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# GENESIS

## The book of creation

**Nature of the book.** Genesis, 'the Book of Beginnings,' is the indispensable introduction to the entire Bible, the foundation of all revealed truth. The book takes its name from the title given to it by the Septuagint (Greek) Version, derived from the heading of its ten parts *he biblos geneleos* (2:4; 5:1; 6:9; 10:1; 11:10; 11:27; 25:12; 25:19; 36:1; 37:2). The title of the book in the Hebrew is *beeresit* ('In the beginning').



Marshlands beside the Euphrates river, Iraq, the cradle of civilization.

### Genesis records nine beginnings:

- |                 |   |
|-----------------|---|
| 1. 1:1-2:3.     | The beginning of the earth as man's habitation.     |
| 2. 2:4-25.      | The beginning of the human race.                    |
| 3. 3:1-7.       | The beginning of human sin.                         |
| 4. 3:8-24.      | The beginning of redemptive revelation.             |
| 5. 4:1-15.      | The beginning of the human family.                  |
| 6. 4:16-9:29.   | The beginning of the godless civilization.          |
| 7. 10:1-32.     | The beginning of nations.                           |
| 8. 11:1-9.      | The beginning of human languages.                   |
| 9. 11:10-50:26. | The beginning of the Hebrew race (covenant people). |

### Genesis records ten family histories:

- |                 |   |
|-----------------|---|
| 1. 1:1-4:26.    | The generations of the heavenly posterity and the earthly seed. |
| 2. 5:1-6:8.     | The generations of Adam.  |
| 3. 6:9-9:29.    | The generations of Noah.  |
| 4. 10:1-11:9.   | The generations of Noah's sons.                                 |
| 5. 11:10-26.    | The generations of Shem.  |
| 6. 11:27-25:11. | The generations of Terah.                                       |
| 7. 25:12-18.    | The generations of Ishmael.                                     |
| 8. 25:19-35:29. | The generations of Isaac.                                       |
| 9. 36:1-37:1.   | The generations of Esau.  |
| 10. 37:2-50:26. | The generations of Jacob.                                       |

### Outline

#### 1-11 Primeval History of Humanity

1-2 Creation

3 The Fall

4-5 From the Fall to the Flood

6-9 The Flood

10-11 From the Flood to Abraham

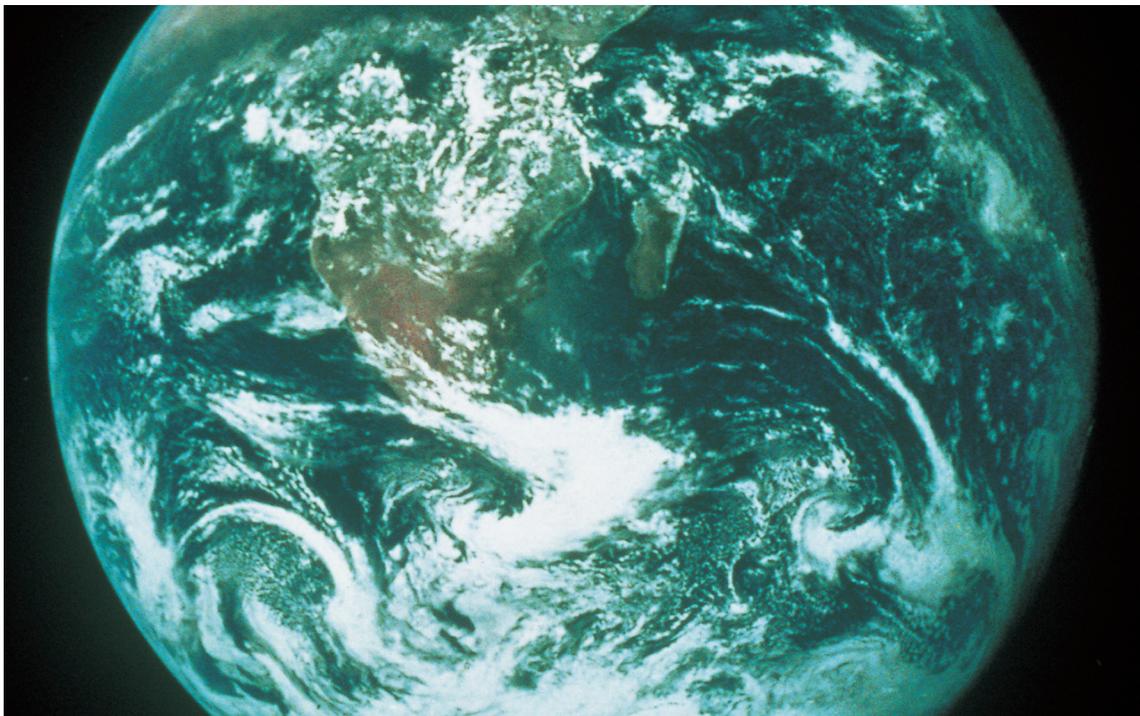
#### 12-50 Patriarchal History of Israel

12-25 Abraham

25-28 Isaac

28-36 Jacob

37-50 Joseph



## I. The beginning of the earth as man's habitation

**God.** In the first phrase of revelation occurs the declaration of the existence of God, whose eternal being is assumed and asserted, and in no sense argued and defined. He is presented here as the infinite First Cause, the Originator and Creator of all things.

**'In the Beginning.'** Evangelical scholars have taken a variety of positions concerning the significance of the creation account in Gen 1: 1-2:3. The opening words of Genesis have been commonly assumed to refer to the original creation of the universe. Some scholars prefer, however, to envision a relative beginning, allowing events such as Satan's fall (cf. Ezk 28:13-14; Isa 14:12) and the geological ages of the earth to precede 1:1 or 1:2 (the Gap Theory).

The issue of a relative beginning (re-creation) principally revolves around three considerations: 1. Is the phrase, 'in the beginning,' absolute or relative? 2. Does the word 'create' (Heb. *bara*) possibly mean 'fashion' or re-create? 3. How do Gen 1:1 and 1:2 fit together grammatically and chronologically (i.e., is it possible that a gap intervenes)?

The phrase, 'in the beginning,' is construed by most Hebrew scholars as absolute. It should be noted though that the phrase, 'in the beginning'

of John 1:1 antedates the 'in the beginning' of Gen 1:1 in any case.

The Hebrew term *bara* has the basic meaning 'create' in distinction from the word *yasar* (to fashion, form). In most of its OT usages *bara* speaks of 'creating something new' or 'bringing into existence' (cf. Isa 41:20; 43:1; Ezk 21:30; 28:13, 15). As a result, most exegetes argue that *bara* serves as testimony to God's *ex nihilo* (out of nothing) creation.

The phrase, 'Now the earth was formless and empty,' has been rendered, 'and the earth became . . .' to portray a chaotic visitation of divine judgment upon the original earth. To place a gap in 1:2 is untenable by the Hebrew text, which shows that all three clauses are circumstantial either to the main clause in 1:1 or that in 1:3. If a gap exists it must occur prior to 1:1 rather than after it. Gen 1:1-2 appear as a unit and serve as a summary introduction to the creative activity that follows. Although the gap theory framework seems to be declining in support, it does commend itself as a potential explanation for the fall of Satan and for the findings of modern science that suggest long geological ages in earth's prehistory.

### Creation and the six days of Genesis

**1.** The six days of creation in Gen 1 can represent either (1) literal 24-hour days of creation,

Earth from space.

(2) literal 24-hour days of divine *revelation* of creation, (3) extended geological ages or epochs preparatory for the eventual occupancy of man, or (4) a revelatory framework to summarize God's creative activity, asserting that 'by him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth . . .' (Col 1:16).

**3-5. First day–light.** The account of God's first creative acts contains several important affirmations. (1) God created *by his word* ('and God said'). The rest of Scripture echoes the power of God's creative word, culminating in the incarnate Word (Jn 1:1) who fulfills God's work of redemption. (2) The creation of light before the sun, moon, and stars (the agents of light) reminds us that light ultimately proceeds from God and only secondarily from His created 'lamps.' (3) The light also prefigures the 'light of God' come to earth in the person of Christ (Mt 4:16, Jn 1:3-9). (4) The state of Gen 1:3 is to be renewed in the New Jerusalem, where 'the city does not need of the sun or the moon to shine on it, for the glory of God gives it light, and the Lamb is its lamp' (Rev 21:23).

**6-8. Second day–firmament.** The second day involved the separation of the mixture of atmospheric waters from the terrestrial waters. The separation of the waters may well have resulted in vast amounts of subterranean and atmospheric waters (vapor) that remained in place until the cataclysm of the Flood.

**9-13. Third day–land, sea, plants.** After the separation from the atmospheric waters on the second day, the terrestrial waters were separated from the land to constitute the earth and to form the seas, making possible luxuriant plant and tree growth.

**14-19. Fourth day–sun, moon, and stars.** God now fills the universe He formed on the first day. These heavenly bodies (together with the vast galaxies in space) are now given responsibility as the source of light and heat on earth. Concerning the order of the creation that places *light* before the sun and stars, see the 'First Day'.

**20-23. Fifth day–sea life and birds created.** As God created the universe on the first day and filled it with the astral bodies on the fourth day, He filled the waters and atmosphere (created on the second day) on the fifth day, bringing forth fish and birds.

**24-31. Sixth day–land life and man**

**created.** Man was created (not evolved) and appeared as the crown and goal of all God's creative activity with regard to the earth as man's special home. The expression 'Let us' (1:26) intimates the Triune God's counsel and activity in man's creation (cf. Jn 1:3; Col 1:16), as well as God's foreordained redemptive plan and purpose for man upon the earth (Eph 1:4-6). Man was given dominion over the earth.

## 2. Man in Eden

**1-3. God's rest.** God rested from His creative work of Gen 1 on the seventh day. This sabbath rest of God became the basis of the Mosaic Sabbath (Ex 20:11) and a type of the believer's rest in God's redemption to be realized in Christ. Elohim, the generic name of God, appears (1:1-2:3).

**4-6. Edenic climate.** The creative work of God is summarized and the prediluvian climate is described: 'but streams came up'. This passage may suggest that prior to the Flood the earth was watered by vapor from subterranean water (cf. Gen 7:11-12).

**7. Man's creation.** The creative act of 1:27 is here described in detail. YHWH (Yahweh, traditionally vocalized Jehovah, printed LORD), the redemptive name of Deity, is introduced in vv. 4, 7, when man filled the scene and assumed control of the earth recreated for him. In His Jehovah character, God is introduced in special revelatory and redemptive relationship to man.

**8-14. The Garden of Eden.** It was provided for unfallen man, 8-9. Its location, 10-14, was somewhere in the Tigris-Euphrates region, evidently in the easternmost end of the Fertile Crescent (the moonshaped rim of ancient civilization, with one point at Palestine-Syria and the other point in the lower Tigris-Euphrates Valley). The Hiddeqel is the ancient name of the Tigris River (Babylonian *Idigla*, *Diglat*). The Pishon and the Gihon were probably smaller channels that connected the Tigris and the Euphrates as ancient river beds. The accumulation of vast deposits of silt has changed the coastline of the Persian Gulf, pushing it farther out to sea.

A.H. Sayce and others located Eden near Eridu, anciently on the Persian Gulf (*Higher Criticism and the Verdict of the Monuments*). Friedrich Delitzsch (*Wo Lag das Paradies?*) placed it just N of Babylon where the Tigris and the Euphrates

# Creation tablets



Illustration showing how a scribe wrote cuneiform on a clay tablet.

**Creation tablets discovered.** Between 1848 and 1876 the first tablets and fragments of tablets of the Babylonian creation epic called *Enuma elish* were found. Written in cuneiform characters the seven cantos of the epic were inscribed on seven tablets and were recovered from the library of the Assyrian emperor Ashurbanipal (669-626 B.C.) at his capital Nineveh. This version, though late, goes back in its political mold to the days of Hammurabi the Great (1792-1750 B.C.), and beyond that to the Sumerians, the earlier inhabitants of Lower Babylonia.

**Tablet 1.** Tablet 1 presents the primitive scene when only living uncreated world matter existed, personified by two mythical beings. These two, Apsu (male) representing the primeval fresh water ocean and Tiamat (female) the primeval salt water ocean, gave birth to a brood of gods who were so ill-behaved that their father Apsu determined to slay them. But Ea, the father of Marduk, the city-god of Babylon, instead slays Apsu, thereby transforming Tiamat into a raging avenger of her slain husband.

**Tablets 2-7.** Tablets 2 and 3 recount how Marduk is selected to fight with the raging Tiamat. Tablet 4 tells how Marduk is chosen and how he defeats Tiamat (chaos) and brings about an ordered universe out of Tiamat's carcass. Tablet 5 describes Marduk's setting up the heavenly bodies for light. Tablet 6 sets forth the creation of man out of the blood of Kingu, Tiamat's commander-in-chief, who is slain. Tablet 7 describes Marduk's elevation as the chief of Babylon and head of the Babylonian pantheon because of his role in creation.

## Similarities and differences with Genesis.

The Babylonian account and that of the Bible are similar in that (1) both accounts speak of the primeval ocean, though the Heb. *tehom* (the deep) has been demonstrated not to be derived from the mythological Tiamat (cf. TWOT, pp. 2495-96). (2) Both accounts have a similar order of events – light, firmament, dry land, luminaries, man, and God or the gods of Babylon at rest. (3) Both accounts have a predilection for the number seven, seven days, seven cantos. But this similarity is superficial, and the differences between the gross polytheistic Babylonian version and the Genesis account are vast. The Babylonian account is a corrupted version of an original tradition, the truth of which was granted to Moses by inspiration and thus freed from its polytheistic incrustations.

# Creation stories

**The Myth of Adapa.** This account of creation was discovered on four cuneiform fragments, three from Ashurbanipal's library in Nineveh (7th cen. B.C.) and the fourth from the archives of the Egyptian kings Amenhotep III and IV at Amarna (14th cen. B.C.). This legendary tale, although not really parallel to the fall of Gen 3 as sometimes claimed, does contain striking similarities, such as 'the food of life' corresponding to the fruit of the tree of life (Gen 3:3, 22). The two accounts agree that eternal life could be obtained by eating a

certain kind of food or fruit. Adam, however, forfeited immortality for himself because of a wrong desire to be like God. Adapa was already endowed with wisdom by the gods and failed to become immortal, not on account of disobedience or presumption, like Adam, but because of his obedience to his creator, Ea, who deceived him. Both accounts deal with the problem of why man must suffer and die, but are poles apart in the matter of an actual fall from a state of innocence, of which the Adapa myth knows nothing.

## The Temptation Seal

portrays two persons sitting beside a fruitbearing tree, and behind one the upright figure of a serpent. But this is scarcely an accurate picture of the temptation scene, since both figures are fully clothed, contrary to the fact that both are explicitly said to be unclothed in Gen 2:25.

**Adam and Eve Seal** is from the fourth millennium B.C. level at Tepe Gawra near Nineveh, and now in the University Museum at Philadelphia. This small stone engraving found in 1932 shows a dejected naked man and woman followed by a serpent, and suggests to some the expulsion from Eden.

**Worldwide traditions of the Fall** are found among Chinese, Hindu, Greek, Persian, and other peoples and, like similar creation and Flood stories, go back to an actual event in history, being corrupted in transmission.

Shepherds at Qurna, Iraq, ancient Mesopotamia.



come close together. But changing topography renders any precise location now only a guess. It is significant, however, that both archaeology and the Bible concur that the Eastern Mediterranean Basin and the region immediately to the E of it (Breasted's Fertile Crescent) is indeed the cradle of civilization.

**15-17. Man's testing in Eden.** Created innocent, placed in a perfect environment, man was put under a simple test of obedience, to abstain from eating the fruit of 'the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.' The penalty for disobedience was death – *immediate* spiritual death (Mt 8:22; Eph 2:1-5), *eventual* physical death (Rom 5:12; 1 Cor 15:21-22). 'Altogether, Adam lived 930 years, and then he died' (Gen 5:5), and ever afterward death has 'reigned' in the fallen human family (Rom 5:14).

**18-22. Man provided a companion.** The Lord God declared that a sexless or unisexual race would not be good and enunciated His purpose to create 'a help suitable to man to be in his presence' (lit.), 'a helper suitable for him' (AV). Adam named the animals and birds; but these, although companions in a sense, were not suitable partners on the same physical, mental, moral and spiritual plane as he.

**21-23. Woman created.** (Cf. 1:27). The Lord God made woman from the man, and presented her to him. Only in this manner could man have 'a helper suitable for him.' Man is man by that spirit by which he *differs* from the beast. Gen 2:21-23 with 2:7 presents the details of man's creation in distinction to 1:26-27 which presents the general truth that man was created, not evolved, and that woman was created in man (*issâ*, because she was taken out of *is*, man).

**24-25. Marriage instituted.** The union of husband and wife prefigured the union of Christ and His church, the woman becoming a picture of the church as Christ's Bride (Eph 5:28-32; cf. Mt 19:5; 1 Cor 6:16; Eph 5:31).

### 3. The Fall Of Man

**1. The Tempter.** This verse introduces Satan, identified by subsequent Scripture (2 Cor 11:3, 14; Rev 12:9; 20:2), with his tool the Edenic serpent. Though the serpent (Satan) is presented here, many interpreters believe that he is introduced in Ezk 28:12-19 and Isa 14:12-14 where the king of Tyre and the nation of Babylon reflect the rise and fall of an exalted angelic

being, Lucifer (Satan). The Edenic serpent (Satan's agent) was not a writhing serpent, which was the result of God's curse (Gen 3:14), but doubtless the most cunning and beautiful of God's animal creatures.

**2-5. The woman tempted.** Satan began by questioning God's word: 'Did God really say . . . ?' then he denied its teaching: 'You will not surely die.' Finally he substituted his own gospel, the immanence of God: 'You will be like Elohim,' 5. The woman's fall involved the basic ingredients of temptation; (1) the lust of the flesh, 'the woman saw that the fruit of the tree was good for food;' (2) the lust of the eyes, 'and pleasing to the eye;' (3) the pride of life, 'and also desirable for gaining wisdom' (cf. 1 Jn 2:16).

**6-7. The Fall.** The woman was deceived, but Adam sinned knowingly (1 Tim 2:14-15). Both lost their innocence, became conscious of sin and shame, and tried to cover this guilt and nakedness by some form of human effort (works).

**8-13. The Lord God seeks fallen man.** God's Sabbath rest of creation was broken by sin, 8, and He took the first steps in His new work of redemption to rescue fearful, ashamed, alienated, and confused fallen man. Adam hid from God, because of a change in him, not in God, His self-provided clothing seemed all right till God appeared and then it was found to be worthless. Similarly, sinners attempt to clothe themselves with their own righteousness.

**14-15. The curse of sin in the serpent.** Satan's tool, the serpent, was cursed and transformed from what probably was an upright, beautiful, intelligent animal to a revolting, crawling snake, 14. But in connection with the serpent not only was the deepest mystery of redemption-atonement hinted (typified by Moses' brazen serpent in Num 21:5-9; Jn 3:14-15; 2 Cor 5:21), but the first promise of a Redeemer was made, 15. This predicted that He would be of the human race, and would come through Abel, Seth, Noah (Gen 6:8-10), Shem (9:26-27), Abraham (12:1-3), Isaac (17:19-21), Jacob (28:10-14), Judah (49:10), David (2 Sam 7:5-17), culminating in Christ (Mt 1:1).

**16. The curse and the woman.** The status of woman in the fallen state is outlined and characterized by increased conception and childbearing attended with pain and sorrow, and the headship of the man, made necessary by the

disorder brought in by sin (1 Cor 11:7-9; Eph 5:22-25; 1 Tim 2:11-14).

**17-19. The curse and the man.** The ground was cursed for fallen man's sake, for he could not wisely use too much leisure in his fallen condition, 17. Life was conditioned by inescapable sorrow, 17. Verse 18 may suggest that a vegetarian diet was prescribed. Light occupation of Eden (2:15) changed to heavy labor, 18-19. Physical death, 19, was pronounced (Rom 5:12-21), although man had already demonstrated spiritual death in his shame and fear in God's presence, 8-13 (cf. Eph 2.1-5; 4:18-19).

**20-21. Unity of the race and typified redemption.** Adam named his wife Eve ('living') 'because she would become the mother of all the living.' The unity of the human race in Adam is here declared.

**22-24. Expulsion from Eden.** As a result of disobedience man lost his innocence and experienced knowledge of evil. Through this knowledge conscience was awakened, and he entered a new time period in which God dealt with him not in innocence as in the garden but under conscience. He was responsible to do all known good and to avoid all known evil, and as a sinner to come before God through his prescribed means of redemption (the sacrificial system, though not explicitly commanded here, appears to now be operative, cf. Gen 4:3-5; 8:20; 12:7; etc.).

Man was accordingly expelled from Eden lest by eating of the tree of life he should perpetuate his misery. The cherubim at the gate of Eden vindicated God's holiness against the presumption of sinful man who, in spite of his sin, would 'reach out his hand and take also from the tree of life.' Later, in the Israelite tabernacle, cherubim hovered over the sprinkled blood in the holiest and portrayed the maintenance of the divine righteousness through sprinkled blood typifying the sacrifice of Christ (Ex. 25:17-20; Rom 3:24-26).

#### **4. The first murder and civilization**

**1-5. Cain and Abel and their worship.** Cain ('acquisition') was a type of a natural man of the earth. His religion was of works, destitute of saving faith, a sense of sin and need of atonement (cf. 'the way of Cain,' Jude 11). How mistaken Eve was concerning her first child,

when she said, 'With the help of the Lord, I have brought forth a man.' Eve may have thought that Cain was to be the fulfillment of the promise of Gen 3:15, but ironically, instead of getting the Saviour she got a murderer, illustrating the ignorance in which she was plunged because she trusted Satan for knowledge. When Eve gave birth to a second child, she named him Abel ('vanity'), perhaps in recognition of the seriousness of the curse. Cain and Abel stand as the prototypes of the division between the godly and ungodly that was to be perpetuated throughout man's history on earth. Though much has been made of the difference between the offerings, the principal reason God rejected Cain's offering was because it was not offered in faith (Heb 11:4). Even at that early period in God's redemptive program, true salvation is demonstrated to be by faith ('without faith it is impossible to please God,' Heb 11:6).

**6-7. The Lord's plea with Cain.** Just as God sought out Adam and Eve when they fell, God sought Cain. Cain, however, as a prototype of fallen man refused God's offer of reconciliation, preferring to pursue his own solution. Cain's actions reveal the plight of unregenerate man, compounding sin upon sin in his rebellion against God. Rejection produced rivalry, which produced hatred and finally murder. In Cain, sin ran its full gamut, beginning with alienation from God, and proceeding to alienation from other men, nature, and even oneself.

**16-24. The first civilization.** Cain left the place of God's manifested Shekinah presence above the cherubim eastward of Eden (3:24) and 'went out from the Lord's presence,' 16, taking up residence in the land of Nod ('wandering'). Departure from God's presence always involves the absence of divine guidance. Cain 'knew' (euphemism for having sexual relations with) his wife, one of his innumerable sisters since by this time Adam's progeny was numerous. Cain's son Enoch built a city (the first urban civilization). In the following verses the material growth and concomitant spiritual decline are portrayed. On one hand, we observe the growth of music (21), metallurgy (22), and poetry (23-24). At the same time, sin increased with the introduction of polygamy in apparent contradiction to God's monogamous standard of Gen 2:24, and Lamech presumptuously boasts about vengeance, a prerogative God claims as his own (cf. Deut 32:35; Heb 10:30).

## Archaeological light

**Beginnings of urban life.** Excavations at Tell Hassuna, Nineveh and Tepe Gawra in northern Mesopotamia reach down to Neolithic times, 5000 B.C. or earlier, showing stone tools, beautiful pottery and architectural remains of skill. Around 4500 B.C. copper was introduced alongside stone. To the Copper-Stone Age, 4500-3000 B.C., belong such sites as Tell Halaf, Chagar Bazar and Tell Arpachiyah in northern Mesopotamia. In southern Mesopotamia, the Tell Obeid culture about 3600 B.C. underlies Ur, Erech, Lagash and Eridu. Excavations here elucidate the succession of cultures in this prehistoric epoch, and bear out the biblical representations. Iron ore (cf. Gen 4:22) was occasionally smelted in Mesopotamia at an early date (or some suggest meteoric iron was used). At Tell Asmar (Eshnunna) Henri Frankfort found evidence of an iron blade dating about 2700 B.C. A small iron ax has been recovered from Ur. But iron smelting was not followed up on an industrial scale till after the Bronze Age, 3000-1200 B.C. The Iron Age extended from 1200 to 300 B.C.

### 25-26. Seth and the spiritual progeny.

The Lord raised up Seth and Enosh ('mortal') to be depositories of the messianic promise. Their birth closes the first section of Genesis (1:1-4:26), and sets the battle lines between the evil illustrated above and God's righteous remnant. This is reflected by the observation, 'At that time men began to call on the name of the Lord' (26).

## 5. From Adam to Noah

**1-32. The messianic line from Adam to Noah.** The second division of the book of Genesis is introduced by the words: 'This is the written account of Adam's line.' The next time the phrase appears is Mt 1:1, where the lineage of the new Adam is set forth. The godly race is marked by physical death, although long-lived.

The dirge 'and then he died' tolls like a funeral bell throughout this chapter. Alongside this sad litany comes the more pleasant refrain, 'and he lived . . .' Though death ruled from Adam until Christ, God preserved man long enough to bear children and preserve the messianic line. Enoch alone escaped death by translation, 24 (Heb 11:5) because he had 'walked with God.' Before the Fall God walked with man; after it, man walked with God.

The great age of the pre-Flood patriarchs was due probably to greater physical vitality and a more healthful pre-Flood climate.

## 6-8. The Flood

### 6:1-7. The moral cause of the Flood.

Several views have been advanced concerning this very difficult passage: (1) intermarriage of godly Sethites and ungodly Cainites; (2) polygamous marriage of ancient dynastic

## Archaeological parallel

It has been customary for critics to treat the longevity of the pre-Flood patriarchs as obviously legendary or mythical. According to the Weld-Blundell Prism, eight antediluvian kings reigned over the lower Mesopotamian cities of Eridu, Badtibira, Larak, Sippar and Shuruppak; and the period of their combined rule totaled 241,200 years (the shortest reign being 18,600 years, the longest 43,200). Berossus, a Babylonian priest (3rd cen. B.C.), lists ten names in all (instead of eight) and further exaggerates the length of their reigns. Other nations too have traditions of primeval longevity.

Attempts to correlate Berossus' ten kings with the ten patriarchs from Adam to Noah have failed. However, the names as preserved by the Sumerian King List and Berossus evidently represent a corrupted tradition of the historical facts as preserved in Gen 5, besides giving extrabiblical indication of the greater length of human life before the Flood.

## The ages of the patriarchs

**Adam 930 years**

**Seth 912 years**

**Enosh 905 years**

**Cainan 910 years**

**Mahalaleel 895 years**

**Jared 962 years**

**Enoch 365 years**

**Methuselah 969 years**

**Lamech 777 years**

**Noah 950 years**

## Chronological light

It is highly improbable that the genealogical framework of Gen 5 was intended to be used, or can be used, for calculating the number of years (1656) between the creation of man and the Flood, thus dating man's creation 4004 B.C. (Ussher). There are several reasons: (1) The Hebrew terms 'begat,' 'son,' 'daughter' are used with great latitude and may involve a distant as well as an immediate descendant. (2) The ten generations from Adam to Noah and the ten from Noah to Abraham evidently aim at brevity and symmetry, rather than unbroken father-to-son relation. (3) Abbreviations due to symmetry are common features of Scripture genealogies (as in Mt 1). (4) In the recurring formula A lived — years and begat B, and A lived after he begat B — years and begat sons and daughters, B may not be the literal son of A. If so, the age of A may be his age when his descendant was born from whom B was descended. An indefinite time interval may therefore be intended between A and B. (5) Man is now scientifically known to have existed long before 4000 B.C., as both paleontology and archaeology show.

rulers ('mighty men'); (3) intermarriages of the 'daughters of men,' i.e., women in the flesh, with the *bene Elohim*, 'sons of God,' i.e. angels. Of these three predominant views, the third is to be preferred because of the broad scope of the passage (i.e. cause for a cataclysmic flood); the origin of the *nephilim* (possibly related to races of giants that inhabited the earth, cf. LXX, 'gigantes'); parallels with Greek and Roman records that speak of Titans, mythological creatures that were part human and part divine; the OT's consistent use of *bene Elohim* as angels (cf. Job 1:6; 2:1; etc); and because the NT writers add their testimony in 2 Pet 2:4-4 and Jude 6.

### 6:8-12. The Lord's grace toward Noah.

Noah found grace in the sight of God because of his faith in the promised Redeemer and the need of vicarious atonement (Heb 11:7). Therefore he

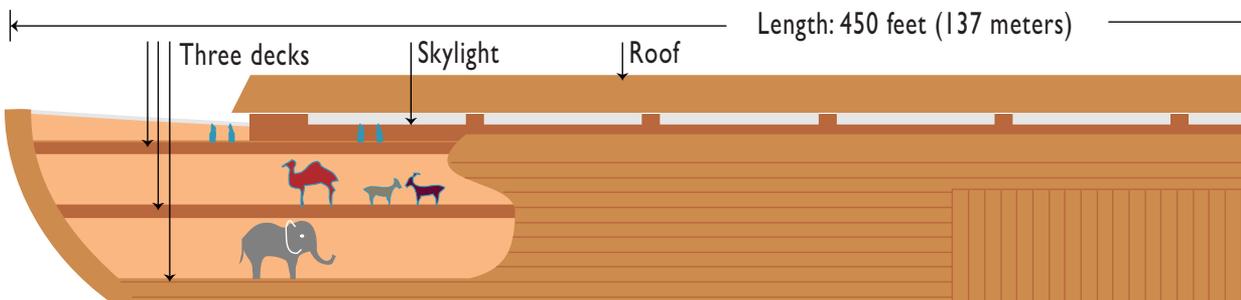
## Archaeological light

The Babylonian flood story is preserved in the eleventh book of the famous Assyrian-Babylonian Epic of Gilgamesh, unearthed at Kuyunjik (Nineveh) in 1853. It describes a boat about five times larger than Noah's ark with a displacement of some 228,500 tons and cubical in structure. In both the Babylonian and the biblical accounts, bitumen or pitch to close up the seams of the vessel appears prominently. Both accounts hold that the catastrophe was divinely planned. But in striking contrast to the monotheistic Hebrew account, the Babylonian is polytheistic and has no adequate moral concept of the cause of the Flood. Both accounts assert that the hero of the deluge (Noah, Utnapishtim) was divinely instructed to build a huge boat to preserve life. Of all extrabiblical parallels that have come down to us from the vast cuneiform literature of the Tigris-Euphrates Valley of antiquity, the most striking remains the Babylonian account of the Flood.

is said to have been 'righteous' and 'perfect' (possessed of spiritual integrity, *not* sinless). Like Enoch, he was an antediluvian of whom it was said, 'He walked with God' (Gen 5:24; 6:9). The ark Noah was told to construct was a type of Christ as the preserver of His people from judgment (Heb 11:7), specifically of the remnant of Israel who will turn to the Lord during the Great Tribulation (Isa 2:10-11; 26:20-21).

**6:13-22. Instructions for building the Ark.** 'Pitch,' 14, comes from a similar root as the Heb. word elsewhere translated, 'atonement' (Lev 17:11; etc.). As such its use may have a

## The Ark dimensions



typical significance with respect to Christ's atonement, which keeps out the waters of judgment. The ark was 300 cubits (450 feet) long, 50 cubits (75 feet) broad, and 30 cubits (45 feet) high with a displacement of 43,300 tons.

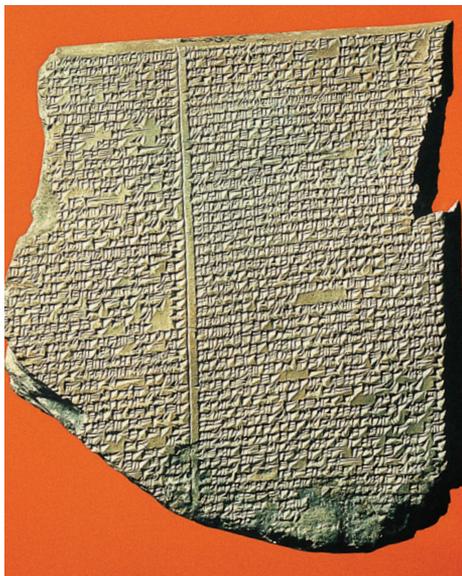
#### 7:1-9. Instructions concerning the

**Flood.** Lev 11:1-31; Deut 14:3-20. Seven (or 'seven pairs' RSV) 'clean animals' (i.e., acceptable for sacrifice), are specified to be taken, in addition to male and female of each species for future increase (Gen 6:19). Such distinctions antedate the Mosaic law, which stipulates ten such animals fit for sacrifice.

#### 7:10-24. The physical causes of the

**Flood.** The causes of the Noachic flood suggest a worldwide catastrophe, not simply a local flood (cf. 2 Pet 3:4-6). Several explanations have been offered for the source of the flood waters with the most popular suggested by Whitcomb and Morris in *The Genesis Flood*. They suggest that the Flood began with the displacement of vast quantities of subterranean water (Gen 7:11), certainly by earthquake, involving the sinking of land levels and raising of sea bottoms. This is mentioned first. The violent 40-day precipitation was only a secondary source of water and occasioned radical climatic changes. Up to that time the earth had evidently been watered by these subterranean fountains and an ascending mist (Gen 2:5-6), so that atmospheric conditions may not have existed to form a rainbow (Gen 9:13) as in the changed postdiluvian world.

**8:1-6. The waters recede.** A wind dried up the water, 1; land and sea levels shifted back to normal positions, 2. Condensation of watery vapor which had surrounded the pre-Flood earth stopped, 2 (cf. Gen 1:6-8). The ark touched dry



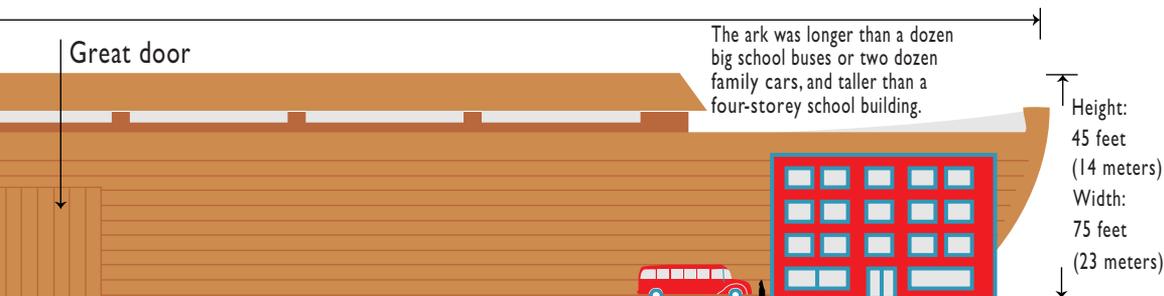
A flood account on tablet XI of the Assyrian version of the Epic of Gilgamesh.

ground on one of the mountains of Ararat, 4, not necessarily modern Mt. Ararat (Agri Dagh), the name being identical with Assyrian *Uratú*, signifying the general mountainous territory of Armenia (cf. 2 Kgs 19:37; Jer 51:27; Isa 37:38), W of the Caspian Sea and SE of the Black Sea.

#### 8:7-14. The sending out of the birds.

A raven was sent out first, 6-7; then a dove was released on three occasions. The return of the second dove with a fresh-plucked olive twig showed that the valleys where the olive groves grew were almost dry .

**8:15-22. Noah leaves the Ark and worships.** Noah offered burnt offerings on the altar which he built, 20, gratefully worshipping the Beloved One who had saved him and his family. Accepting Noah's act of worshipful gratitude, the lord 'smelled the pleasing aroma,' 21.



## Archaeological light

Both the Babylonian and the biblical accounts specify the duration of the Flood. The pre-Babylonian (Sumerian) account specifies seven days and seven nights, the Babylonian six days and nights. The Bible account indicates a little more than a year (371 days). The Bible also espouses supernatural catastrophism against the modern naturalistic theory of uniformity (2 Pet 3:56).

## 9. God's covenant with Noah

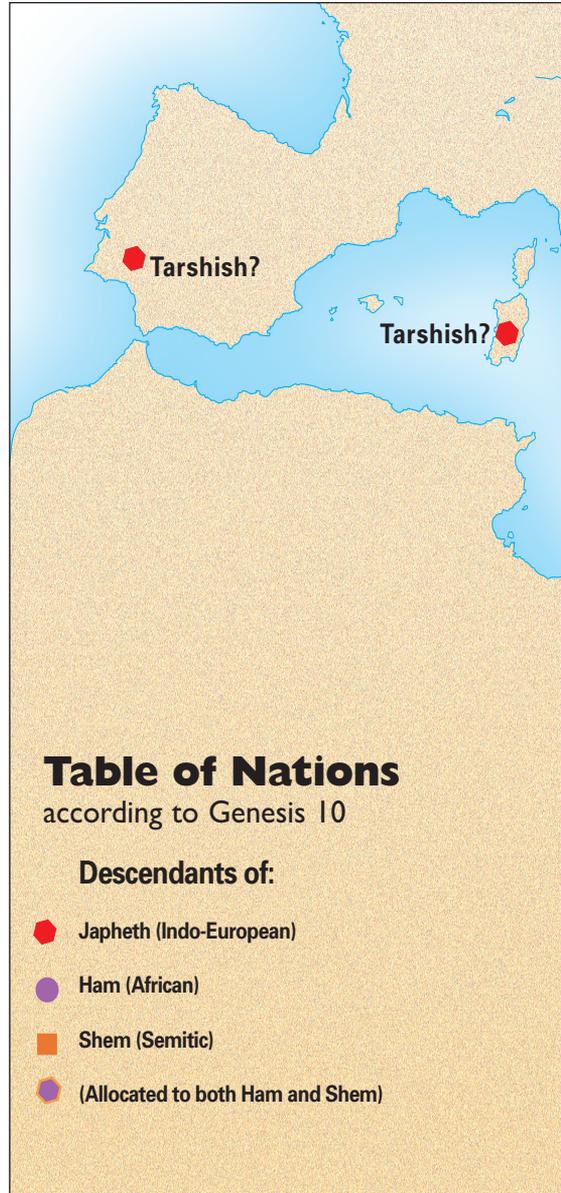
### 1-19. Elements of the Covenant.

(1) Promise that every living thing should never again be destroyed, 8:21. (2) Order of nature confirmed, 8:22. (3) Noah and his sons commanded to increase and subdue the earth, 9:1, 7. (4) Meat diet permitted but not with the blood, 3-4. (5) Human government (capital punishment) instituted, 5-6. (6) Rainbow appeared as the sign of the covenant, 8-19. Scripture does not specifically say whether the bow had previously existed and was now invested with the quality of a sign or whether it was a new phenomenon, indicating a changed climate after the Flood.

### 20-29. Noah's prophesy of the moral and spiritual history of the nations.

Noah in an unguarded moment dishonoured himself, demonstrating that salvation from the Flood did not ultimately change man's sinful nature, 20-21. His son Ham, exhibiting the lascivious bent of his character, shamefully dishonoured his father, 22-23. Noah by the spirit of prophecy foretold the inevitable outworking of this lascivious tendency in the curse that fell upon Ham's 'son' (descendant) Canaan, who represented the progenitor of that branch of the Hamitic peoples that later occupied Palestine before Israel's conquest (Gen 10:15-20).

The purpose of this prophecy was to indicate the origin of the Canaanites and to show the source of their moral pollution (cf. Gen 10:15-19; 19:5; Lev 18, 20; Deut 12:31). That Canaan's curse was fundamentally religious rather than racial is shown by the fact that Shem's contrasting blessing was religious, 9:26, with a knowledge of God and God's salvation coming through the Semitic line. Likewise Japheth's blessing was also religious, 27. He would dwell in the tents of Shem.



## Archaeological light

In the Babylonian flood story, Utnapishtim offered sacrifice, poured out a libation, and burned 'sweet cane, cedar, and myrtle' after he left the boat, partly to appease the wrath of the angry deities who had decreed the complete extermination of mankind and partly to express his gratitude to the god Ea for sparing him. In both accounts the expression 'smell' occurs. Before he left the boat, like Noah, Utnapishtim sent out birds — a dove seven days after the boat landed on Mt. Nisir, followed by a swallow and finally a raven.



**The marshlands of southern Iraq–Mesopotamia – during a thunderstorm.**

## Archaeological light

The Canaanites were enslaved by one of the most terrible and degrading forms of idolatry, which encouraged their immorality. Discovered in 1929-37, Canaanite religious literature from Ras Shamra (ancient Ugarit in North Syria) reveals the worship of the immoral gods El and Baal and the sacred courtesans Anath, Asherah and Astarte. This literature fully corroborates the OT notices of the religious debauchery and moral degradation of the Canaanites. Cult objects, figurines and literature combine to show how sex-centered was Canaanite religion, with human sacrifice, cult of serpents, sacred courtesans and eunuch priests excessively common. The sordid depths of social degradation to which the erotic aspects of the Canaanite cults led can scarcely be imagined.

## 10. The Sons of Noah Japhethites

Noah's panoramic prophecy of moral and spiritual history (cf. 9:24-27) forms an indispensable introduction to the principle that underlies the ethnographic table of Gen 10, viz., that in God's ways with men the moral character of a nation cannot be understood unless its source is known. The nation Israel, divinely elected to be the medium of redemptive blessing to the world, needed to know the source from which the various nations surrounding her sprang, that she might know how to act toward them. W.F. Albright writes concerning the table: 'It stands absolutely alone in ancient literature, without a remote parallel even among the Greeks, where we find the closest approach to a distribution of peoples in genealogical framework. But among the Greeks the framework is mythological and the peoples are all Greek and Aegean tribes . . . The table of Nations remains an astonishingly accurate document' (in Young's *Analytical Concordance to the Bible*, 22nd., p. 30). Although numerous names have been known from ancient Greek and Roman sources, modern archaeology of the past century and a half has elucidated many of them by its discoveries.

**2-5. The descendants of Japheth.** These formed the northern nations. *Gomer* (*Assyrian Gimir-rama*), Cimmerians of antiquity (Ezk 38:6), is mentioned in the annals of Assyrian emperors Esarhaddon and Ashurbanipal (7th cen. B.C.). Magog (Ezk 38:2; 39:6) were Scythians (according to Josephus), but probably this is a comprehensive term for northern barbarians.

*Madai* are the well-known Medes (2 Kgs 17:6; 18:11; Isa 21:2) mentioned in the Assyrian

inscriptions. *Javan*, Ionian Greeks of Homer and particularly the Asiatic Ionians, was first mentioned by Sargon II (722-705 B.C.) and subsequently known in Jewish history (Ezk 27:13; Isa 66:19; Joel 3:6; Zech 9:13; Dan 8:21; 10:20). *Tubal and Mesbech* (Ezk 27:13; 32:26; 38:2; 39:1; Isa 66:19) were the Tabali and Mushki of the Assyrian cuneiform records from the time of Tiglath-Pileser I (c. 1100 B.C.) onward. *Tiras* was probably the ancestor of the Tirsenoï, a pirate Aegean people.

*Ashkenaz* are the Scythians (Assyrian *Ashkuuz*). *Riphat* were probably preserved in the Riphæan Mountains far to the N (Josephus calls them Paphlagonians).

*Elisbab* is Kittim or Cyprus (Ezk 27:7), the Alashiya of the Amarna Tablets. *Tarshish* was the Phoenician copper smelting center at Tartessus, Spain, or one in Sardinia (Ezk 27:12). *Kittim* is Cyprus, connected with the ancient south coast city Kition (present-day Larnaka). *Dodanim* was perhaps the Dardana (Dardanians) of Asia Minor; also read *Rodanim* in 1 Chr 1:7 (RSV) and in the Greek and Samaritan texts of Gen 10:4, in which case the Aegean island of Rhodes is indicated.

## Hamites

**6-20. Descendants of Ham.** These were southern nations. The earliest empire builders were in southern Babylonia and later in Egypt. *Cush* is connected with *Kish*, the ancient city-state in lower Babylonia. From Kish, where Babylonian emperors of the third millennium B.C. took their titles as kings of the world (cf. Nimrod, 8-12), the Cushites migrated to Africa (Kosh or Nubia). *Mizraim* is Egypt, whose civilization dates from about 5000 B.C. and includes the predynastic period to 3100 B.C. and 30 dynasties of splendid kings from 3100 B.C. to 322 B.C. *Put* is Cyrenaica in North Africa W of Egypt, as is now known from the inscriptions of Darius I of Persia (522-486 B.C.). *Canaan* represents the original Hamitic peoples settling in Palestine who yielded to racial amalgamation and became predominantly Semitic.

*Seba* is connected with South Arabia and is mentioned in the Assyrian inscriptions of the 8th cen. B.C. *Havilah* was ancestor to a people in central and southern Arabia partly Cushite and partly Semitic Joktanite (10:7-29). *Sabtah* is Shabwat, ancient capital of Hazarmaveth (10:26), modern Hadramaut. *Raamah*, *Sabteca*,



*Sheba* and *Dedan* are representative of Cushite tribes of Arabia.

**8-10. Hamitic imperial power.** This appeared in human history in Nimrod, founder of the kingdom of Babylon, plausibly explained as Sumerian (early non-Semitic Babylonian) Nin-Maradda ('Lord of Marad'), a town SW of Kish. The Sumerian King List names the dynasty of Kish with 23 kings first in the enumeration of Mesopotamian dynasties which reigned after the Flood. However, the name Nimrod suggested 'rebel' against God to the Hebrews, who took note of his character as a hunter, the opposite of the divine ideal of a king, that of a shepherd (2 Sam 5:2; 7:7).

*Nimrod's Kingdom* is mentioned in its inception in the land of Shinar (the entire alluvial plain of the Tigris-Euphrates River, the last 200 miles of their course to the Persian Gulf) with *Babel*, *Erech*, *Akkad* and *Calneh*, 10, all of which have been resurrected by archaeology. *Akkad* (*Agade*) and *Babel* (*Babylon*) were in the northern part of Shinar, called Akkad, and in the southern portion, called Sumer, was *Erech* (ancient Uruk), modern Warka, where the first ziggurat (temple tower) and cylinder seals were discovered. The name *Akkad* was given to the district of northern Babylonia from its chief city *Agade*; which Sargon made the capital of a Semitic empire 2371-2230 B.C. *Calneh* is still obscure, but is thought to be a shorter form of

Hursagkalama (Kalama), a twin city of Kish.

*Asshur* (Assyria), the capital and center of Assyrian power 60 miles S of Nineveh, now called Qalat Sharqat, was excavated 1903-14 and its occupation goes back to the early third millennium B.C.

*Nineveh* (modern Kuyunjik), about 60 miles N of Asshur, was the later capital of the Assyrian Empire. Resurrected by modern archaeology from the grave of its oblivion, it was anciently, like New York, the center of a complex of cities including Calah, 18 miles S; Resen, between Calah and Nineveh proper; and Rehoboth Ir (Rebit-Ninua), W of the capital.

**13-14. Other Hamitic nations—descendants of Egypt** are *Ludim* (thought by some to be for Lubim, Libyans, a tribe W of the Delta), the *Anamites*, *Lebabites*, *Naphtubites* and *Caslubites* (all obscure). The *Patbrusites* are inhabitants of Ptores, Upper Egypt. *Caphtorites* are dwellers of *Kaptara* or Caphtor (Crete). The *Philistines* are abundantly illustrated by the monuments. They invaded SE Palestine en masse in the 12th cen. B.C., though small communities of Philistines may have been in Canaan from 2100 B.C. (cf. Gen 21:32-34; 26:1).

**15-20. Other descendants of Canaan.** *Sidon* (the oldest Phoenician city, 22 miles N of Tyre) represents the Phoenicians (Sidonians). The Hittites were an ancient imperial people of

**The queen feasting with attendants, ancient Nineveh (modern Kuyunjik), about 60 miles N of Asshur, later capital of the Assyrian Empire.**

# Contemporary Mesopotamian history

Period (All dates B.C.)	Excavated site	Events
<b>Neolithic Age 6500-5000</b>	Earliest villages in northern Mesopotamia. Qal'at Jarmo, 30 miles E of Mosul, excavated 1948 by Univ. of Chicago.	Stone implements, simple houses, no pottery.
<b>Hassuna Period</b>	Tell Hassuna 25 miles S of Mosul. Excavated 1943-44 by Iraq Museum. Matarrah 25 miles S of Kirkuk. Excavated by Univ. of Chicago 1948. Nineveh lowest levels. Samarra on Tigris N of Baghdad.	Crude pottery. Flint and obsidian artifacts. Development of agricultural implements, domestication of animals. Clay houses. No metal. Pottery improves. Painted pottery. Artistic height of Samarran Period.

