

THE
**BIBLE
RECAP**
BIBLE

**365-DAY
CHRONOLOGICAL
STUDY BIBLE**

ENGLISH STANDARD VERSION

PRESENTED TO

FROM

DATE

THE
**BIBLE
RECAP
BIBLE**

**365-DAY
CHRONOLOGICAL
STUDY BIBLE**

ENGLISH STANDARD VERSION

TARA-LEIGH COBBLE
GENERAL EDITOR



BETHANYHOUSE

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Minneapolis, Minnesota

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The Bible Recap is dedicated to every person who has tried and failed countless times to read the Bible, who has almost given up on understanding God and His Word, and who is here, trying one more time—with equal parts hope, fear, and skepticism—to draw near to the God of the universe.

May you come to know and love Him more and to understand that despite all your failures, He has never given up on pursuing you with love to this very page.

“And I am sure of this, that he who began a good work in you will bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ.”

—Philippians 1:6

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Scripture Index: Canon Order 1993

The Bible Recap Notes 2005

A Letter from Tara-Leigh Cobble

For years I struggled with Bible reading even though I was in full-time ministry. Not only was Scripture challenging to understand, but the challenge also left me with a lack of desire. Every day I felt defeated before I even started, and many days I didn't start at all. Eventually, I learned I was making three primary mistakes that held me back from understanding and loving Scripture.

Mistake #1

My first major mistake was looking for myself. I viewed the Bible as a big to-do list, and if I checked all the right boxes, God would respond by fulfilling all my desires. I approached the Bible primarily to get my application points, feel like a good, moral person, and move on. Reading Scripture as a story about God—not me—felt unnatural at first, so I started asking myself a few questions to narrow my focus:

- What does God say or do in this passage?
- What does this reveal about what God loves?
- What does this reveal about what God hates?
- What does this reveal about what motivates God to do what He does?
- In all of that, what attributes of God are displayed?

The questions we ask of the Bible impact the wisdom we glean from it. Reading the Bible is not a means to self-help or an attempt to earn God's favor. It's an opportunity to behold the beauty of God and be drawn in by Him.

Mistake #2

My second major mistake stemmed from mistake #1. Since I was only looking for the steps I needed to take to appease God and have a perfect, joy-filled life, I hovered over the same passages of Scripture and disregarded the rest. There were so many old laws we no longer follow and passages about people with names I couldn't pronounce—those parts confused or bored me. But my standard approach had me dropping down in the middle of a movie and staying for five minutes, with no real idea of the story line or who the characters were, and hoping to understand it. Not only is it impossible to understand something when you handle it that way, but it's also impossible to love it.

To correct this mistake, I decided to read through Scripture chronologically, not front to back. I wanted to see the overall story line or metanarrative. I began each book by identifying who wrote it, when they wrote it, whom they wrote it to, and what style they wrote it in. The Bible has sixty-six individual books that together tell one story, but they're from a wide variety of vantage points and styles—narrative history, poetry, prophecy—and much to my initial dismay, the bulk of it is not promises or action points. Most of it serves to tell me a story about God and His unshakeable love for His people.

Reading the story in order and paying attention to the context helped me make sense of verses that appear to contradict each other. I also learned how to sift through the confusing passages to find God's character.

Mistake #3

My first two mistakes worked together to create my other major mistake: drawing conclusions about God before I'd read the whole Bible. Since I had primarily read Scripture for selfish reasons, I was impatient and didn't take time to read it all. That was a dangerous approach because I didn't have all the information. I was tempted to build a theology around one verse without knowing what other verses had to say. I was tempted to read every verse as a command, even if the verse was just describing what was happening. I wanted quick answers, and I didn't take the time to consider context or evaluate the verses against the rest of Scripture to see the fullness of God's revealed counsel.

The Bible is the story of God pursuing His people despite their sin. Bit by bit, we see Him giving them more information about who He is and who He is making them into. But it isn't all revealed at once, because they can't handle it all at once. He's patient with them, giving them baby steps. For instance, it's easy to read through parts of the Old Testament and conclude that God is angry and wants to kill anyone who disobeys Him. But when we zoom out and read the whole story, we see a through line of grace and mercy and rescue.

It required patience to hold my questions and conclusions with an open hand and continue to ask God to guide me in wisdom, knowledge, and understanding as I read each day. Some of the questions I had in Leviticus weren't answered until Hebrews. But all good relationships require patience, and they develop over time. It's worth holding some things with an open hand and waiting until God reveals more of Himself.

I spent years trying to build my life around a book I hadn't read about a God I didn't know. But now that I really know Him, I want to help others know Him better too!

By the way, I'm not an academic. I didn't go to seminary, and I'll only occasionally mention what the original Hebrew might mean, and even then, chances are I don't know how to pronounce it. I've learned much of what I know by studying and listening to a variety of scholars, so any wisdom you find in this book certainly didn't originate with me, but if you do happen to spot an error, it's likely mine.

Overall, my approach in this book will be less like a scholarly Bible commentary and more like an overview and a highlight reel rolled into one. What that means is, I'm less inclined to tell you about archaeological details and more inclined to point to the character of God as revealed in that day's reading. I want to help you learn how to find and see and know God and His character more than anything else. I don't care if you never know what year the temple was built and destroyed and rebuilt and redestroyed—those are great details to be aware of, but they will never serve you like the personal knowledge of God. They will never bring you joy or sustain you in trials. They will never draw you in to spend more time with God out of sheer joy and delight.

Here's what I'm imagining for you this year: Picture yourself being drawn to God and His character instead of feeling alienated by the God of the Old Testament. Imagine understanding the motives behind His actions instead of feeling confused or even frustrated by what He does. Picture yourself actually hearing from God in His Word directly and feeling closer to and more intimate with Him than you ever have before—just because you've committed to spending the first 1 percent of your day with Him. If all you gain from this is one new insight about God, that insight could change the rest of your life and your relationship with Him. And no matter how your circumstances change, I believe your joy will grow deeper and richer, because you will be spending time with Him—and He's where the joy is!

For the gospel,



How to Use This Book

This book is arranged according to a 365-day chronological plan. Each day begins with its assigned chapters of Scripture, and you probably saw the full schedule in the front of the book, as well. Unlike a front-to-back plan (canonical), or plans that have you read from both the Old and New Testaments each day, the chronological plan takes you through the story of Scripture as it happened.

Each day, you'll start by reading that day's portion of the Bible (an average of three chapters or about twelve minutes of reading). When something stands out at you as meaningful or encouraging, take note of it in your journal. When you're confused about something you read, write a question about it in your journal so you can research it later.

After you finish reading the day's Bible chapters, read the recap to get a summary and highlight reel along with some explanations of the more confusing parts of the text. The Bible Recap team has also built out a list of free resources for you on our website that correspond to the days of this plan: TheBibleRecap.com/links. We'll include an asterisk next to the days that have resources so you'll know when to look for those.

Each day ends with a section called Today's God Shot, which points to one of the many places where God's attributes are on display in that day's reading. It's called a God Shot because it's a snapshot of God's character. Look for your own God Shot each day too. He's on every page of Scripture, so keep your eyes peeled for things that reveal Him to you—what He says and does, what He loves and hates, and what motivates Him to do what He does.

As we move through these books, the tone and feel will change regularly. That's because these books are written in a wide range of literary genres, such as narrative history, poetry and wisdom literature, prophecy, and letter. They were written over several hundred years by dozens of different writers, but they all have a cohesive theme in the metanarrative. As you begin each new book, take time to research who wrote each book, to whom they wrote it, when they wrote it, and the literary style in which it was written. Those details may seem unimportant, but they set the scene for reading it as it was meant to be read, which is the only way to truly understand it—and that's our goal! Let's get started!

Preface to the ESV

The Bible

“This Book [is] the most valuable thing that this world affords. Here is Wisdom; this is the royal Law; these are the lively Oracles of God.” With these words the Moderator of the Church of Scotland hands a Bible to the new monarch in Britain’s coronation service. These words echo the King James Bible translators, who wrote in 1611, “God’s sacred Word . . . is that inestimable treasure that excelleth all the riches of the earth.” This assessment of the Bible is the motivating force behind the publication of the English Standard Version.

Translation Legacy

The English Standard Version (ESV) stands in the classic mainstream of English Bible translations over the past half-millennium. The fountainhead of that stream was William Tyndale’s New Testament of 1526; marking its course were the King James Version of 1611 (KJV), the English Revised Version of 1885 (RV), the American Standard Version of 1901 (ASV), and the Revised Standard Version of 1952 and 1971 (RSV). In that stream, faithfulness to the text and vigorous pursuit of precision were combined with simplicity, beauty, and dignity of expression. Our goal has been to carry forward this legacy for this generation and generations to come.

To this end each word and phrase in the ESV has been carefully weighed against the original Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek, to ensure the fullest accuracy and clarity and to avoid under-translating or overlooking any nuance of the original text. The words and phrases themselves grow out of the Tyndale–King James legacy, and most recently out of the RSV, with the 1971 RSV text providing the starting point for our work. Archaic language has been brought into line with current usage and significant corrections have been made in the translation of key texts. But throughout, our goal has been to retain the depth of meaning and enduring quality of language that have made their indelible mark on the English-speaking world and have defined the life and doctrine of its church over the last five centuries.

Translation Philosophy

The ESV is an “essentially literal” translation that seeks as far as possible to reproduce the precise wording of the original text and the personal style of each Bible writer. As such, its emphasis is on “word-for-word” correspondence, at the same time taking full account of differences in grammar, syntax, and idiom between current literary English and the original languages. Thus it seeks to be transparent to the original text, letting the reader see as directly as possible the structure and exact force of the original.

In contrast to the ESV, some Bible versions have followed a “thought-for-thought” rather than “word-for-word” translation philosophy, emphasizing “dynamic equivalence” rather than the “essentially literal” meaning of the original. A “thought-for-thought” translation is of necessity more inclined to reflect the interpretive views of the translator and the influences of contemporary culture.

Every translation is at many points a trade-off between literal precision and readability, between “formal equivalence” in expression and “functional

equivalence” in communication, and the ESV is no exception. Within this framework we have sought to be “as literal as possible” while maintaining clarity of expression and literary excellence. Therefore, to the extent that plain English permits and the meaning in each case allows, we have sought to use the same English word for important recurring words in the original; and, as far as grammar and syntax allow, we have rendered Old Testament passages cited in the New in ways that show their correspondence. Thus in each of these areas, as well as throughout the Bible as a whole, we have sought to capture all the echoes and overtones of meaning that are so abundantly present in the original texts.

As an essentially literal translation, taking into account grammar and syntax, the ESV thus seeks to carry over every possible nuance of meaning in the original words of Scripture into our own language. As such, the ESV is ideally suited for in-depth study of the Bible. Indeed, with its commitment to literary excellence, the ESV is equally well suited for public reading and preaching, for private reading and reflection, for both academic and devotional study, and for Scripture memorization.

Translation Principles and Style

The ESV also carries forward classic translation principles in its literary style. Accordingly it retains theological terminology—words such as grace, faith, justification, sanctification, redemption, regeneration, reconciliation, propitiation—because of their central importance for Christian doctrine and also because the underlying Greek words were already becoming key words and technical terms among Christians in New Testament times.

The ESV lets the stylistic variety of the biblical writers fully express itself—from the exalted prose that opens Genesis, to the flowing narratives of the historical books, to the rich metaphors and dramatic imagery of the poetic books, to the ringing rhetoric in the prophetic books, to the smooth elegance of Luke, to the profound simplicities of John, and the closely reasoned logic of Paul.

In punctuating, paragraphing, dividing long sentences, and rendering connectives, the ESV follows the path that seems to make the ongoing flow of thought clearest in English. The biblical languages regularly connect sentences by frequent repetition of words such as “and,” “but,” and “for,” in a way that goes beyond the conventions of current literary English. Effective translation, however, requires that these links in the original be reproduced so that the flow of the argument will be transparent to the reader. We have therefore normally translated these connectives, though occasionally we have varied the rendering by using alternatives (such as “also,” “however,” “now,” “so,” “then,” or “thus”) when they better express the linkage in specific instances.

In the area of gender language, the goal of the ESV is to render literally what is in the original. For example, “anyone” replaces “any man” where there is no word corresponding to “man” in the original languages, and “people” rather than “men” is regularly used where the original languages refer to both men and women. But the words “man” and “men” are retained where a male meaning component is part of the original Greek or Hebrew. Likewise, the word “man” has been retained where the original text intends to convey a clear contrast between “God” on the one hand and “man” on the other hand, with “man” being used in the collective sense of the whole human race (see Luke 2:52). Similarly, the English word “brothers” (translating the Greek word *adelphoi*) is retained as an important familial form of address between fellow-Jews and fellow-Christians in the first century. A recurring note is included to indicate that the term “brothers” (*adelphoi*) was often used in Greek to refer to both men and women, and to indicate the specific instances in the text where this is the case. In addition, the English word “sons” (translating the Greek word *huiοι*) is retained in specific instances because the underlying

Greek term usually includes a male meaning component and it was used as a legal term in the adoption and inheritance laws of first-century Rome. As used by the apostle Paul, this term refers to the status of all Christians, both men and women, who, having been adopted into God's family, now enjoy all the privileges, obligations, and inheritance rights of God's children.

The inclusive use of the generic "he" has also regularly been retained, because this is consistent with similar usage in the original languages and because an essentially literal translation would be impossible without it.

In each case the objective has been transparency to the original text, allowing the reader to understand the original on its own terms rather than in the terms of our present-day Western culture.

The Translation of Specialized Terms

In the translation of biblical terms referring to God, the ESV takes great care to convey the specific nuances of meaning of the original Hebrew and Greek words. First, concerning terms that refer to God in the Old Testament: God, the Maker of heaven and earth, introduced himself to the people of Israel with a special personal name, the consonants for which are YHWH (see Exodus 3:14–15). Scholars call this the "Tetragrammaton," a Greek term referring to the four Hebrew letters YHWH. The exact pronunciation of YHWH is uncertain, because the Jewish people considered the personal name of God to be so holy that it should never be spoken aloud. Instead of reading the word YHWH, therefore, they would normally read the Hebrew word *'adonay* ("Lord"), and the ancient translations into Greek, Syriac, and Aramaic also followed this practice. When the vowels of the word *'adonay* are placed with the consonants of YHWH, this results in the familiar word *Jehovah* that was used in some earlier English Bible translations. As is common among English translations today, the ESV usually renders the personal name of God (YHWH) by the word LORD (printed in small capitals). An exception to this is when the Hebrew word *'adonay* appears together with YHWH, in which case the two words are rendered together as "the Lord [in lowercase] GOD [in small capitals]." In contrast to the personal name for God (YHWH), the more general name for God in Old Testament Hebrew is *'elohim* and its related forms of *'el* or *'eloah*, all of which are normally translated "God" (in lowercase letters). The use of these different ways to translate the Hebrew words for God is especially beneficial to English readers, enabling them to see and understand the different ways that the *personal* name and the *general* name for God are both used to refer to the *One True God* of the Old Testament.

Second, in the New Testament, the Greek word *Christos* has been translated consistently as "Christ." Although the term originally meant simply "anointed," among Jews in New Testament times it had specifically come to designate the Messiah, the great Savior that God had promised to raise up. In other New Testament contexts, however, especially among Gentiles, *Christos* ("Christ") was on its way to becoming a proper name. It is important, therefore, to keep the context in mind in understanding the various ways that *Christos* ("Christ") is used in the New Testament. At the same time, in accord with its "essentially literal" translation philosophy, the ESV has retained consistency and concordance in the translation of *Christos* ("Christ") throughout the New Testament.

Third, a particular difficulty is presented when words in biblical Hebrew and Greek refer to ancient practices and institutions that do not correspond directly to those in the modern world. Such is the case in the translation of *'ebed* (Hebrew) and *doulos* (Greek), terms which are often rendered "slave." These terms, however, actually cover a range of relationships that requires a range of renderings—"slave," "bondservant," or "servant"—depending on the context. Further, the word "slave" currently carries associations with the often brutal and dehumanizing institution of slavery particularly

in nineteenth-century America. For this reason, the ESV translation of the words *‘ebed* and *doulos* has been undertaken with particular attention to their meaning in each specific context. Thus in Old Testament times, one might enter slavery either voluntarily (e.g., to escape poverty or to pay off a debt) or involuntarily (e.g., by birth, by being captured in battle, or by judicial sentence). Protection for all in servitude in ancient Israel was provided by the Mosaic Law, including specific provisions for release from slavery. In New Testament times, a *doulos* is often best described as a “bondservant”—that is, someone in the Roman Empire officially bound under contract to serve his master for seven years (except for those in Caesar’s household in Rome who were contracted for fourteen years). When the contract expired, the person was freed, given his wage that had been saved by the master, and officially declared a freedman. The ESV usage thus seeks to express the most fitting nuance of meaning in each context. Where absolute ownership by a master is envisaged (as in Romans 6), “slave” is used; where a more limited form of servitude is in view, “bondservant” is used (as in 1 Corinthians 7:21–24); where the context indicates a wide range of freedom (as in John 4:51), “servant” is preferred. Footnotes are generally provided to identify the Hebrew or Greek and the range of meaning that these terms may carry in each case. The issues involved in translating the Greek word *doulos* apply also to the Greek word *sundoulos*, translated in the text as “fellow servant.”

Fourth, it is sometimes suggested that Bible translations should capitalize pronouns referring to deity. It has seemed best not to capitalize deity pronouns in the ESV, however, for the following reasons: first, there is nothing in the original Hebrew and Greek manuscripts that corresponds to such capitalization; second, the practice of capitalizing deity pronouns in English Bible translations is a recent innovation, which began only in the mid-twentieth century; and, third, such capitalization is absent from the KJV Bible and the whole stream of Bible translations that the ESV carries forward.

A fifth specialized term, the word “behold,” usually has been retained as the most common translation for the Hebrew word *hinneh* and the Greek word *idou*. Both of these words mean something like “Pay careful attention to what follows! This is important!” Other than the word “behold,” there is no single word in English that fits well in most contexts. Although “Look!” and “See!” and “Listen!” would be workable in some contexts, in many others these words lack sufficient weight and dignity. Given the principles of “essentially literal” translation, it is important not to leave *hinneh* and *idou* completely untranslated and so to lose the intended emphasis in the original languages. The older and more formal word “behold” has usually been retained, therefore, as the best available option for conveying the original weight of meaning.

Textual Basis and Resources

The ESV is based on the Masoretic text of the Hebrew Bible as found in *Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia* (5th ed., 1997), and on the Greek text in the 2014 editions of the *Greek New Testament* (5th corrected ed.), published by the United Bible Societies (UBS), and *Novum Testamentum Graece* (28th ed., 2012), edited by Nestle and Aland. The currently renewed respect among Old Testament scholars for the Masoretic text is reflected in the ESV’s attempt, wherever possible, to translate difficult Hebrew passages as they stand in the Masoretic text rather than resorting to emendations or to finding an alternative reading in the ancient versions. In exceptional, difficult cases, the Dead Sea Scrolls, the Septuagint, the Samaritan Pentateuch, the Syriac Peshitta, the Latin Vulgate, and other sources were consulted to shed possible light on the text, or, if necessary, to support a divergence from the Masoretic text. Similarly, in a few difficult cases in the New Testament, the ESV has followed a Greek text different from the text given preference in the UBS/Nestle-Aland 28th

edition. Throughout, the translation team has benefited greatly from the massive textual resources that have become readily available recently, from new insights into biblical laws and culture, and from current advances in Hebrew and Greek lexicography and grammatical understanding.

Textual Footnotes

The footnotes that are included in most editions of the ESV are therefore an integral part of the ESV translation, informing the reader of textual variations and difficulties and showing how these have been resolved by the ESV translation team. In addition to this, the footnotes indicate significant alternative readings and occasionally provide an explanation for technical terms or for a difficult reading in the text.

Publishing Team

The ESV publishing team has included more than a hundred people. The fourteen-member Translation Oversight Committee benefited from the work of more than fifty biblical experts serving as Translation Review Scholars and from the comments of the more than fifty members of the Advisory Council, all of which was carried out under the auspices of the Crossway Board of Directors. This hundred-plus-member team shares a common commitment to the truth of God's Word and to historic Christian orthodoxy and is international in scope, including leaders in many denominations.

To God's Honor and Praise

We know that no Bible translation is perfect; but we also know that God uses imperfect and inadequate things to his honor and praise. So to our triune God and to his people we offer what we have done, with our prayers that it may prove useful, with gratitude for much help given, and with ongoing wonder that our God should ever have entrusted to us so momentous a task.

Soli Deo Gloria!—To God alone be the glory!
The Translation Oversight Committee

Explanation of Features

Included in This Edition of the ESV

The Thinline Edition of the ESV Bible includes a number of valuable features to encourage the reading and study of the Bible. A brief description is provided below explaining the purpose and use of these features.

Textual Footnotes

Several kinds of footnotes related to the ESV text are provided throughout the ESV Bible to assist the reader. These footnotes appear at the bottom of the page and are indicated in the ESV text by a superscript *letter* that *follows* the word or phrase to which the footnote applies (e.g., “Isaac^b”).

The footnotes included in the ESV Bible are an integral part of the text and provide important information concerning the understanding and translation of the text. The footnotes fall mainly into four categories, as illustrated in the examples below.

Types of Textual Footnotes

(1) *Alternative Translations.* Footnotes of this kind provide alternative translations for specific words or phrases when there is a strong possibility that such words or phrases could be translated in another way, such as: “Or *keep awake*” (see Matt. 26:38); and “Or *down payment*” (see Eph. 1:14). In such cases, the translation deemed to have the stronger support is in the text while other possible renderings are given in the note.

(2) *Explanation of Greek and Hebrew Terms.* Notes of this kind relate primarily to the meaning of specific Greek or Hebrew terms, as illustrated by the following examples:

(a) Notes about the meaning of names in the original languages, such as: “Isaac means *he laughs*” (see Gen. 17:19); and “Simeon sounds like the Hebrew for *heard*” (see Gen. 29:33).

(b) Notes that give the literal translation of a Greek or Hebrew word or phrase deemed too awkward to be used in the English text, such as: “Greek *girding up the loins of your mind*” (see 1 Pet. 1:13).

(c) Notes indicating that absolute certainty of the meaning of a word or phrase is not possible given our best understanding of the original language (e.g., Hebrew words occurring so infrequently in the Old Testament that their meaning cannot be determined with certainty). Such words are identified with a note stating that “The meaning of the Hebrew is uncertain” (see, e.g., Josh. 17:11).

(d) Notes that indicate the specialized use of a Greek word, such as: “brothers,” translating the Greek word *adelphoi* (see, e.g., the extended note on Rom. 1:13, corresponding to the first occurrence of *adelphoi* in any New Testament book, and the abbreviated note, e.g., on Rom. 7:1, corresponding to subsequent occurrences of *adelphoi* in any New Testament book); and “sons,” translating the Greek word *huioi* (see, e.g., Rom. 8:14). See also the discussion of *adelphoi* and *huioi* in the Preface.

(3) *Other Explanatory Notes.* Footnotes of this kind provide clarifying information as illustrated by the following examples:

(a) Notes clarifying additional meanings that may not otherwise be apparent in the text, such as: “*Leprosy* was a term for several skin diseases; see Leviticus 13.”

(b) Notes clarifying important grammatical points that would not otherwise be apparent in English, such as: “In Hebrew *you* is plural in verses 1–5” (see Gen. 3:1).

(c) Notes clarifying when the referent for a pronoun has been supplied in the English text, such as: “Greek *he*” (see, e.g., Mark 1:43).

(d) Notes giving English equivalents for weights, measures, and monetary values.

(4) *Technical Translation Notes*. Footnotes of this kind indicate how decisions have been made in the translation of difficult Hebrew and Greek passages. Such notes occasionally include technical terms. For an explanation of these terms the reader is referred to standard Bible study reference works. See further the section in the Preface on “Textual Basis and Resources” for an explanation of the original-language texts used in the translation of the ESV Bible and how the translation of difficult passages has been resolved.

THE RECAPS AND CHRONOLOGICAL READING PLAN

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

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

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

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

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

¹⁴And God said, “Let there be lights in the expanse of the heavens to separate the day from the night. And let them be for signs and for seasons,^f and for days and years, ¹⁵and let them be lights in the expanse of the heavens to give light upon the earth.” And it was so. ¹⁶And God made the two great lights—the greater light to rule the day and the lesser light to rule the night—and the stars. ¹⁷And God set them in the expanse of the heavens to give light on the earth, ¹⁸to rule over the day and over the night, and to separate the light from the darkness. And God saw that it was good. ¹⁹And there was evening and there was morning, the fourth day.

²⁰And God said, “Let the waters swarm with swarms of living creatures, and let birds^g fly above the earth across the expanse of the heavens.” ²¹So God created the great sea creatures and every living creature that moves, with which the waters swarm, according to their kinds, and every winged bird according to its kind. And God saw that it was good. ²²And God blessed them, saying, “Be fruitful and multiply and fill the waters in the seas, and let birds multiply on the earth.” ²³And there was evening and there was morning, the fifth day.

²⁴And God said, “Let the earth bring forth living creatures according to their kinds—livestock and creeping things and beasts of the earth according to their kinds.” And it was so. ²⁵And God made the beasts of the earth according to their kinds and the livestock according to their

^a Or a canopy; also verses 7, 8, 14, 15, 17, 20 ^b Or fashioned; also verse 16 ^c Or Sky; also verses 9, 14, 15, 17, 20, 26, 28, 30; 2:1

^d Or Land; also verses 11, 12, 22, 24, 25, 26, 28, 30; 2:1 ^e Or small plants; also verses 12, 29 ^f Or appointed times ^g Or flying things; see Leviticus 11:19–20

kinds, and everything that creeps on the ground according to its kind. And God saw that it was good.

²⁶ Then God said, “Let us make man^a in our image, after our likeness. And let them have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over the livestock and over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth.”

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

²⁸ And God blessed them. And God said to them, “Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and subdue it, and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over every living thing that moves on the earth.” ²⁹ And God said, “Behold, I have given you every plant yielding seed that is on the face of all the earth, and every tree with seed in its fruit. You shall have them for food. ³⁰ And to every beast of the earth and to every bird of the heavens and to everything that creeps on the earth, everything that has the breath of life, I have given every green plant for food.” And it was so. ³¹ And God saw everything that he had made, and behold, it was very good. And there was evening and there was morning, the sixth day.

GENESIS 2 Thus the heavens and the earth were finished, and all the host of them. ² And on the seventh day God finished his work that he had done, and he rested on the seventh day from all his work that he had done. ³ So God blessed the seventh day and made it holy, because on it God rested from all his work that he had done in creation.

⁴ These are the generations
of the heavens and the earth when they were created,
in the day that the LORD God made the earth and the heavens.

⁵ When no bush of the field^b was yet in the land^c and no small plant of the field had yet sprung up—for the LORD God had not caused it to rain on the land, and there was no man to work the ground, ⁶ and a mist^d was going up from the land and was watering the whole face of the ground— ⁷ then the LORD God formed the man of dust from the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man became a living creature. ⁸ And the LORD God planted a garden in Eden, in the east, and there he put the man whom he had formed. ⁹ And out of the ground the LORD God made to spring up every tree that is pleasant to the sight and good for food. The tree of life was in the midst of the garden, and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.

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

^a The Hebrew word for *man* (*adam*) is the generic term for mankind and becomes the proper name *Adam* ^b Or *open country*

^c Or *earth*; also verse 6 ^d Or *spring*

the Tigris, which flows east of Assyria.^a And the fourth river is the Euphrates.

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

¹⁸ Then the LORD God said, “It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him a helper fit for^c him.” ¹⁹ Now out of the ground the LORD God had formed^d every beast of the field and every bird of the heavens and brought them to the man to see what he would call them. And whatever the man called every living creature, that was its name.

²⁰ The man gave names to all livestock and to the birds of the heavens and to every beast of the field. But for Adam^e there was not found a helper fit for him. ²¹ So the LORD God caused a deep sleep to fall upon the man, and while he slept took one of his ribs and closed up its place with flesh. ²² And the rib that the LORD God had taken from the man he made^f into a woman and brought her to the man. ²³ Then the man said,

“This at last is bone of my bones
and flesh of my flesh;
she shall be called Woman,
because she was taken out of Man.”^g

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

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

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

⁸ And they heard the sound of the LORD God walking in the garden in the cool^j of the day, and the man and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the LORD God among the trees of the garden. ⁹ But the LORD God called to the man and said to him, “Where are you?”^k ¹⁰ And he said, “I heard the sound of you in the garden, and I was afraid,

^a Or Asshur ^b Or when you eat ^c Or corresponding to; also verse 20 ^d Or And out of the ground the LORD God formed ^e Or the man ^f Hebrew built ^g The Hebrew words for woman (*ishshah*) and man (*ish*) sound alike ^h In Hebrew you is plural in verses 1–5 ⁱ Or to give insight ^j Hebrew wind ^k In Hebrew you is singular in verses 9 and 11

because I was naked, and I hid myself.”¹¹ He said, “Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten of the tree of which I commanded you not to eat?”¹² The man said, “The woman whom you gave to be with me, she gave me fruit of the tree, and I ate.”¹³ Then the LORD God said to the woman, “What is this that you have done?” The woman said, “The serpent deceived me, and I ate.”

¹⁴ The LORD God said to the serpent,

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

¹⁵ I will put enmity between you and the woman,
and between your offspring^a and her offspring;
he shall bruise your head,
and you shall bruise his heel.”

¹⁶ To the woman he said,

“I will surely multiply your pain in childbearing;
in pain you shall bring forth children.
Your desire shall be for^b your husband,
and he shall rule over you.”

¹⁷ And to Adam he said,

“Because you have listened to the voice of your wife
and have eaten of the tree
of which I commanded you,
‘You shall not eat of it,’
cursed is the ground because of you;
in pain you shall eat of it all the days of your life;
¹⁸ thorns and thistles it shall bring forth for you;
and you shall eat the plants of the field.

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

²⁰ The man called his wife’s name Eve, because she was the mother of all living.^c ²¹ And the LORD God made for Adam and for his wife garments of skins and clothed them.

²² Then the LORD God said, “Behold, the man has become like one of us in knowing good and evil. Now, lest he reach out his hand and take also of the tree of life and eat, and live forever—” ²³ therefore the LORD God sent him out from the garden of Eden to work the ground

^a Hebrew seed; so throughout Genesis ^b Or to, or toward, or against (see 4:7) ^c Eve sounds like the Hebrew for life-giver and resembles the word for living

from which he was taken.²⁴ He drove out the man, and at the east of the garden of Eden he placed the cherubim and a flaming sword that turned every way to guard the way to the tree of life.

RECAP

Genesis is a book of the law; it's not a science book or a history book, though it does tell us a lot about history. While Scripture is 100 percent true, it isn't always 100 percent literal. It's important to hold our scientific conclusions or opinions with an open hand. It's even important to hold our questions with an open hand, because this book isn't necessarily here to answer them; it's here to reveal GOD. Today's reading is a good example. Some people believe the days of creation were prolonged periods of time lasting tens of thousands of years. This is called the day-age theory, and it's held by many old earth creationists. Most young earth creationists believe God created the earth in six literal days. What's clear in Scripture is that God is the Creator; none of this was an accident.

In 1:26, God refers to Himself in the plural form: "Let us make man in our image." All three persons of the Trinity are present and active at creation: God the Father, God the Son, and God the Spirit. The Father gives the creation commands, the Son does the manual labor of creation (John 1:3), and the Spirit hovers over creation, sustaining and approving of it. They work in tandem toward the same goal. It's important to note that Jesus doesn't just show up on the scene when He's born in a manger in the New Testament. Before God the Son took on the name Jesus, He resided in heaven with the Father. He's been here all along. In fact, we'll see Him a lot in the Old Testament. Be on the lookout for Him!

In 2:4, the word *LORD* is in all caps; this is different from when we see the word spelled *Lord* or *lord*. All lowercase *lord* can refer to anyone who is in charge, like your land/lord. When it's capitalized as *Lord*, it means "Adonai," the Hebrew word for *Master*, which is a proper name of God, not just a general term. When you see all-caps *LORD*, it represents an ancient Hebrew spelling of YHWH. It has no vowels, so when we try to pronounce it, it sounds like "Yahweh" or "Jehovah." This is God's personal name. By telling us His name, He's showing us *right out of the gate* that He wants to be personal with His creation. He's not setting Himself apart as one not to be known or spoken to. He tells humankind His name! Despite that, it doesn't bring Him to our level. YHWH is still Lord (Master), after all.

Later, we see the fall of humankind in the sin of Adam and Eve. Because God is sovereign and isn't confined to time, nothing surprises Him. Their sin doesn't thwart His plan—His plan accounted for their sin. In 2:17 He tells them, "*In the day that you eat of [the tree of the knowledge of good and evil] you shall surely die.*" He didn't say *if*; He said *when*; it implies certainty. The rest of Scripture supports this, letting us know that God wasn't relegated to plan B after they ate the fruit; it was always plan A.

When Eve questions God's goodness, she buys the lie that He's holding out on her and decides she'd make a better god. Adam is right

there with her—and according to Romans 5, God holds him responsible for his role in this too. That’s when the world was first fractured by sin, and it’s still fracturing. Not only do we still believe and act on the same lies, but the curses pronounced over Adam and Eve still resonate in our world today. In 3:16–17, the curse states that pain will now surround childbirth and work and that sin will corrupt the relationship between husband and wife. There are a few views on what this corruption looks like, but suffice it to say that sin has impacted not only our relationships with God, creation, and ourselves, but also our relationships with each other.

Today’s God Shot

God is our Creator and the Lord over everything, but despite His lordship and His perfection, He’s merciful toward the sinners He’s in relationship with. He said they’d die if they ate of the fruit, but He lets them live! He doesn’t strike them down on the spot. Any time we see God hedge on His promises, it’s always on the side of mercy. He doesn’t break promises; He exceeds them. We see it again in 3:9–10, when they’re hiding from Him and lying to Him. Before they even repent, He pursues them out of His great love. At the height of their sin, He continues to show them both mercy and discipline. It’s such a gift to them and to us that He doesn’t give up on pursuing us, because He’s where the joy is!

DAY 2*

GENESIS 4–7

GENESIS 4 Now Adam knew Eve his wife, and she conceived and bore Cain, saying, “I have gotten^a a man with the help of the LORD.”² And again, she bore his brother Abel. Now Abel was a keeper of sheep, and Cain a worker of the ground.³ In the course of time Cain brought to the LORD an offering of the fruit of the ground,⁴ and Abel also brought of the firstborn of his flock and of their fat portions. And the LORD had regard for Abel and his offering,⁵ but for Cain and his offering he had no regard. So Cain was very angry, and his face fell.⁶ The LORD said to Cain, “Why are you angry, and why has your face fallen?⁷ If you do well, will you not be accepted?^b And if you do not do well, sin is crouching at the door. Its desire is for^c you, and you must rule over it.”⁸ Cain spoke to Abel his brother.^d And when they were in the field, Cain rose up against his brother Abel and killed him.⁹ Then the LORD said to Cain, “Where is Abel your brother?” He said, “I do not know; am I my brother’s keeper?”¹⁰ And the LORD said, “What have you done? The voice of your brother’s blood is crying to me from the ground.¹¹ And now you are cursed from the ground, which has opened its mouth to receive your brother’s blood from your hand.¹² When you work the ground, it shall no longer yield to you its strength. You shall be a fugitive and a wanderer on the earth.”¹³ Cain said to the LORD, “My punishment is greater than I can bear.^e”¹⁴ Behold, you have driven me today away from the ground, and from your face I shall be hidden.

^a Cain sounds like the Hebrew for gotten ^b Hebrew will there not be a lifting up [of your face]? ^c Or to, or toward, or against (see 3:16) ^d Hebrew; Samaritan, Septuagint, Syriac, Vulgate add Let us go out to the field ^e Or My guilt is too great to bear

I shall be a fugitive and a wanderer on the earth, and whoever finds me will kill me.”¹⁵ Then the LORD said to him, “Not so! If anyone kills Cain, vengeance shall be taken on him sevenfold.” And the LORD put a mark on Cain, lest any who found him should attack him.¹⁶ Then Cain went away from the presence of the LORD and settled in the land of Nod,^a east of Eden.

¹⁷ Cain knew his wife, and she conceived and bore Enoch. When he built a city, he called the name of the city after the name of his son, Enoch. ¹⁸ To Enoch was born Irad, and Irad fathered Mehujael, and Mehujael fathered Methushael, and Methushael fathered Lamech. ¹⁹ And Lamech took two wives. The name of the one was Adah, and the name of the other Zillah. ²⁰ Adah bore Jabal; he was the father of those who dwell in tents and have livestock. ²¹ His brother’s name was Jubal; he was the father of all those who play the lyre and pipe. ²² Zillah also bore Tubal-cain; he was the forger of all instruments of bronze and iron. The sister of Tubal-cain was Naamah.

²³ Lamech said to his wives:

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

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

²⁵ And Adam knew his wife again, and she bore a son and called his name Seth, for she said, “God has appointed^b for me another offspring instead of Abel, for Cain killed him.” ²⁶ To Seth also a son was born, and he called his name Enosh. At that time people began to call upon the name of the LORD.

GENESIS 5 This is the book of the generations of Adam. When God created man, he made him in the likeness of God. ² Male and female he created them, and he blessed them and named them Man^c when they were created. ³ When Adam had lived 130 years, he fathered a son in his own likeness, after his image, and named him Seth. ⁴ The days of Adam after he fathered Seth were 800 years; and he had other sons and daughters. ⁵ Thus all the days that Adam lived were 930 years, and he died.

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

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

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

¹⁵ When Mahalalel had lived 65 years, he fathered Jared. ¹⁶ Mahalalel lived after he fathered Jared 830 years and had other sons and

^a Nod means wandering ^b Seth sounds like the Hebrew for he appointed ^c Hebrew adam

daughters. ¹⁷ Thus all the days of Mahalalel were 895 years, and he died.

¹⁸ When Jared had lived 162 years, he fathered Enoch. ¹⁹ Jared lived after he fathered Enoch 800 years and had other sons and daughters.

²⁰ Thus all the days of Jared were 962 years, and he died.

²¹ When Enoch had lived 65 years, he fathered Methuselah. ²² Enoch walked with God^a after he fathered Methuselah 300 years and had other sons and daughters. ²³ Thus all the days of Enoch were 365 years.

²⁴ Enoch walked with God, and he was not,^b for God took him.

²⁵ When Methuselah had lived 187 years, he fathered Lamech.

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

²⁸ When Lamech had lived 182 years, he fathered a son ²⁹ and called his name Noah, saying, “Out of the ground that the LORD has cursed, this one shall bring us relief^c from our work and from the painful toil of our hands.” ³⁰ Lamech lived after he fathered Noah 595 years and had other sons and daughters. ³¹ Thus all the days of Lamech were 777 years, and he died.

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

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

⁵ The LORD saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every intention of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. ⁶ And the LORD regretted that he had made man on the earth, and it grieved him to his heart. ⁷ So the LORD said, “I will blot out man whom I have created from the face of the land, man and animals and creeping things and birds of the heavens, for I am sorry that I have made them.” ⁸ But Noah found favor in the eyes of the LORD.

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

¹¹ Now the earth was corrupt in God’s sight, and the earth was filled with violence. ¹² And God saw the earth, and behold, it was corrupt, for all flesh had corrupted their way on the earth. ¹³ And God said to Noah, “I have determined to make an end of all flesh,^f for the earth is filled with violence through them. Behold, I will destroy them with the earth. ¹⁴ Make yourself an ark of gopher wood.^g Make rooms in the ark, and cover it inside and out with pitch. ¹⁵ This is how you are to make it: the length of the ark 300 cubits,^h its breadth 50 cubits, and its height 30 cubits. ¹⁶ Make a roofⁱ for the ark, and finish it to a cubit above, and

^a Septuagint *pleased God*; also verse 24 ^b Septuagint *was not found* ^c *Noah* sounds like the Hebrew for *rest* ^d *Or My Spirit shall not contend with* ^e *Or giants* ^f Hebrew *The end of all flesh has come before me* ^g Transliterated from Hebrew; the identity of this tree is uncertain ^h A cubit was about 18 inches or 45 centimeters ⁱ *Or skylight*

set the door of the ark in its side. Make it with lower, second, and third decks. ¹⁷ For behold, I will bring a flood of waters upon the earth to destroy all flesh in which is the breath of life under heaven. Everything that is on the earth shall die. ¹⁸ But I will establish my covenant with you, and you shall come into the ark, you, your sons, your wife, and your sons' wives with you. ¹⁹ And of every living thing of all flesh, you shall bring two of every sort into the ark to keep them alive with you. They shall be male and female. ²⁰ Of the birds according to their kinds, and of the animals according to their kinds, of every creeping thing of the ground, according to its kind, two of every sort shall come in to you to keep them alive. ²¹ Also take with you every sort of food that is eaten, and store it up. It shall serve as food for you and for them.” ²² Noah did this; he did all that God commanded him.

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

⁶ Noah was six hundred years old when the flood of waters came upon the earth. ⁷ And Noah and his sons and his wife and his sons' wives with him went into the ark to escape the waters of the flood. ⁸ Of clean animals, and of animals that are not clean, and of birds, and of everything that creeps on the ground, ⁹ two and two, male and female, went into the ark with Noah, as God had commanded Noah. ¹⁰ And after seven days the waters of the flood came upon the earth.

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

¹⁷ The flood continued forty days on the earth. The waters increased and bore up the ark, and it rose high above the earth. ¹⁸ The waters prevailed and increased greatly on the earth, and the ark floated on the face of the waters. ¹⁹ And the waters prevailed so mightily on the earth that all the high mountains under the whole heaven were covered. ²⁰ The waters

^a Or seven of each kind of clean animal ^b Or seven of each kind ^c Hebrew all existence; also verse 23

prevailed above the mountains, covering them fifteen cubits^a deep.²¹ And all flesh died that moved on the earth, birds, livestock, beasts, all swarming creatures that swarm on the earth, and all mankind.²² Everything on the dry land in whose nostrils was the breath of life died.²³ He blotted out every living thing that was on the face of the ground, man and animals and creeping things and birds of the heavens. They were blotted out from the earth. Only Noah was left, and those who were with him in the ark.²⁴ And the waters prevailed on the earth 150 days.

RECAP

Yesterday, when God finished creating, He declared it *very good*, but that's different from being perfect and complete. Imperfect man can't live up to God's standard of perfection, and that's evident in Cain's murder of Abel. This happened about 2,500 years before God gave Moses the Ten Commandments, but Cain still knew murder was wrong; he even feared other people killing him in response to it (4:14).

People often wonder whom Cain married. Adam and Eve had lots of children after Cain and Abel, so it's likely he married one of his sisters or nieces. The scientific reason incest isn't problematic here is that there's no genetic load yet. God doesn't ban incest until much later, and up until that point it serves as a tool to populate the earth. This doesn't mean God changed; it shows He has an orderly plan. Only He can know the point when genetic mutations will be a problem, so only He will know when incest has served its purpose and has crossed into dangerous territory.

The phrase *sons of God* (6:4) is one way Scripture refers to angels. The prevailing view of ancient Jews was that *sons of God* referred to fallen angels who, in this text, took human wives and had kids with them, creating a crossbreed of angels and humans known as Nephilim. Scripture says angels in heaven don't procreate, but that could be because (a) the angels in heaven are the elect angels who live under God's rule and don't rebel against Him, and/or (b) all angels referred to in Scripture are male, so they can't procreate among themselves. But if they procreated with human females, then theoretically this kind of crossbreeding would be possible. If that's the case, there's a strong chance the presence of the Nephilim contributes to the increasing wickedness on the earth.

Why would fallen angels do this? Here's a theory: The angels who lived in heaven with God knew His plan from before creation was to send God the Son to earth as a human named Jesus to redeem and restore everything; but then they rebelled against God and His kingdom, so they tried to thwart and counterfeit His plan to deceive His people. It's possible the enemy is trying to corrupt the human bloodline to prevent the birth of the Messiah by counterfeiting the supernatural-natural union. We don't have all the information here, so we hold this with an open hand. But if this *did* happen the way the ancient Jews understood it, it makes sense that God would wipe out the crossbreed population via the flood. And in this scenario, the only family whose bloodline hasn't been infiltrated by fallen angels is

^a A cubit was about 18 inches or 45 centimeters