarly extensive. If the flood in Noah's day was local, people living outside the area survived, even though they, too, were sinners. This gives great hope to end-time sinners. Will they be able to escape the coming fiery judgment on sin?
7. **The Testimony of Peter** Peter also wrote of the coming judgment of the entire heavens and earth (II Peter 3:10-12). He based his argument on the historical facts that the creation was of the entire earth (v.5) and that the flood overflowed the entire earth (v.6), causing it to perish. If the flood was only local, does this imply that only a portion of the earth will "melt with fervent heat" (v.10)?

Furthermore, the entire creation will be fully renewed, replaced by "a new heavens and a new earth" (v.13). The local flood idea produces theological nonsense.

8. **8. Many Expressions of the Flood's Global Nature** Hugh Ross rightly claims that the word "all" can sometimes be used in a limited sense (e.g., Genesis 41:57); thus the terms used in the flood account might be similarly limited. But proper Biblical exegesis involves discerning the meaning of words in their immediate context. A passage cannot be interpreted by vaguely possible meanings. An honest look at the flood account uncovers an abundance of terms and phrases, each of which is best understood in a global sense. Taken together as forming the context for each other, the case is overwhelming. A listing with brief descriptions follow:

- **Genesis 6**- "Multiply on the face of the earth" (v.1). "Wickedness of man was great in the earth" (v.5). "Made man on the earth" (v.6). "Destroy man whom I have created from the face of the earth-both man, and beast, and the creeping thing, and the fowls of the air" (v.7; not just herds of domesticated animals as claimed). "The earth also was corrupt before God" (v.11; how much can God observe?). "The earth was filled with violence" (v.11); "God looked upon the earth" (v.12). "All flesh . . . upon the earth [not just humans]" (v.12). "The end of all flesh" (v.13). "The earth is filled with violence" (v.13). "Destroy them with the earth" (v.13). "A flood of waters upon the earth" (v.17). "To destroy all flesh" (v.17). "Wherein is the breath of life" (v.17; not just domesticated animals). "From under heaven" (v.17; not just the atmosphere above Mesopotamia). "Everything that is in the earth shall die" (v.17; animals at a distance would have been unaffected by a local flood). "Every living thing of all flesh" (v.19; couldn't be just Noah's herds). "To keep them alive" (v.19). "Fowls . . . to keep them alive" (v.20; birds could certainly survive a local flood).
- **Genesis 7**- "To keep seed alive" (v.3). "Upon the face of all the earth" (v.3). "Every living substance that I have made" (v.4). "Destroy from off the face of the earth" (v.4). "The flood of waters was upon the earth" (v.6). "Because of the

waters of the flood" (v.7). "The waters of the flood were upon the earth" (v.10). "All the fountains" (v.11; all, not limited to local geysers or volcanos). "Of the great deep" (v.11; the deep ocean). "Windows of heaven" (v.11; a worldwide source implies a worldwide effect). "Rain was upon the earth" (v.12). "Forty days and forty nights" (v.12; no local flood would do this). "Every beast, . . . all the cattle . . ." (v.14). "Every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth" (v.14; did Noah need to take rats and moles and snakes for them to survive a local flood?). "Every fowl . . . every bird of every sort" (v.14). "Wherein is the breath of life" (v.15; applies to animals worldwide). "The waters increased" (v.17). "Bare up the Ark" (v.17). "Lift up above the earth" (v.17). "Waters prevailed" (v.18; similar to a military conquest). "Increased greatly" (v.18). "Upon the earth" (v.18; not just upon the valley). "The face of the waters" (v.18; compare with the world ocean in Genesis 1:2). "The waters prevailed exceedingly" (v.19). "Upon the earth" (v.19). "All the high hills" (v.19) "That were under the whole heaven" (v.19; all that were within God's sight). "Were covered" (v.19). "Fifteen cubits upward" (v.20; the draft of the thirty cubit Ark). "Did the waters prevail" (v.20). "The mountains were covered" (v.20; same word in Hebrew as high hills [v.19]). "All flesh died" (v.21). "That moved upon the earth" (v.21). "Fowl . . . cattle . . . beast . . . creeping things" (v.21). "That creepeth upon the earth" (v.21; most animals are small creeping things). "Upon the earth" (v.21). "And every man" (v.21). "In whose nostrils was the breath of life" (v.22; all air-breathing animals). "All that was in the dry land" (v.22). "Every living substance was destroyed" (v.23). "Upon the face of the ground" (v.23). "Man, and cattle, and the creeping things and the fowl of the heaven" (v.23). "They were destroyed from the earth" (v.23). "Noah only remained alive" (v.23). "They that were with him in the Ark" (v.23). "The waters prevailed" (v.25).

- **Genesis 8**- "Every living thing" (v.1). "All the cattle" (v.1). "A wind to pass over the earth" (v.1). "The waters assuaged" (v.1). "The fountains of the deep" (v.2). "The windows of heaven" (v.2). "Were stopped" (v.2). "The rain from heaven was restrained" (v.2; a special rain, not a local storm, for they continue). "The waters returned" (v.3). "From off the earth" (v.3). "The waters were abated" (v.3). "The mountains of Ararat" (v.4; the entire Ararat region is about one mile in elevation, the headwaters of Mesopotamian rivers. Did the Ark float uphill in this "local" flood?). "The waters decreased continually" (v.5). "The tops of the mountains were seen" (v.5; three months later). "The waters were dried up" (v.7). "From off the earth" (v.7; after 40 more days). "To see if the waters were abated" (v.8). "From off the face of the ground" (v.8). "The dove found no rest" (v.9). "The waters were on the face of the whole earth" (v.9). "The waters were abated" (v.11). "From off the earth" (v.11). "The waters were dried up" (v.13). "From off the earth" (v.13). "The face of the earth" (v.13). "Was the earth dried" (v.14). "Every beast, every creeping thing, and every fowl" (v.19; all of them, not some of them, left the Ark). "Curse the ground" (v.21). "Every living thing" (v.21; promise of no more such floods. Couldn't be a local flood). "While the earth remaineth" (v.22).

- **Genesis 9**- "Be fruitful, and multiply and replenish the earth" (v.1). "Every beast of the earth" (v.2; not just local farm animals). "Every fowl of the air" (v.2). "That moveth upon the earth" (v.2). "All the fishes of the sea" (v.2). "Every moving thing that liveth" (v.3). "Bring forth abundantly in the earth" (v.7). "Establish my covenant" (v.9). "With every living creature" (v.10). "That is with you" (v.10; there were no land-dwelling creatures not included in this covenant). "Fowl, cattle, every beast of the earth" (v.10). "To every beast of the earth" (v.10). "All flesh be cut off" (v.11). "By the waters of a flood" (v.11). "A flood to destroy the earth" (v.11). "Every living creature" (v.12). "Perpetual generations" (v.12). "Between me and the earth" (v.13). "Every living creature" (v.15). "Of all flesh" (v.15). "Waters shall no more become a flood" (v.15). "To destroy all flesh" (v.15). "Every living creature" (v.16). "Of all flesh" (v.16). "That is upon the earth" (v.16). "All flesh" (v.17). "That is upon the earth" (v.17). "The whole earth overspread" (v.19; Noah's descendants are today worldwide. The same term was used to describe the Flood's extent).

It would seem that the Author of Genesis could hardly have been more explicit. Conversely, if the omniscient Author had intended to describe a local flood, He obscured the facts. If words can communicate truth, if God can express Himself clearly, then the Flood was global.

For more information on the global flood perspective, view the Institute for Creation Research website at: [www.icr.org](http://www.icr.org)

## WEEK FOUR: 11:10-15:21

### Day One:

1. Prepare your heart to be taught by God. Pray that God would cause the “eyes of your heart to be enlightened” (Ephesians 1:18) and that you would be responsive to the things God wants you to learn.
2. Read Genesis 11:10-15:21.

*Biblical Note:* The *NIV Bible Commentary* in the *Zondervan Reference Software* says this about Genesis 11:10-26: “This list of ten descendants of Shem, like that of Adam in Chapter 5, draws the line of the "faithful" (Noah to Abraham) and bypasses the "unfaithful" (10:26-30). In Chapter 5, the list of ten patriarchs from Adam to Noah provided the link between the "offspring" promised to the woman (3:15) and the offspring of Noah, the survivor of the Flood (7:23). Not only does the list mark the "line of the promise," it also bypasses the line of Cain (4:17-22), the line of the builders of the city (v. 17), and the civilization (vv. 20-24) that was destroyed in the Flood. Verses 10-26 show that God's promise concerning the seed of the woman cannot be thwarted by the confusion and scattering of the nations at Babylon. Though the seed of Noah were scattered at Babylon, God preserved a line of ten great men from Noah to Abraham.

3. In the space below, briefly summarize the main events/actions/ideas contained in Genesis 11:10-15:21. (For an example summary, see Week1/Day1.)

**Day Two:**

1. Prepare your heart before God. Pray that God would teach you from His Word, and that you would be responsive to His teaching.
2. Read Genesis 11:10-15:21 again.
3. What observations do you have of Genesis 11:10-15:21? What most stands out to you about what you read this week?
  
4. Think of some questions that might lead to an important spiritual “discovery.” (For examples, you could review questions from last week’s study.) Write your questions in the space below, then pray that God would answer your question(s).

**Day Three:**

1. Prepare your heart before God. Pray that God would teach you from His Word, and that you would be responsive to His teaching.
2. Read Genesis 11:31-12:9.

*Biblical Note:* The *NIV Bible Commentary* in the *Zondervan Reference Software* says this about the biblical account of Abram/Abraham: “Abraham, like Noah, marks a new beginning as well as a return to God's original plan of blessing "all peoples on earth" (cf. Genesis 1:28). Notable is the frequent reiteration of God's "blessing" throughout the narratives of Abraham and his descendants (Genesis 12:1-3; 13:15-16; 15:5, 18; et al.). Abraham is here represented as a new Adam, the seed of Abraham as a second Adam, a new humanity. ... The identity of the seed of Abraham is one of the chief themes of the following narratives. At the close of the book (Genesis 49:8-12), a glimpse of the future seed of Abraham is briefly allowed. This one seed who is to come, to whom the right of kingship belongs, will be the "lion of the tribe of Judah" (cf. Genesis 49:9); and "the obedience of the nations is his" (Genesis 49:10).

3. Refer to the map at the end of this week's study and trace the path of Abraham's journey from Ur to Canaan. Where is "Ur of the Chaldeans?" Where is "Haran?" Where is Shechem? Bethel? Ai?
- 4A. In Abram's/Abraham's time, great emphasis was placed on maintaining one's ties to family and tribe. For example, read Genesis 11:29 and Genesis 20:11-13. Do you notice anything unusual about Milcah and Sarai/Sarah, the wives of Nahor and Abram?
- 4B. Consider what it took for Abraham to follow God's call to "Leave your country, your people and your father's household" (cf. Genesis 12:1). What would be analogous to this call for your life? Describe a hypothetical scenario in which God would call you to do something similar to what he called Abraham to do. Elaborate in the space below.
- 4C. Would it be easy or hard for you to follow God's call to "leave your country, your people and your father's household?" What would be the hardest thing for you to trust God for, were He to give you a call similar to Abraham's?
5. The last portion of God's promise to Abraham is that "all peoples on earth will be blessed through you." What do you think that refers to? (NOTE: The text does not provide an answer to this question, so you will have to speculate on the answer. What do you think are some possible ways that Abraham could be a blessing to "all peoples on earth?").

**Day Four:**

1. Prepare your heart before God. Pray that God would teach you from His Word, and that you would be responsive to His teaching.
- 2A. Read Genesis 12:10-13:4

- 2B. In this account we get a picture of the kind of man Abram/Abraham was. Abraham knew that his safety and the safety of his household would be at risk while living in another country. What “clever” thing did he do to preserve his household’s safety? In particular, how would passing himself off as Sarai’s/Sarah’s brother make it more likely that his household would be kept safe while they took refuge in Egypt?
- 2C. What unexpected “twist” occurred that completely reversed Abraham’s “clever” idea, creating a seemingly impossible problem? Elaborate in the space below.
- 2D. How did God intervene to undo the problem caused by Abraham’s “cleverness,” thereby rescuing Abraham’s household from Egypt?
- 3A. Read Genesis 14:1-14:16.
- 3B. This account gives us another picture of the kind of man Abram/Abraham was. In the space below, describe what we learn about Abraham’s character from this incident in Abraham’s life.
- 3C. Read Genesis 14:18-20.

*Biblical Note:* This account of Melchizedek king of Salem is startling for several reasons. He comes from nowhere, and virtually nothing is known about him.<sup>12</sup> Yet he clearly is a follower of God and his presence supports the notion that God “preserves a remnant” to worship Him.

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<sup>12</sup> The *Expository Dictionary* in the *Zondervan Reference Software* says this about Melchizedek: “[He is mentioned only once again in the entire Old Testament in Psalm 110:4]: “You are a priest forever, in the order of Melchizedek.” This psalm is of special interest because Jesus referred to it (Matt 22:44; Mark 12:35-36; Luke 20:41-42), and it is regarded as one of the messianic psalms. The ideal ruler of the Hebrew nation would be one who combined in his person the role of both priest and king. The author of the Letter to the Hebrews uses Melchizedek (Hebrews, Chapters 5-7) in his great argument showing Jesus Christ as the final and perfect revelation of God. The ideal priest must belong to “the order of Melchizedek,” and Christ was the fulfillment of this prophecy, for he came out of Judah, a tribe with no connection to the Levitical priesthood.”

- 3D. This account of Abraham before Melchizedek reveals that Abraham knew that his battle victory had come from God. Elaborate in the space below how we know this.
- 4A. Abraham was a “can do” kind of guy. He was clever, bold, ambitious, and courageous, among other things. In other words, he was just the kind of person who is likely to feel that he can navigate life on his own, without needing help from others. Yet God uses the circumstances of Abraham’s life to teach him something about faith. In the space below, elaborate the “lesson” that God was trying to teach Abraham through these different incidents in Abraham’s life.
- 4B. As we shall see, Abraham had a hard time learning to depend on God. How about you? Is this a “lesson” that you have difficulty learning? Elaborate in the space below.

**Day Five:**

1. Prepare your heart before God. Pray that God would teach you from His Word, and that you would be responsive to His teaching.
2. Read Genesis 15:1-6.

*Biblical Note:* The Hebrew word translated “believed” in Genesis 15:6 is “*aman*.” The Hebrew word translated “righteousness” in Genesis 15:6 is “*tsedhaqah*.” This is the first time either of these words appears in the Bible. Significantly, they occur together!

- 3A. Read Genesis 15:2,3.
- 3B. Read Genesis 13:14-17.
- 3C. In Genesis 15:3, Abraham states “You have given me no children” (NIV). The Hebrew word translated “children” here is “*zera`*.” It is the same word that is translated “offspring” in Genesis 13:15-16. In other words, God promised Abraham “offspring” in Genesis 13:14-17, and Abraham notes that God had not fulfilled His promise. Abraham is doubting God! In the space below, elaborate why Abraham had trouble believing God’s promise of “offspring.”







SOURCE: *Atlas in Zondervan Reference Software.*

## **WEEK FIVE: Genesis 16:1-21:7**

### **Day One:**

1. Prepare your heart to be taught by God. Pray that God would cause the “eyes of your heart to be enlightened” (Ephesians 1:18) and that you would be responsive to the things God wants you to learn.
2. Read Genesis 16:1-21:7.
3. In the space below, briefly summarize the main events/actions/ideas contained in Genesis 16:1-21:7. (For an example summary, see Week1/Day1.)

### **Day Two:**

1. Prepare your heart before God. Pray that God would teach you from His Word, and that you would be responsive to His teaching.
2. Read Genesis 16:1-21:7 again.



- 3A. Read Genesis 17:15-22.
- 3B. How do you think God viewed Abraham's attempt to fulfill His promise of a son?

**Day Four:**

1. Prepare your heart before God. Pray that God would teach you from His Word, and that you would be responsive to His teaching.
  2. Read Genesis 21:1-7.
  3. According to Genesis 16:1-21:7, which one of Abraham's sons, Ishmael or Isaac, could be called the "child of promise?"
- 4A. Read Galatians 4:21-31.
- 4B. In Galatians 4:21-31, the author (the apostle Paul, inspired by the Holy Spirit) states that Ishmael and Isaac are associated with two "covenants." As best you can, elaborate on the characteristics of the two "covenants" in the space below.
- 4C. In the space below, explain how the births of Ishmael and Isaac illustrate the key characteristics of these two "covenants."
- 5A. The New Testament (= New Covenant) draws a fundamental distinction between "living by flesh/law/human effort" versus "living by faith/grace/Spirit." For example, consider the following verses from Galatians 3:1-3:
- "You foolish Galatians! Who has bewitched you? Before your very eyes Jesus Christ was clearly portrayed as crucified. I would like to learn just one thing from you: Did you **receive the Spirit** by **observing the law**, or by **believing what you heard**? Are you so foolish? After **beginning with the Spirit**, are you now trying to **attain your goal by human effort**?"*

- 5B. In the space below, explain how Abraham's effort to produce a child, resulting in Ishmael, is an example of "living by flesh/law/human effort."
- 5C. In the space below, explain how Abraham's effort to produce a child, resulting in Isaac, is an example of "living by faith/grace/Spirit."
- 6A. Can you think of an example from your life where you attempted to "produce righteousness" by "flesh/law/human effort?" Elaborate in the space below.
- 6B. Using the example from (6A), contrast living by "faith/grace/Spirit" with your efforts to produce righteousness by "human effort." In other words, explain how you could have applied the principles of "faith/grace/Spirit" in this part of your life.

**Day Five:**

1. Prepare your heart before God. Pray that God would teach you from His Word, and that you would be responsive to His teaching.
2. Read Genesis 17:9-14 and Genesis 17:23-27.

*Biblical Note:* "Circumcision was an ancient institution not limited to the family tribe of Abraham and was practiced in Egypt in the Old Kingdom period. But there it was carried out during boyhood rather than at infancy. A sixth dynasty Egyptian tomb relief depicts a boy being circumcised and two prisoners of a Canaanite king depicted on a 12<sup>th</sup> century BC Megiddo ivory were also

circumcised. But it is clear that in Abraham's family tribe general circumcision was not practiced up to this point, and it was not generally practiced in Mesopotamia from where Abraham came."

(SOURCE: [www.geocities.com/genesiscommentary/genesis7.html](http://www.geocities.com/genesiscommentary/genesis7.html))

*Biblical Note:* Dr. Peter Pett, in his commentary on Genesis, has this to say about circumcision: "By being ... circumcised with a view to membership in the covenant community, they showed their response to God's covenant with His people and their commitment to the God of the covenant. We note here that ... [it] is God who 'establishes' the covenant (verse 7). It is Abraham who 'keeps' it (verses 9-10). *Circumcision is not the making of a covenant but the response to a covenant already established by God*" [emphasis added].

(SOURCE: [www.geocities.com/genesiscommentary/genesis7.html](http://www.geocities.com/genesiscommentary/genesis7.html))

3. Note that for most recipients, circumcision was not a voluntary act: it was performed on male children when they were eight days old (Genesis 17:12). Thus, circumcision was primarily a command on the parents to place a physical mark on their male children identifying them as "Abraham's descendants." Why do you think God instituted this practice? What do you think was the purpose behind it? (NOTE: This is a tough question. If you can't think of anything, don't sweat it. We'll pick it up again below.)
  
4. Read Romans 3:1. What does this verse say about the benefit of circumcision?
  
5. Circumcision was part of God's efforts to create a consciousness among Abraham's descendants that they had been endowed with a special purpose: to be the trustee of God's revelation (the "oracles of God" [NASB] / "the very words of God" [NIV]). Clearly, God views His words, our Bible, as being incredibly important. Why do you think that is? What is so important about the Bible?
  
6. How about you? How important is the Bible to your life? Be honest now! How do you think your life would be different if you weren't familiar with God's Word? Elaborate in the space below.

7. How important is it to you that other people know God's Word? Elaborate in the space below.

**Day Six:**

1. Prepare your heart before God. Pray that God would teach you from His Word, and that you would be responsive to His teaching.

*NOTE: While the main story line in this section of Genesis is Abraham, this account in Genesis also includes insights into three other groups/individuals: (i) the people of Sodom and Gomorrah, (ii) Lott, and (iii) Abimelech. Unfortunately, we don't have time to explore all three. Instead, we'll focus on what we can learn from the biblical account of Abimelech.*

2. Read Genesis 20:1-18.

*Biblical Note: A remarkably similar account can be found in Genesis 26:1-11, involving Abraham's son Isaac. This leads one to believe that there is something that God wants us to learn from this story!*

3. Why do you think God included this story about Abraham and Abimelech in His Word? What do you think He wants us to learn from this? (NOTE: This is a hard question. If you are at a loss of how to answer it, no worries. We'll continue to pursue this question below.)
4. In this account of Abraham and Abimelech, who comes out looking better? Who seems to be the more "righteous" person? Elaborate your answer in the space below.

*NOTE: There is no reason to think that Abimelech was a follower of God (cf. Genesis 20:11). So here we have a "godless heathen" behaving more righteously than Abraham, the great patriarch of God's chosen people, the Jews! Which raises the question...why did God choose Abraham in the first place?*

- 5A. Deuteronomy 7:7-9 addresses a similar question, why did God choose the people of Israel to be "His people?" Read these verses and summarize the biblical answer to this question in the space below.

- 5B. Consider what the *NIV Bible Commentary* in the *Zondervan Reference Software* has this to say about Deuteronomy 7:7-9: *“It is the character of God rather than any excellence in the people that accounts for the choice. This is more evident by the reiterated assertion that the Lord their God was God, was faithful and true in himself and true to his covenant-treaty, and would be true in his covenant love toward his people into the distant future--“to a thousand generations of those who love him and keep his commands.””* In other words, the answer to the question of why God chose Israel (and by extension, Abraham) is because He did! He just loved them. Not because of who they were, but because of who God is.
- 6A. Read Romans 8:38,39.
- 6B. If you are a Christian, the ultimate answer to why God loves you is the same as why God chose Abraham (cf. Romans 5:6-8) – not because of any special merit that you possess, but because of who God is. How does that make you feel? How can that knowledge give you great confidence that God will love you and be faithful to you no matter what?
7. Review this week’s study. Did God teach you anything that spiritually impacted you this week? Elaborate in the space below.

## **WEEK SIX: Genesis 21:8-25:18**

### **Day One:**

1. Prepare your heart to be taught by God. Pray that God would cause the “eyes of your heart to be enlightened” (Ephesians 1:18) and that you would be responsive to the things God wants you to learn.
2. Read Genesis 21:8-25:18.
3. In the space below, briefly summarize the main events/actions/ideas contained in Genesis 21:8-25:18. (For an example summary, see Week1/Day1.)

### **Day Two:**

1. Prepare your heart before God. Pray that God would teach you from His Word, and that you would be responsive to His teaching.
2. Read Genesis 21:8-25:18 again.
3. What observations do you have of Genesis 21:8-25:18? What most stands out to you about what you read this week?

4. Think of some questions that might lead to an important spiritual “discovery.”<sup>13</sup> (For examples, you could review questions from last week’s study.) Write your questions in the space below, then pray that God would answer your question(s).

**Day Three:**

1. Prepare your heart before God. Pray that God would teach you from His Word, and that you would be responsive to His teaching.
  
- 2A. Read Genesis 16:1-16.
- 2B. Read Genesis 21:8-21.
- 2C. Read Genesis 25:12-18.
- 2D. Review Week5/Days 3 and 4.
- 2E. The Bible gives considerable attention – a surprising amount of attention – to Ishmael, especially since he is not the “child of promise” around which the biblical storyline develops. Why do you think God had so much written about Ishmael in His Word? What do you think He wants us to learn from this?
  
- 3A. Read Genesis 16:7-9.
- 3B. Read Genesis 21:9-14.

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<sup>13</sup> One question which you may have, and which unfortunately we do not have time to address, has to do with the unconditional nature of the Abrahamic covenant. Genesis 22:15-18 seems to indicate that God would fulfill His promises of descendants and land because of Abraham’s faithful response (Genesis 22:16: ... “I swear by myself, declares the LORD, that **because you have done this** and have not withheld your son, your only son...”). This seems to conflict with what we learned earlier about the Abrahamic Covenant (see the Week4/Day6 study). However, note that none of the promises that God makes in Genesis 22:15-18 add anything to what He had previously promised to do unilaterally/unconditionally (e.g., descendants, land, nations will be blessed through Abraham). Interestingly, Genesis 18:19 states [God speaking]: “For I have chosen him [Abraham], in order that he may command his children and his household after him to keep the way of the LORD by doing righteousness and justice; in order that the LORD may bring upon Abraham what He has spoken about him.” In other words, God implies that He Himself engineered Abraham’s obedience to bring about God’s plan. In this sense, Abraham’s obedience, and subsequent “reward,” parallels the Christian’s obedience, and subsequent “reward,” even though it is God who is doing the work through us (cf. Philippians 2:13). This lies well beyond the purview of our Genesis study! The main point of this discussion is this: The Abrahamic Covenant is unconditional, based on God’s doing, and a careful study of Genesis 22:15-18 does not alter this conclusion.

- 3C. The first time conflict entered Hagar's and Sarai's/Sarah's relationship, God gently intervened and led Hagar back to her mistress. The second time it arose, God allowed (directed?) Hagar to be driven out of Abraham's household. Why do you think God acted differently in these two instances? What do you think He wants us to learn from this? (NOTE: This is a tough question. We'll continue to deal with this question below.)
- 4A. Consider how the Holy Spirit (through the apostle Paul) interprets Ishmael's expulsion for us in the later, New Testament revelation of Galatians:  
Galatians 4:28-31: *"Now you, brothers, like Isaac, are children of promise. At that time the son born in the ordinary way persecuted the son born by the power of the Spirit. It is the same now. **But what does the Scripture say? "Get rid of the slave woman and her son, for the slave woman's son will never share in the inheritance with the free woman's son."** Therefore, brothers, we are not children of the slave woman, but of the free woman."*
- 4B. According to the New Testament, Isaac and Ishmael – though real, historical figures – are also “types.” That is, they represent ideas about how God wants us to live. As we learned in the Week5/Days 3 and 4 study, Isaac represents “living by faith/grace/Spirit,” while Ishmael represents “living by flesh/law/human effort.” With this in mind, what lesson can we learn from the conflict between Ishmael and Isaac? What does this conflict have to say to the Christian who tries to live his/her life through a combination of “living by faith” and “living by flesh?”
- 4C. The first time Hagar left Sarai/Sarah, Isaac was not yet born. By bringing them back, only to have conflict break out again, God illustrates that coexistence between the “child of promise” and the child born through human efforts is not possible. What lesson can you learn from this?

5. One frequently hears that “God helps those who help themselves.” Do you think there is an application in today’s lesson for this saying? Elaborate in the space below.

**Day Four:**

1. Prepare your heart before God. Pray that God would teach you from His Word, and that you would be responsive to His teaching.
2. Read Genesis 22:1-19.
3. What do you think about this story of Abraham’s “test?” What do you think God wants you to learn from this?
4. Is there anything about Abraham’s “test” that confuses/bothers/disturbs you? Elaborate in the space below.
- 5A. Before taking up the purpose behind Abraham’s test, let us address parallels between Isaac’s sacrifice and the sacrifice of Jesus Christ. In the space below, elaborate on similarities/differences between the sacrifices of Isaac and Jesus.
- 5B. Certainly one reason for Abraham’s “test” is that it illustrates God’s character. Fill in the blank in the following sentence:

*What God was not willing to impose on Abraham, God imposed on Himself, in that He sacrificed His own \_\_\_\_\_ so that our sins might be forgiven.*

6A. Consider three possible reasons for Abraham's test:

REASON #1: *That God would learn whether Abraham loved Him so much that He would be willing to sacrifice his son for Him.*

REASON #2: *That Abraham would learn how far he was willing to trust God.*

REASON #3: *That we would learn something about the nature of real faith.*

6B. Genesis 22:12 ("now I know that you fear God") seems to support REASON #1, but there is a problem with this. Can you identify what it is? In the space below, elaborate why REASON #1 cannot be the reason for Abraham's "test."

6C. REASON #2 is a possibility, but it is interesting to note that there is nothing in Scripture to suggest that this was God's purpose in putting Abraham through the test. In contrast, there IS support in Scripture for REASON #3. Consider the following:

James 2:21-24: *"Was not Abraham our father justified by works, when he offered up Isaac his son on the altar? You see that **faith was working with his works**, and as a result of the works, faith was perfected; and the Scripture was fulfilled which says, "AND ABRAHAM BELIEVED GOD, AND IT WAS RECKONED TO HIM AS RIGHTEOUSNESS," and he was called the friend of God. You see that a man is justified by works, and not by faith alone."*

Note that the Holy Spirit (through the New Testament writer James) uses Abraham's offering of Isaac as an example of real faith ("faith was working with his works"). In the space below, explain how this provides support for REASON #3.

7. Recall that in the beginning of Chapter 15, God promised Abraham that a "son coming from his own body would be his heir" (Genesis 15:4). Abraham "believed God," and God "credited righteousness" to Abraham as a result of his belief (Genesis 15:6). In the space below, explain how Abraham's willingness to sacrifice Isaac illustrates "real faith."

8A. What (do you think) was Abraham’s rationale when he walked up the hill to sacrifice Isaac? In other words, why did he do it? After you think about this for a moment, read Hebrews 11:17-19 to get a deeper glimpse at what Abraham was thinking. Write below what you think Abraham was thinking as he walked Isaac up that hill.

8B. Abraham was believing specific truths about God and His character as he walked by faith up that mountain to sacrifice Isaac. God clearly “delivered” consistent with the truth Abraham was believing. Do you see any parallels to this for your Christian life today? Are there places in your Christian life where God’s Word asks you to do something which sounds difficult or “radical” to you? How does this passage give you a clue as to how to walk by faith in those areas of your life?

**Day Five:**

1. Prepare your heart before God. Pray that God would teach you from His Word, and that you would be responsive to His teaching.
2. Review yesterday’s study.
3. Read Hebrews 11:6. What does this verse say about the importance God attaches to “real faith?”
4. Given the importance that God attaches to “real faith,” it is important for us to think about the connection between what we say we believe, and what we really believe. In the space below, consider some things that Christians frequently say they believe. In the corresponding space next to that statement, explain the kinds of “works” / “actions” that would evidence that they really believed this:

<i>Christians say they believe:</i>	<i>Actions that evidence that Christians really believe this:</i>
“The Bible is God’s Word”	

<i>Christians say they believe:</i>	<i>Actions that evidence that Christians really believe this:</i>
“A person needs to trust Jesus to forgive their sins in order to have eternal life”	
“The purpose of my life is to glorify God”	
“God will provide all of my needs”	

5. Now think about your own life. On the left column in the table below, identify an important Christian/religious belief that you have. In the column to the right, write down some “works” / “actions” that would evidence that you “really believe” this.

<i>I say I believe:</i>	<i>Actions that would evidence that I really believe this:</i>

<i>I say I believe:</i>	<i>Actions that would evidence that I really believe this:</i>

**Day Six:**

1. Prepare your heart before God. Pray that God would teach you from His Word, and that you would be responsive to His teaching.
- 2A. Read Genesis 13:14-17.
- 2B. Read Genesis 15:7.
- 2C. Read Genesis 15:12-21.
- 2D. Read Genesis 17:7,8.
- 2E. Read Genesis 23:1-20.

*Biblical Note:* A common theme in Genesis is the promise of “land” that God made to Abraham and his descendants. Prior to purchasing the burial cave for Sarah and adjoining field, Abraham was a nomad, wandering throughout the land that God had promised him. In Genesis 23:1-20, Abraham took the first step towards possessing the “Promised Land,” though the ultimate fulfillment would not be realized in his lifetime.

3. Interestingly, this picture/type of Abraham wandering on earth as a “stranger and sojourner” (NASB) / “alien and stranger” (NIV) (cf. Genesis 23:4) is applied to God’s followers throughout the Bible.
  - 3A. Read Psalm 39:12.
  - 3B. Read Hebrews 11:13-16, along with Hebrews 13:12-14.
  - 3C. Read 1 Peter 1:1.
  - 3D. Read 1 Peter 2:11.
5. Explain how a “stranger and sojourner” lives life differently than a permanent resident/landowner.



**WEEK SEVEN: (Isaac and Rebekah)**  
**Excerpts from Genesis 24:1-35:29**

*NOTE: Over the next few weeks, we will be looking more in depth at the Genesis accounts of the lives of Isaac, Jacob, and Joseph. As we do this, the Scripture passages in each week will overlap some. That is why you may find passages in this week's section that you wonder why we are not talking more about. Be patient! We will cover some of those passages that deal more with Jacob in the next two weeks. The scope of this week's study is to see what God would want us to see from Isaac and Rebekah's life.*

**Day One:**

1. Prepare your heart to be taught by God. Pray that God would cause the “eyes of your heart to be enlightened” (Ephesians 1:18) and that you would be responsive to the things God wants you to learn.
  
2. Read the following excerpts from Genesis 24:1-35:29:
  - Genesis 24:1-24:67
  - Genesis 25:19-25:28
  - Genesis 26:1-26:33
  - Genesis 26:34-26:36
  - Genesis 27:1-27:41
  - Genesis 27:42-28:5
  - Genesis 35:27-29
  
3. In the space next to each of the Scripture excerpts below, briefly summarize the main events/actions/ideas contained in the respective biblical passages. (For an example summary, see Week1/Day1.)

-Genesis 24:1-24:67

-Genesis 25:19-25:28

-Genesis 26:1-26:33

-Genesis 26:34-26:36

-Genesis 27:1-27:41

-Genesis 27:42-28:5

-Genesis 35:27-29

**Day Two:**

1. Prepare your heart before God. Pray that God would teach you from His Word, and that you would be responsive to His teaching.
2. Read the following excerpts from Genesis 24:1-35:29 again.
  - Genesis 24:1-24:67
  - Genesis 25:19-25:28
  - Genesis 26:1-26:33<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> No doubt you have noticed that this account of Isaac and Rebekah in the land of the Philistines, where Isaac passes off Rebekah as his sister, has several similarities with previous stories of Abraham and Sarah (cf. Genesis 12:10-20 and 20:1-13). Dr. Peter Pett's commentary on Genesis has this to say regarding the question, Is this story a duplicate?: "Those who delight in seeing duplicate narratives everywhere there is a coincidence and have a bias against anything that seems like a coincidence when it comes to ancient records, try to tell us that this story is simply a duplicate of chapters 12:10-20 and 20:1-13, but on careful examination there is no essential where the stories are similar, apart from those which are totally explicable and likely.

It is true that each depicts men as licentious, but then that has ever been the case. In those days a woman's virtue was ever at risk, especially a "foreign" woman, if she was not closely watched and guarded. And they all depict the profession that a wife is a sister. But as this is in fact stated to be Abraham's regular policy it would clearly happen again and again. The only other "coincidence" is explained by the fact that Abimelech is a throne name (or a family name) and therefore passes from one generation to another. Thus the similarities are easily explained and happened often.

What is striking is the differences. In 12:10-20 we have a situation well known in those days of servants of Pharaohs ever seeking beautiful women to satisfy him, something they did regularly, and the account is accurate in the way it presents how Sarah is brought into one of his households. But she escapes because of Yahweh sending a plague. In 20:1-13 we have a petty king misusing his authority to take possession of a beautiful "foreign" woman for his pleasure. He probably did it regularly, but this time it did not work because he was dealing with Yahweh, who gave him a vivid and unpleasant dream. In this third episode with Isaac no attempt at all is made on the woman and no supernatural activity is recorded, although we can see Yahweh's hand behind events. The one common factor of any importance is thus the activity of Yahweh.

With regard to duplicate names, history is littered with them, for names tended to be passed on in families within a generation. And as we have suggested throne names were automatically passed on.

We consider how in Egyptian inscriptions Khnumhotep, the governor of Menat-Khufu has certain privileges under Amenemhet, and how in the next generation another Khnumhotep, governor of Menat-Khufu has the same privileges under another Amenemhet, and it is clear that these cannot be duplicates. Or how Tuthmosis campaigned into Northern Syria, left a victory stela by the Euphrates and hunted elephants at Niy, and so did Tuthmosis his grandson.

So once we have discounted man's constant propensity to evil where women are concerned (especially if they are vulnerable foreigners), and their being ever on the watch for such opportunities, and the patriarchal practice of continually representing wives as sisters because of this propensity, what should surprise us is how totally different the stories are. The only really common feature is the protecting power of Yahweh and even this is exercised in different ways. Thus we have every grounds for accepting that the events happened each time as described."

(SOURCE: <http://www.geocities.com/genesiscommentary/genesis9>)



- 4A. Read Genesis 17:19-22.
- 4B. Read Genesis 26:2-5.
- 4C. Read Genesis 26:24.
  
- 5. What great act of faith did Isaac do that caused God to extend His covenant to Isaac and Isaac's descendants?
  
- 6. It is noteworthy that there is not much that is spiritually admirable about the life of Isaac. Isaac lies about his relationship with his wife, calling her his sister (cf. Genesis 26:7).<sup>15</sup> He does a good thing in sending Jacob back to his home country to get a wife, but that only comes about through the nagging of Rebekah (cf. Genesis 27:46-28:2). And he had to be manipulated and deceived in order to get him to do the right thing and give Jacob his blessing (cf. Genesis 27:2-4). Yet even so, God blesses Isaac and continues His covenant relationship with him.
  - 6A. What does this say about the character of God?
  
  - 6B. What, if anything, can you learn about YOUR relationship with God by learning about God and Isaac's relationship?

**Day Four:**

- 1. Prepare your heart before God. Pray that God would teach you from His Word, and that you would be responsive to His teaching.
  
- 2A. Read Genesis 25:21-23.
  
- 2B. Do you think Rebekah would have shared this prophecy with Isaac? Why or why not? (HINT: We can only speculate here, but use your common sense.)
  
- 2C. Read Genesis 25:27,28.

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<sup>15</sup> While it is true that Abraham acted similarly, there is an important difference: Sarah was Abraham's sister (cf. Genesis 20:12), the daughter of his father, but not his mother. In contrast, Rebekah was Isaac's cousin, and could in no way rightfully be called his sister.

- 2D. Which one of the twins did Rebekah favor? Which one of the twins did Isaac favor?
- 2E. Do you think that during the many years that Isaac and Rebekah parented the twins, that Rebekah might have had occasion to emphasize to Isaac that God had prophesized Jacob to dominate over Esau? Elaborate your answer in the space below. (HINT: Again, we can only speculate here, but use your common sense.)
3. Read Genesis 27:1-27:40.
4. Compare Genesis 27:29 with Genesis 25:23. Do you notice anything unusual about the fact that Isaac wanted to give the blessing of priority to Esau, even though God had previously prophesized that Jacob and his descendants would be favored over Esau? Elaborate in the space below.
5. It is difficult to know for certain whether Isaac was deliberately bucking God's will when he attempted to bless Esau over Isaac, though that is certainly a possibility.<sup>16</sup> The alternative is that Rebekah never shared the prophecy of Genesis 25:21-23 with her husband and that Isaac didn't know any better when he attempted to bless Esau. However, if that were the case, one wonders why God didn't communicate directly with Isaac to let him know that the blessing should run through Jacob. Whatever the reason, God orchestrated events so that Jacob, not Esau, would receive Isaac's blessing.
- 5A. What does this teach us about God's will?
- 5B. How can you apply this truth when you are wrestling with knowing God's will for your life?

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<sup>16</sup> Hebrews 11:20 states that "By faith Isaac blessed Jacob and Esau in regard to their future." Since Isaac clearly intended to give Esau the better blessing, the faith that is being commended here probably refers to Isaac carrying out his responsibility to bestow a blessing, and not specifically on whom the blessing was to be bestowed.

**Day Five:**

1. Prepare your heart before God. Pray that God would teach you from His Word, and that you would be responsive to His teaching.

2A. Read Genesis 27:1-27:40.

*Biblical Note:* This practice of a “deathbed blessing” is prominently mentioned later in the book of Genesis (cf. Genesis 48:10-49:28).<sup>17,18</sup> The Peter Pett commentary on Genesis states that “Deathbed words were considered to be especially effective, and even prophetic, and were treated seriously. (See ... Deuteronomy 33:1ff; 2 Samuel 23:1ff.)”

(SOURCE: <http://www.geocities.com/genesiscommentary/genesis9>)

2B. If you think about it, there are some similarities between (i) Isaac’s blessing of Jacob and (ii) evangelism, by which Christians share the gospel with non-Christians and lead them to salvation. In both cases, God uses humans to achieve His purposes in building His kingdom. In the space below, elaborate on the similarities, and differences, between Isaac’s blessing of Jacob and evangelism.

2C. How about you? Are you being used of God to share the gospel and bestow His blessing on others? Are you actively involved in evangelism? If not, do you want to be? Elaborate in the space below.

3A. Read Genesis 11:30.

3B. Read Genesis 25:21.

3C. Read Genesis 29:31.

3D. Do you notice a similarity connecting Sarah, Rebekah, and Rachel? What is it?

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<sup>17</sup> Interestingly, while Isaac thought he was close to death, he was wrong. He ended up living many more years (cf. Genesis 35:27-29).

<sup>18</sup> Whether Isaac’s blessing had some real “power” associated with it, or whether it was just a cultural thing that was merely perceived by the people at the time to have special meaning, is unclear. If people perceived the blessing to have special meaning, then Isaac’s blessing of Jacob would have provided further validation of Jacob’s priority as Abraham’s spiritual descendant, and as a progenitor of the line of descendants that would form the future nation of Israel. What is clear is that God used these words/actions of Isaac to further his plans for Jacob and the nation of God-worshippers He was building.

3E. Do you think there is any spiritual significance to the fact that these three prominent Old Testament women were all initially barren, and yet God was able to produce “fruit” in their lives such that their children became the patriarchs of the future nation of Israel? Elaborate in the space below.

3F. Do you think this spiritual lesson, illustrated by the picture of barrenness and subsequent “fruit” of these women’s lives, has an application to your life? Elaborate in the space below.

**Day Six:**

1. Prepare your heart before God. Pray that God would teach you from His Word, and that you would be responsive to His teaching.

2A. Read Genesis 24:1-24:67.

2B. Read Genesis 28:1-28:5.

3. In the accounts above, Abraham and Isaac arranged for their sons to marry wives from their “own people.” Why do you think that was important to them (and God)?

4A. Read 2 Corinthians 6:14-16.

4B. Why do you think it is important to God that Christians not be “bound together” (NASB) / “yoked together” (NIV) with non-Christians?

4C. Do you think that these verses teach that Christians should not marry non-Christians? Elaborate your thoughts in the space below.



## WEEK EIGHT: Excerpts from Genesis 25:19-32:2

### Day One:

1. Prepare your heart to be taught by God. Pray that God would cause the “eyes of your heart to be enlightened” (Ephesians 1:18) and that you would be responsive to the things God wants you to learn.
2. Read the following excerpts from Genesis 25:19-32:2:
  - Genesis 25:19-25:26
  - Genesis 25:27-25:34
  - Genesis 27:1-27:41
  - Genesis 27:42-28:5
  - Genesis 28:10-28:22
  - Genesis 29:1-29:30
  - Genesis 29:31-30:24
  - Genesis 30:25-31:2
  - Genesis 31:3-32:2
3. In the space next to each of the Scripture excerpts below, briefly summarize the main events/actions/ideas contained in the respective biblical passages. (For an example summary, see Week1/Day1.)

-Genesis 25:19-25:26

-Genesis 25:27-25:34

-Genesis 27:1-27:41

-Genesis 27:42-28:5

-Genesis 28:10-28:22

-Genesis29:1-29:30

-Genesis 29:31-30:24

-Genesis 30:25-31:2

-Genesis 31:3-32:2

**Day Two:**

1. Prepare your heart before God. Pray that God would teach you from His Word, and that you would be responsive to His teaching.
2. Read the following excerpts from Genesis 25:19-32:2 again:
  - Genesis 25:19-25:26
  - Genesis 25:27-25:34
  - Genesis 27:1-27:41
  - Genesis 27:42-28:5
  - Genesis 28:10-28:22
  - Genesis 29:1-29:30
  - Genesis 29:31-30:24
  - Genesis 30:25-31:2
  - Genesis 31:3-32:2
3. What observations do you have of these excerpts from Genesis 25:19-32:2? What most stands out to you about what you read this week?
4. Think of some questions that might lead to an important spiritual “discovery.” (For examples, you could review questions from last week’s study.) Write your questions in the space below, then pray that God would answer your question(s).



- 4D. What would it take for you to get to the point where you had complete confidence and trust to fully follow God?

**Day Four:**

1. Prepare your heart before God. Pray that God would teach you from His Word, and that you would be responsive to His teaching.

- 2A. Read the excerpts from Genesis 25:19-32:2 listed below:

-Genesis 27:41-27:45

-Genesis 29:16-29:30 and Genesis 29:31-30:24

-Genesis 30:29-31:2 and Genesis 31:17-31:23

- 3B. Each of the preceding excerpts describes a situation where Jacob's scheming/inconsiderate/deceptive ways got him into a difficult predicament. In the space next to each of these excerpts above, briefly summarize how Jacob messed up and the trouble that subsequently followed.

4. Now read the following excerpts. In the space next to each of these, briefly summarize how God intervened in Jacob's life to take care of him:

-Genesis 28:10-28:15

-Genesis 29:31-30:24

-Genesis 30:25-30:30

-Genesis 31:3

-Genesis 31:4-31:9

-Genesis 31:22-31:29

-Genesis 32:1-2

5. What had Jacob done to deserve such blessed treatment from God? Elaborate your thoughts in the space below.
  
6. Why do you think God went to such extraordinary measures to protect and bless Jacob?
  
7. What can we learn about God's character through seeing how He dealt with Jacob? Elaborate your thoughts in the space below.
  
8. If you are a child of God, what confidence does this give you as you look ahead to what lies in store for your life in the years ahead? Elaborate in the space below.



- 4B. Why do you think God chose to found the nation of Israel with such ordinary, unimpressive individuals? What do you think He was trying to communicate to us today?
- 5A. Read 1 Corinthians 1:26-31.
- 5B. If you are a Christian, what do these verses have to say about what God needs from you in order to advance His plans on earth? How does that make you feel? Elaborate your thoughts in the space below.
6. God is very interested in the development of the nation of Israel. Throughout the entire Bible, God's special promises and special dealings with the nation are detailed, including several mentions of Israel in the book of Revelation, as God shows His people what the future will be like. So, God has been very interested in Israel from the very beginning (Genesis), all the way to the very end (Revelation), and yet God uses such common means to form this nation, even using the sinful jealousy of Rachel and Leah as the fuel to produce these 12 boys. What does this tell you about our God? What does this tell about His ability to work through our lives to accomplish His purposes, even in areas which are of extreme importance to Him?

**Day Six:**

1. Prepare your heart before God. Pray that God would teach you from His Word, and that you would be responsive to His teaching.
2. An interesting theme throughout the Book of Genesis is how God confounds the plans of man and replaces "man's choice" with His own choice. Consider the following examples below:
  - God chooses Isaac (the second born) over Ishmael (the first born)
  - God chooses Jacob (the second born) over Esau (the first born)
  - Later on, we will see a similar scenario as God causes Ephraim, the second-born son of Joseph, to be blessed above Manasseh, the first-born son (cf. Genesis 48:8-48:20).

These examples are even more noteworthy in that they fly in the face of the well-established cultural system of primogeniture, in which the first-born son was given rights and privileges of preeminence above the other sons.

- 2A. We know from later revelation that God arranged many of the historical events of Genesis to serve as “pictures” of spiritual truths (for example, see Galatians 4:28f.). Thus, it is reasonable to presume that when God consistently chooses the second-born son over the first-born son, He is illustrating a spiritual truth. What is that truth? What do you think He is trying to teach us?
- 2B. Some commentators see in God’s favoring of the second over the first, a preview of the “New Covenant”, wherein God chooses a second, “younger” covenant to have preeminence over an “older” covenant. Consider the following verses:

Jeremiah 31:31-33: *“Behold, days are coming,” declares the LORD, “when I will make a **NEW COVENANT** with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah, not like the covenant which I made with their fathers in the day I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt, My covenant which they broke, although I was a husband to them,” declares the LORD. But this is the covenant which I will make with the house of Israel after those days,” declares the LORD, “I will put My law within them, and on their heart I will write it; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people. And they shall not teach again, each man his neighbor and each man his brother, saying, ‘Know the LORD,’ for they shall all know Me, from the least of them to the greatest of them,” declares the LORD, “for I will forgive their iniquity, and their sin I will remember no more.”*

Luke 22:15-20: *“And He said to them, “I have earnestly desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer; for I say to you, I shall never again eat it until it is fulfilled in the kingdom of God.” And when He had taken a cup and given thanks, He said, “Take this and share it among yourselves; for I say to you, I will not drink of the fruit of the vine from now on until the kingdom of God comes.” And when He had taken some bread and given thanks, He broke it, and gave it to them, saying, “This is My body which is given for you; do this in remembrance of Me.” And in the same way He took the cup after they had eaten, saying, “This cup which is poured out for you is the **NEW COVENANT** in My blood.”*

Hebrews 8:6-7,13: *“But now He [Jesus] has obtained a more excellent ministry, by as much as He is also the mediator of a better covenant, which has been enacted on better promises. For if that first covenant had been faultless, there would have been no occasion sought for a second....When He said, “A **NEW COVENANT**,” He has made the first obsolete. But whatever is becoming obsolete and growing old is ready to disappear.”*

What do you think? Do you think this is reading too much into the Bible to see God's choosing of the second over the first as a preview of the New Covenant being chosen by God to replace the Old Covenant? Elaborate your thoughts in the space below.

3. Review this week's study. Did God teach you anything that spiritually impacted you this week? Elaborate in the space below.

## WEEK NINE: Excerpts from Genesis 32:3-49:33

### Day One:

1. Prepare your heart to be taught by God. Pray that God would cause the “eyes of your heart to be enlightened” (Ephesians 1:18) and that you would be responsive to the things God wants you to learn.
2. Read the following excerpts from Genesis 32:3-49:33:
  - Genesis 32:3-32:21
  - Genesis 32:22-32:32
  - Genesis 33:1-33:20
  - Genesis 34:1-34:31
  - Genesis 35:1-35:8
  - Genesis 35:9-35:15
  - Genesis 35:16-35:20
  - Genesis 35:21,22
  - Genesis 35:23-35:29
  - Genesis 37:1-37:36
  - Genesis 38:1-38:30

Then skim Genesis 39:1-49:33, paying special attention to the following passages:

- Genesis 42:1-42:4
- Genesis 42:29-42:38
- Genesis 43:1-43:14
- Genesis 45:25-46:7
- Genesis 46:26-46:30
- Genesis 47:7-47:10
- Genesis 48:1-48:16
- Genesis 49:28-49:33

### Day Two:

1. Prepare your heart before God. Pray that God would teach you from His Word, and that you would be responsive to His teaching.
2. In the space next to each of the Scripture excerpts below, briefly summarize the main events/actions/ideas contained in the respective biblical passages. (For an example summary, see Week1/Day1.)
  - Genesis 32:3-32:21
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  - Genesis 32:22-32:32

-Genesis 33:1-33:20

-Genesis 34:1-34:31

-Genesis 35:1-35:8

-Genesis 35:9-35:15

-Genesis 35:16-35:20

-Genesis 35:21,22

-Genesis 35:23-35:29

-Genesis 37:1-37:36

-Genesis 38:1-38:30

-Genesis 42:1-42:4

-Genesis 42:29-42:38

-Genesis 43:1-43:14



Biblical Note #1: “Peniel” means “the face of God” in Hebrew. The *NIV Bible Commentary* in the *Zondervan Reference Library* has this to say about Jacob’s struggle with God: “The importance of the name “Peniel” is that it identifies the one with whom Jacob was wrestling as God. Jacob’s remark that he had seen God face to face did not necessarily mean that the “man” he wrestled with was in fact God. Rather, when one saw the “angel of the LORD,” it was appropriate to say that he had seen the face of God (e.g., Judges 13:22; but cf. Hosea 12:2-4).”

Biblical Note #2: “Jacob” means “supplanter” or “deceiver” in Hebrew. “Israel” means “one who wrestles with God.”

3. Do you think Jacob’s struggle with God is meant to be an illustration for how Christians are supposed to interact with God? Elaborate your thoughts below.

4. Consider the following verses:

Luke 11:5-8: [Jesus speaking] “*And He said to them, “Suppose one of you shall have a friend, and shall go to him at midnight, and say to him, ‘Friend, lend me three loaves; for a friend of mine has come to me from a journey, and I have nothing to set before him’; and from inside he shall answer and say, ‘Do not bother me; the door has already been shut and my children and I are in bed; I cannot get up and give you anything.’ “I tell you, even though he will not get up and give him anything because he is his friend, yet because of his persistence he will get up and give him as much as he needs.”*”

Luke 18:1-7: [Jesus speaking] “*Now He was telling them a parable to show that at all times they ought to pray and not to lose heart, saying, “There was in a certain city a judge who did not fear God, and did not respect man. “And there was a widow in that city, and she kept coming to him, saying, ‘Give me legal protection from my opponent.’ “And for a while he was unwilling; but afterward he said to himself, ‘Even though I do not fear God nor respect man, yet because this widow bothers me, I will give her legal protection, lest by continually coming she wear me out.’” And the Lord said, “Hear what the unrighteous judge said; now shall not God bring about justice for His elect, who cry to Him day and night, and will He delay long over them? “I tell you that He will bring about justice for them speedily. However, when the Son of Man comes, will He find faith on the earth?”*”

5. In Jacob's wrestling with God we have a picture of a man who is scared, needy, and desperate. He clings to "God" for all he's worth in order to secure God's help. The fact that God rewards Jacob's behavior suggests that God wants us to cling to Him for help. Why do you think that is? Why do you think God wants us to be "dependent" on Him?
  
6. How about you? Do you see yourself as being needy and desperate for God's help? Elaborate your thoughts in the space below.
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
7. Suppose a Christian doesn't "feel" needy and desperate for God's help. Is there anything they can/should do about that? Elaborate your thoughts in the space below.

**Day Four:**

1. Prepare your heart before God. Pray that God would teach you from His Word, and that you would be responsive to His teaching.
  
- 2A. Read the following excerpts from Genesis 32:22-35:29. Next to each passage, write down the geographical location where the "action" occurs:
  - Genesis 32:22
  
  - Genesis 33:17
  
  - Genesis 33:18
  
  - Genesis 35:6
  
  - Genesis 35:16-35:19
  
  - Genesis 35:21
  
  - Genesis 35:27

- 2B. Use the map attached to the end of this week's study to track Jacob's return from Paddan-aram to his father Isaac's home.

NOTE #1: You should be able to find all of the locations, except for Eder ("tower of Eder"/"Migdal Eder"). It's not clear where the "ford of the Jabbok" is, but you should be able to locate the Jabbok River.

NOTE #2: Paddan-aram, the beginning of Jacob's journey, is located substantially northeast of Damascus, off the map.

- 3A. Based on your reading of Genesis 32:22-35:29, how much time do you think elapsed between when Jacob wrestled with God before crossing the Jabbok, and his eventual return to his home in Hebron? Go ahead, take a guess!

- 3B. While we don't know exactly how much time elapsed, most commentators are agreed that it was a period of many years. We know this because Jacob spent 20 years with Laban in Paddan-aram. He married both his wives after his seventh year of service to Laban. Over the next 13 years (most likely during the first half of those years) he had 11 sons and at least one daughter, Dinah. Dinah was the daughter of Leah, and was born after she had already given birth to Reuben, Simeon, Levi, Judah, Issachar, and Zebulun. Thus, at most, Dinah was 8 or 9 when Jacob left Paddan-aram. By the time that Jacob and his clan moved to Shechem (Genesis 33:18), Dinah was apparently in her teens -- old enough to venture into the city by herself and sufficiently grown up that the prince of the land (Shechem, the son of Hamor) wanted to marry her. This implies that Jacob spent several years in Succoth (notice also that Jacob built a house in Succoth -- cf. Genesis 33:17). And of course, it was only later that Jacob finally returned to see Isaac. This leads to the following question: Do you find it strange that Jacob took so many years to return to his father Isaac and his childhood home in Hebron? Elaborate your thoughts in the space below.

- 4A. Read Genesis 33:18-34:31.

- 4B. Genesis 33:18-34:31 provides evidences (more than one) that Jacob was planning on living permanently in Shechem, and was okay with his sons/daughters marrying into the local community. Find these evidences and report them in the space below.

- 4C. Look up the following verses: (i) Genesis 24:1-4; (ii) Genesis 27:46; and (iii) Genesis 28:1,2.
- 4D. In the space below, explain how these verses imply that Jacob should have known better than to consider living among, and marrying into, the Canaanite community at Shechem.
- 5A. Reread Genesis 33:18-34:31, paying particular attention to the subject of circumcision. Was Jacob okay with having the Canaanites circumcised in order to facilitate the mingling of these two communities? Write your answer and how you know it in the space below.
- 5B. Consider the following discussion concerning circumcision from the *NIV Bible Commentary* in the *Zondervan Reference Library*: "...the rite of circumcision was to be a sign (cf. Genesis 17:11) of the unity of the covenant people and their separation from the rest of the nations. Circumcision was not limited to Abraham's descendants but was rather given as a sign of one's joining in the hope of God's promises to Abraham. It was, in fact, a sign given of the covenant promise that Abraham would become the father of "many nations" (Genesis 17:5). But in the way the sons of Jacob carried out the request that these Canaanites be circumcised, it offers a curious reversal of God's intention. They offered circumcision as a means for the two families to become "one people." The Canaanites were not joining the offspring of Abraham; rather, the descendants of Abraham were joining with the Canaanites. This point is stressed in Hamor and Shechem's report to their countrymen: "Won't their livestock, their property and all their other animals become ours?""
6. Genesis 35:1 reports how God appeared to Jacob and tells him to move from Shechem and go to Bethel. The subsequent account in Genesis 35:2-35:5 gives one more piece of evidence that all was not spiritually well with Jacob and his clan. Identify that evidence in the space below.

- 7A. Review today's Bible study.
- 7B. Taken together, today's study provides compelling evidence that -- despite all of God's interventions in his life -- Jacob had wandered far from God's original design of being the progenitor of a people who would constitute a nation of God-worshippers, and serve as representatives of God to the rest of the world. In the space below, summarize this evidence.

**Day Five:**

1. Prepare your heart before God. Pray that God would teach you from His Word, and that you would be responsive to His teaching.
- 2A. Read Genesis 35:6-35:15.
- 2B. What is significant about Jacob's return to Bethel? What happened there many years previously which makes this a very special event (cf. Genesis 28:11-28:19)? Elaborate your answer in the space below.
- 3A. Read Genesis 35:16-35:29.
- 3B. Read Genesis 28:20-22.
- 3C. After many years, Jacob finally returns to Isaac, his father, and his birthplace home. This journey of Jacob's, and his subsequent return, is symbolic of Jacob's larger spiritual journey. In the space below, sketch out the "spiritual meaning" of Jacob's journey and the return to his family "roots."

- 4A. Read Genesis 35:11,12.
- 4B. God's statement to Jacob is a reiteration of a theme that has run throughout the Book of Genesis. What is that theme? Elaborate your answer in the space below.
5. Go back and re-read Genesis 33:18-34:31. Upon reflection, these events, repugnant as they are, provide an illuminating account of how God managed to get Jacob to where he needed be, despite Jacob's spiritual backsliding. In the space below, discuss how the events of Genesis 33:18-34:31 were necessary to get Jacob to return to "his father's house" (cf. Genesis 28:21).
6. What spiritual lessons, if any, can you see for your own life in how God worked through Jacob's/Israel's life?

**Day Six:**

1. Prepare your heart before God. Pray that God would teach you from His Word, and that you would be responsive to His teaching.
2. While Jacob/Israel finally got to the point of making God "his God" (cf. Genesis 28:21), his life ended up being very "messy." He had lots of troubles, including heartache from his sons (the patriarchs of the nation of Israel!). In the space next to each Bible passage below, briefly describe the scandal caused by Jacob's/Israel's sons:  
  
-Genesis 35:22  
  
-Genesis 37:19-37:28  
  
-Genesis 38:1-38:26

3A. Kid problems, wife problems (the constant struggle between Leah and Rachel), financial problems caused by famine, heartache caused by the supposed death of his “favorite” son, all of these were earmarks of Jacob’s/Israel’s life. Look up the passages below and try and get a feel for Jacob’s/Israel’s attitude towards adversity in life:

-Genesis 31:36

-Genesis 34:30

-Genesis 37:31-35

-Genesis 42:1,2

-Genesis 42:36

-Genesis 43:11-14

-Genesis 45:25-28

-Genesis 46:30

-Genesis 47:7-47:10

3B. Based on the passages above, how would you characterize Jacob’s/Israel’s attitude towards adversity in life? Was he a cheery, positive mental attitude, “turn lemons into lemonade” kind of guy? Elaborate your thoughts in the space below.

4. Jacob/Israel saw God work in some powerful ways in his life. Yet he had a “bad” attitude. How could that happen? Where did Jacob/Israel go wrong?

5. What lessons do you think you can learn from Jacob’s/Israel’s failures in the area of attitude in the face of adversity? Elaborate your thoughts in the space below.

6. Review this week’s study. Did God teach you anything that spiritually impacted you this week? Elaborate in the space below.



SOURCE: Atlas in Zondervan Reference Software.

## WEEK TEN: Excerpts from Genesis 37:1-50:26

### Day One:

1. Prepare your heart to be taught by God. Pray that God would cause the “eyes of your heart to be enlightened” (Ephesians 1:18) and that you would be responsive to the things God wants you to learn.
2. Read the following excerpts from Genesis 37:1-50:26:
  - Genesis 37:1-11
  - Genesis 37:12-36
  - Genesis 39:1-23
  - Genesis 40:1-41:45
  - Genesis 41:46-57
  - Genesis 42:1-38
  - Genesis 43:1-45:15
  - Genesis 45:16-47:12
  - Genesis 47:13-27
  - Genesis 47:28-48:20
  - Genesis 48:21-49:33
  - Genesis 50:1-21
  - Genesis 50:22-26

### Day Two:

1. Prepare your heart before God. Pray that God would teach you from His Word, and that you would be responsive to His teaching.
2. In the space next to each of the Scripture excerpts below, briefly summarize the main events/actions/ideas contained in the respective biblical passages. (For an example summary, see Week1/Day1.)
  - Genesis 37:1-11
  
  - Genesis 37:12-36
  
  - Genesis 39:1-23
  
  - Genesis 40:1-41:45
  
  - Genesis 41:46-57



**Day Three:**

1. Prepare your heart before God. Pray that God would teach you from His Word, and that you would be responsive to His teaching.
2. Review Day2/Question2 in this week's study.
- 3A. God had a specific purpose for placing Joseph in a position of high authority in Egypt. What was it?
- 3B. In the space below, list the verses that substantiate your answer to (3A).
4. Joseph had a lot of "ups and downs" in his life leading up to being appointed "in charge of the whole land of Egypt" (Genesis 41:41). In the space below, briefly summarize the ("up and down") events that took Joseph from living with his brothers in Canaan to becoming Pharaoh's right-hand man.
5. It is evident that God orchestrated the events in Joseph's life. In the space below, identify all the ways that God intervened/arranged events to get Joseph to where He wanted him to be.
6. Don't you think God could have arranged to take care of Israel and his clan in a more straightforward manner? If you were God and were looking to preserve Israel during difficult times, how do you think you would have done it? Write some ideas in the space below.

7. Why do you think God chose His way of preserving Israel rather than use your ideas? Elaborate any thoughts you may have in the space below.

**Day Four:**

1. Prepare your heart before God. Pray that God would teach you from His Word, and that you would be responsive to His teaching.
2. Review Day2/Question2 in this week's study.

*Biblical Note: The following addresses the question of whether Joseph was a “prophetic figure” that foreshadowed the life of Jesus Christ: “Typology is a special kind of symbolism. (A symbol is something which represents something else.) We can define a type as a ‘prophetic symbol’ because all types are representations of something yet future. More specifically, a type in scripture is a person or thing in the Old Testament which foreshadows a person or thing in the New Testament. For example, the flood of Noah’s day (Genesis 6-7) is used to typify baptism in 1 Peter 3:20-21. The word for type that Peter uses is figure. When we say that someone is a “type” of Christ, we are saying that a person in the Old Testament behaves in a way that corresponds to Jesus’ character or actions in the New Testament. When we say that something is “typical” of Christ, we are saying that an object or event in the Old Testament can be viewed as representative of some quality of Jesus. Scripture itself identifies several Old Testament events as types of Christ’s redemption, including the tabernacle, the sacrificial system, and the Passover.”*

(SOURCE: “[www.gotquestions.org/typology-Biblical.html](http://www.gotquestions.org/typology-Biblical.html)”.)

3. Whether or not we want to formally identify Joseph as a “type” of Christ, it is clear that there are many interesting parallels between the life of Joseph and the life of Jesus Christ. In the space below, identify as many parallels as you can between Joseph’s and Jesus’ lives. (HINT: If you are not very familiar with the life of Jesus, you can “cheat” and check out the following internet resource: “[www.freeessays.tv/d9693.htm](http://www.freeessays.tv/d9693.htm)”.)

4. There are many ways that God could have chosen to preserve Israel and his clan during the famine (and afterwards), none of which would have involved Joseph being sold into slavery and eventually rising through the ranks to become Pharaoh's right-hand man. Do you think the reason God chose the "Joseph approach" was to give us an Old Testament "prophetic picture" of the life of Jesus? Or do you think that is trying to read too much into the events of the Old Testament? Elaborate your thoughts in the space below.

**Day Five:**

1. Prepare your heart before God. Pray that God would teach you from His Word, and that you would be responsive to His teaching.
2. Review Day3/Question4 in this week's study.
3. Joseph faced a lot of adversity in his life. We could certainly understand if there were times when he had difficulty trusting that God was going to work everything out for good. In the space below, list some of the difficult situations faced by Joseph and, for each one, explain why he might have had good reason to doubt God.
4. All of us have had difficult times in our lives where we wondered where God was and doubted that the circumstances in our life could ever amount to anything good. In the space below, describe an event(s) in your life that caused you, and may still cause you, to doubt God's love and protection of your life.
5. Write out the following verses:

Genesis 50:19,20:

6. Do you think Joseph's faith in the midst of adversity can help you to better trust God through your own difficult times? Elaborate your thoughts in the space below.

**Day Six:**

1. Prepare your heart before God. Pray that God would teach you from His Word, and that you would be responsive to His teaching.
2. Read the excerpts from Genesis listed below. Pay special attention to the character of Judah. Next to each listing, write any impressions you have of the kind of person Judah was.

-Genesis 37:23-27

-Genesis 38:1-26

-Genesis 43:1-10

-Genesis 44:14-34

-Genesis 46:28

-Genesis 49:8-10

3. You might get the impression after reading the Scripture for this week's study that God's plan for building the nation of Israel centered on Joseph. Actually, not! According to Genesis 49:8-10 (and later developments), it is clear that Judah would be the favored line through which God would develop Israel. Consider what the *NIV Bible Commentary* in the *Zondervan Reference Library* has to say about this: *"Two lines that have thus far run parallel are about to converge, and out of them both will emerge a single theme. Jacob has two wives, each representing a possible line through which the promise will be carried on. Just as Abraham had two sons and only one was the son of promise, and just as Isaac*



**WEEK ELEVEN: Excerpts from Genesis 48:1-50:26**

**Day One:**

1. Prepare your heart to be taught by God. Pray that God would cause the “eyes of your heart to be enlightened” (Ephesians 1:18) and that you would be responsive to the things God wants you to learn.
  
- 2A. Read Genesis 48:1-5.
- 2B. Read Genesis 49:1-28.
- 2C. Read Numbers 1:1-16.
  
3. Complete the table below:

<i>Names of 12 sons of Jacob/Israel (from Genesis 49:1-28)</i>	<i>Names of 12 tribes of Israel (from Numbers 1:1-16)</i>
1.	1.
2.	2.
3.	3.
4.	4.
5.	5.
6.	6.
7.	7.
8.	8.
9.	9.
10.	10.
11.	11.
12.	12.

4. What 2 names appear on the right-hand side of the table that are not listed on the left-hand side?
  
5. Read Romans 11:1-18.  
*Note:* Pay particular attention to Romans 11:17, which states that the Gentiles were “grafted into” God’s chosen people, here represented as “the olive tree.”
  
6. Don’t you think this “grafting” of the two sons of Joseph into the 12 tribes of Israel (and corresponding “breaking off” of two of the “branches” to make room for them) is interesting?

7. By now in our study of Genesis, we have seen that God oftentimes uses people and events to picture or foreshadow New Testament truths. Further, the Bible itself tells us that many things in the Old Testament are meant to be “types”, or pictures, of biblical truths/future events (cf. Galatians 4:24f.). In your opinion, do you think this “grafting in” of Joseph’s sons is a “prophetic picture” that foreshadows the “grafting in” of the Gentiles into God’s chosen people? Elaborate your thoughts in the space below. (NOTE: While one always runs the risk of “over-interpreting” the Bible, it is noteworthy that both of Joseph’s sons had an Egyptian/Gentile mother – cf. Genesis 41:50-52).

**Day Two:**

1. Prepare your heart before God. Pray that God would teach you from His Word, and that you would be responsive to His teaching.
2. Read Genesis 50:15-26.
3. Why did God send Joseph into Egypt and arrange for him to achieve great influence and authority under Pharaoh?
4. A significant portion of the Book of Genesis can be understood as a history of the “beginnings” of the nation of Israel. However, there is a larger story-line that runs through the Book of Genesis. With this in mind, answer the following questions:
  - 4A. God created Adam and Eve and fashioned a special place where they could enjoy intimate fellowship with God. Something happened that upset this arrangement. What was that “something?”(cf. Week Two of the Genesis study)
  - 4B. Things got so bad that God had to destroy mankind through a great flood, preserving the line of Noah in a “fresh start” for man. Something happened that upset this arrangement. What was that “something?”(cf. Week Three of the Genesis study)

- 4C. Finally, God decided to create a “special people” whom He would nurture into a nation of God-worshippers. Who were these “special people?”
5. Imagine that you were trying to describe the Book of Genesis to a friend. In that frame of mind, write a short paragraph in the space below briefly summarizing the main story-line of the Book of Genesis.

**Day Three:**

1. Prepare your heart before God. Pray that God would teach you from His Word, and that you would be responsive to His teaching.
- 2A. Review Week One of the Genesis study.
- 2B. In the space below, summarize the main things that God taught you from that week’s study.

- 3A. Review Week Two of the Genesis study.
- 3B. In the space below, summarize the main things that God taught you from that week's study.

- 4A. Review Week Three of the Genesis study.
- 4B. In the space below, summarize the main things that God taught you from that week's study.

**Day Four:**

1. Prepare your heart before God. Pray that God would teach you from His Word, and that you would be responsive to His teaching.

2A. Review Week Four of the Genesis study.

2B. In the space below, summarize the main things that God taught you from that week's study.

3A. Review Week Five of the Genesis study.

3B. In the space below, summarize the main things that God taught you from that week's study.

4A. Review Week Six of the Genesis study.

4B. In the space below, summarize the main things that God taught you from that week's study.

**Day Five:**

1. Prepare your heart before God. Pray that God would teach you from His Word, and that you would be responsive to His teaching.

2A. Review Week Seven of the Genesis study.

2B. In the space below, summarize the main things that God taught you from that week's study.

3A. Review Week Eight of the Genesis study.

3B. In the space below, summarize the main things that God taught you from that week's study.

4A. Review Week Nine of the Genesis study.

4B. In the space below, summarize the main things that God taught you from that week's study.

- 5A. Review Week Ten of the Genesis study.
- 5B. In the space below, summarize the main things that God taught you from that week's study.

**Day Six:**

1. Prepare your heart before God. Pray that God would teach you from His Word, and that you would be responsive to His teaching.
2. In the space below, make up a title that captures the main idea for each week of the Genesis study. Try and write your "titles" so that by reading them, one after the other, you can "walk through" the main ideas in the Book of Genesis.

<i>WEEK</i>	<i>TITLE</i>
ONE	
TWO	
THREE	
FOUR	
FIVE	

<i>WEEK</i>	<i>TITLE</i>
SIX	
SEVEN	
EIGHT	
NINE	
TEN	

3. Reflect on all the great truths that you have learned in your study of Genesis this semester. What did you find most spiritually impacting in your study? Elaborate in the space below.