



*Everyday
Gospel
Bible*



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Gospel
Bible*

ENGLISH STANDARD VERSION

GENERAL EDITOR
PAUL DAVID TRIPP



CROSSWAY

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INTRODUCTION

to the ESV Everyday Gospel Bible

I have just completed one of the most wonderful years of my life. I do not know when I have felt more excited to get up every morning and do what God has called me to do. I have been blessed to spend a year writing daily devotionals on every part of the Bible, from the beginning of Genesis to the end of Revelation. This year has left me more deeply grateful for the beautiful gift of the Word of God and left me loving my Savior more than I ever have before. Each day as I wrote I felt as though I were examining a priceless treasure. It was as though I were holding the world's most precious diamond, turning it over in my hand and watching beautiful colors radiate from each facet. It was hard for me to understand how I had been chosen to perform such a wonderful task. It was as though I were in the temple with David (see Psalm 27), gazing daily upon the beauty of the Lord.

As I wrote, there were also moments of sadness. I know there are millions of people who do not understand the glorious wonder that is Scripture. Many read the Bible more out of duty than out of delight. Many read but miss the diamonds of spiritual insight and beauty embedded in every portion of the Bible. Many read not knowing whom to look for in every passage. Many read and do not know that they are reading the ultimate story, the only one that makes sense out of the little stories of everyone who has ever lived. Many forget that, when they hold the Bible in their hands, they are holding the very words of God himself, recorded and preserved for them as an act of divine love. Many of us forget that God gave us words—that is, the ability to think and communicate in language—so that he could reveal himself to us in his Word. So I wrote the devotionals in this Bible like I was a tour guide. I walk with readers down the road of God's Word, from Genesis to Revelation, stopping here and there, saying, "Look, do you see this? Do you understand that? Do not miss what is here!" all the while asking readers to slow down, to believe that the journey is worth it, and to see it more as a gift than as an obligation.

Several things are important to understand before beginning this journey through God's Word.

1. *Between the "already" of Christ's first coming and the "not yet" of his return, besides the presence and grace of the Son through his Spirit, the two greatest gifts*

God has given us are his Word (so that we would know him and ourselves) and his church (a place where his Word would be continually explained and applied). There is simply no way to overstate the eternal, transformative value of the Bible. There is no way to overstate the lavish divine love that caused this wonderful book to be recorded and preserved for us so that we could actually hold in our hands the very words of God himself. There are no words to characterize adequately the unending disaster that would befall humanity if it were left without the glorious rescuing wisdom of Scripture. When we hold the Bible in our hands, we are holding a physical argument for the magnificence of God's love for us. The Bible is God's coming near to us with rescuing, redeeming, and transforming grace.

2. *The Bible is not a collection of stories but one story.* As we read the Bible, we can think of it as one overarching story with many chapters. The Bible is the story of how God works through his Son to rescue, restore, and renew his creation from the horrible damage that sin has done. The key theme of this story is redemption, and the central character is the Redeemer, Jesus.

3. *The Bible includes more than a story.* The Bible is more than a history book. God in his wisdom has included with the central story his explanatory and applicatory notes. God does not just give us his story, but he helps us understand what it means and what it looks like to live in light of it. All of this is done in a way that is self-revealing. He has given us his story with his notes so that we would know him and, in knowing him, come to know our need of him and seek and celebrate the grace that can be found only in him.

4. *The great biblical story has a plot.* Like every great story ever written, the greatest story ever written has a plot. A novel makes sense only when we understand the plotline. The same is true with God's Word—except that the plot of God's story has everything to do with our world and our lives. This is not a novel; the biblical story is the story of humanity, of what went wrong, and of how it is being fixed by divine grace in the gift of Jesus Christ. Since the biblical story is our story, it is a matter of life and death for us to understand its plot. The plot of the biblical narrative can be summarized with four words: *creation* (God makes beautiful creatures in a beautiful world), *slavery* (sin deceives, seduces, and enslaves us), *redemption* (God liberates us from our bondage to sin), and *restoration* (God makes all things, including us, new again). This is the grand plot, but also the mini-plot repeated again and again—not only in the individual stories that are part of the grand story of the Bible but in our own stories as well.

5. *This story is the only way to make proper sense of our individual stories.* I have written before that we live life based not on the facts of our existence but on our interpretation of those facts. We all look to something to help us understand who we are and what life is about. This is one of the main functions of Scripture; the great story of the Bible has been given by a loving God so that we will make proper sense of the story of our lives.

6. *The Scripture story has a central character: Jesus.* The Bible is the biography of Jesus. Every passage points to him, cries out for him, prophesies about him, or looks back on what he has done. The Bible is not simply about how to be

religious, how to be a good person, or what we have to do to be acceptable to God. The Bible is most deeply the story of God's rescuing, forgiving, transforming, and delivering grace, brought to us through the life, death, resurrection, and ascension of his son, Jesus Christ.

7. *As children of God, by grace our stories have been embedded in the larger story of redemption.* Genesis, Exodus, Joshua, Malachi, Romans, Revelation, and the other books are not only about the times and the people to whom they were first written. All that God has done, in every period of redemptive history, he has done for us so that we would come to know him and be the recipients of his life-giving and heart- and life-changing grace.

8. *It really is true that all Scripture is profitable (2 Tim. 3:16–17).* The Bible has no unneeded stories, no unessential teachings, no excess details, no superfluous history, not even one unneeded word. Everything God ordained to be written and preserved was recorded and protected because it is what we would need and what God knew would bear good fruit in our lives. As we read we can be assured that all we read is profitable, that is, in God's infinite wisdom it is meant for us and for our good.

May God richly bless his people as they journey through his Word. And at the end of the year may we be more grateful for the Bible than ever before, and may our dependency on and love for Jesus reach a fuller, deeper depth.

Paul David Tripp
January 2024

PREFACE

to the English Standard Version

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 *huiioi*) 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

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.

Second, a particular difficulty is presented when words in biblical 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 *doulos*, a term which is often rendered “slave.” This term, however, actually covers 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 word *doulos* has been undertaken with particular attention to its meaning in each specific context. 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 Greek and the range of meaning that this term 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.”

Third, 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 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 fourth specialized term, the word “behold,” usually has been retained as the most common translation for the Greek word *idou*, which means 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 *idou* completely

untranslated and so to lose the intended emphasis in the original language. 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 New Testament is based 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. 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 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

The *ESV Everyday Gospel 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.

SECTION HEADINGS

Section headings have been included throughout the text of the *ESV Everyday Gospel Bible*. While the headings are not part of the Bible text itself, they have been provided to help identify and locate important themes and topics throughout the Bible.

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 *number* that *follows* the word or phrase to which the footnote applies (e.g., “Isaac²”). Superscript *letters* that *precede* a word indicate cross-references (see explanation on the following page).

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.

CROSS-REFERENCE FOOTNOTES

In addition to the *numeric* (textual) footnotes, the New Testament portion of this edition of the ESV Bible includes two kinds of cross-reference notes. These

are identified *alphabetically* and follow the numeric notes at the bottom of each page. These include (1) *direct quotations from the Old Testament* (indirect quotations and allusions are not included), and (2) *parallel passages in the four Gospels*. These cross-references are included to help the reader understand the relationship of the New Testament to the Old Testament, and the harmony of the Gospels in the New Testament.

MAPS

A valuable set of maps is provided at the end of the *ESV Everyday Gospel Bible*. These include maps describing the biblical world and key historical periods in the life of ancient Israel and in New Testament times. Also included are maps showing a comprehensive overview of Jesus' life and ministry as well as the missionary journeys of the apostle Paul.

The
OLD TESTAMENT

Introduction to
GENESIS



Author, Date, and Recipients

Traditionally, Moses is considered to have been the author of Genesis and the rest of the Pentateuch (see Num. 33:2; Deut. 31:24; John 5:46). Of course, Moses lived much later than the events of Genesis. Presumably, stories were passed down about those earlier events, and Moses brought them all together.

The first audience would have been the Israelites Moses led through the wilderness. For readers today, Genesis is an essential introduction to the rest of the Bible. It is rightly called the book of beginnings.

Welcome to the Story of Jesus

The gospel story begins not with Matthew but with the very first verses of Genesis. When it comes to the story of Jesus, the Old Testament is anticipation, the Gospels are realization, the Epistles are explanation and application, and Revelation is the culmination. Each part of the Bible is about redemption's central character, Jesus.

Some may think that the title above is a strange title for the book of Genesis, because Jesus is never mentioned—but in fact he is. Genesis begins with the story of creation. It is not meant to be a scientific analysis of the creation of the world; it is meant to put God in the center of everything. He is the initiator. He is the controller. He is the designer. Life is about him. One could argue that the four most important words in all of Scripture are “In the beginning, God,” because, if God is on the scene first, then everything in human existence is about him. He is at the center; we are not. But, if we look at what the Gospel of John says about Jesus, it should change the way we think about Genesis: “All things were made through him, and without him was not any thing made that was made” (John 1:3). The creator of Genesis 1 is Jesus. In the first words of the Bible we are immediately confronted with the awesome glory, the awesome power, the awesome wisdom, and the awesome love of Jesus to create this magnificent cosmos that is the place where we are all blessed to live.

But that is not all. It does not take long in Genesis before we meet Jesus the promised Redeemer. Genesis presents to us the three acts of the redemptive drama. We can think of it as a play. Act 1 covers the creation of the world

(Genesis 1). Act 2 describes the fall of humanity into sin (Genesis 3). And Act 3 presents redeeming grace (promised in Genesis 3 and covenanted in Genesis 12; 15; 17). These three acts, which will form the rest of the whole redemptive story, are found and first introduced in Genesis.

So in the very first book of the Bible we are confronted with the fact that in the great moral drama of life there is only central character, one hero. That hero is Jesus—Jesus the Creator, Jesus the Redeemer, and Jesus the hope of all humanity.

Outline

- I. Primeval History (1:1–11:26)
 - A. God's creation and ordering of heaven and earth (1:1–2:3)
 - B. Earth's first people (2:4–4:26)
 - C. Adam's descendants (5:1–6:8)
 - D. Noah's descendants (6:9–9:29)
 - E. The descendants of Noah's sons (10:1–11:9)
 - F. Shem's descendants (11:10–26)
- II. Patriarchal History (11:27–50:26)
 - A. Terah's descendants (11:27–25:18)
 - B. Isaac's descendants (25:19–37:1)
 - C. Jacob's descendants (37:2–50:26)

GENESIS



DAY 1

GENESIS 1-3

The Creation of the World

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 expanse¹ in the midst of the waters, and let it separate the waters from the waters.” ⁷And God made² 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.³ 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,⁴ 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, plants⁵ 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,⁶ 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 birds⁷ 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 kinds, and everything that creeps on the ground according to its kind. And God saw that it was good.

¹Or a canopy; also verses 7, 8, 14, 15, 17, 20 ²Or fashioned; also verse 16 ³Or Sky; also verses 9, 14, 15, 17, 20, 26, 28, 30; 2:1 ⁴Or Land; also verses 11, 12, 22, 24, 25, 26, 28, 30; 2:1 ⁵Or small plants; also verses 12, 29 ⁶Or appointed times ⁷Or flying things; see Leviticus 11:19–20

²⁶Then God said, “Let us make man¹ 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.

²⁸And 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.” ²⁹And 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. ³⁰And 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. ³¹And God saw everything that he had made, and behold, it was very good. And there was evening and there was morning, the sixth day.

Made in God's Image

Genesis 1:26–27

That mankind is made in God's image is a profound announcement. We must never forget this foundational definition of who human beings are. With these words God names the intrinsic worth of people. This worth is never earned and cannot be taken away. To be human is to have dignity and worth because you carry the image of God himself. Look into the face of any person, anywhere, at any time and remember that the one thing you know for sure is that he or she bears the stamp of God's image. And we must always remember that hatred of an image bearer is hatred of God, violence against an image bearer is violence against God, and dishonor of anyone made in the image of God dishonors the Maker.

The Seventh Day, God Rests

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

The Creation of Man and Woman

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.

⁵When no bush of the field² was yet in the land³ 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, ⁶and a mist⁴ was going up from the land and was watering the whole face of the ground— ⁷then 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. ⁸And the LORD God planted a garden in Eden, in the east, and there he put the man whom he had formed. ⁹And 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.

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

¹⁵The LORD God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to work it and keep it. ¹⁶And the LORD God commanded the man, saying, “You may surely eat of every tree of the garden, ¹⁷but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat⁵ of it you shall surely die.”

¹The Hebrew word for man (*adam*) is the generic term for mankind and becomes the proper name Adam. ²Or open country. ³Or earth; also verse 6.

⁴Or spring. ⁵Or when you eat.

¹⁸Then the LORD God said, "It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him a helper fit for¹ him." ¹⁹Now out of the ground the LORD God had formed² 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. ²⁰The man gave names to all livestock and to the birds of the heavens and to every beast of the field. But for Adam³ there was not found a helper fit for him. ²¹So 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. ²²And the rib that the LORD God had taken from the man he made⁴ into a woman and brought her to the man. ²³Then 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."⁵

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

The Fall

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, 'You⁶ shall not eat of any tree in the garden?'" ²And the woman said to the serpent, "We may eat of the fruit of the trees in the garden, ³but 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.'" ⁴But the serpent said to the woman, "You will not surely die. ⁵For God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil." ⁶So 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,⁷ she took of its fruit and ate, and she also gave some to her husband who was with her, and he ate. ⁷Then the eyes of both were opened, and they knew that they were naked. And they sewed fig leaves together and made themselves loincloths.

⁸And they heard the sound of the LORD God walking in the garden in the cool⁸ of the day, and the man and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the LORD God among the trees of the garden. ⁹But the LORD God called to the man and said to him, "Where are you?"⁹ ¹⁰And he said, "I heard the sound of you in the garden, and I was afraid, because I was naked, and I hid myself." ¹¹He said, "Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten of the tree of which I commanded you not to eat?" ¹²The man said, "The woman whom you gave to be with me, she gave me fruit of the tree, and I ate." ¹³Then the LORD God said to the woman, "What is this that you have done?" The woman said, "The serpent deceived me, and I ate."

¹⁴The 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 offspring¹⁰ and her offspring;
he shall bruise your head,
and you shall bruise his heel."

¹⁶To the woman he said,

"I will surely multiply your pain in child-bearing;
in pain you shall bring forth children.
Your desire shall be contrary to¹¹ your husband,
but he shall rule over you."

¹⁷And 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;

¹ Or corresponding to; also verse 20 ² Or And out of the ground the LORD God formed ³ Or the man ⁴ Hebrew built ⁵ The Hebrew words for woman (ishshah) and man (ish) sound alike ⁶ In Hebrew you is plural in verses 1-5 ⁷ Or to give insight ⁸ Hebrew wind ⁹ In Hebrew you is singular in verses 9 and 11 ¹⁰ Hebrew seed; so throughout Genesis ¹¹ Or shall be toward (see 4:7)

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.¹ 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 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.

God doesn't wait long to reveal the biblical narrative. The whole story is in compressed form in the first three chapters of Genesis.

Genesis begins with the most brilliant, mind-bending, and heart-engaging introduction book ever written. God knows how much we need the creation-to-destiny themes of the biblical narrative in order to make sense of our lives, so he lovingly gives us those dominant themes right up front. The beginning of the Bible is wonderful, awe-inspiring, heartbreaking, cautionary, and hope-instilling all at once. Since God created us to be meaning-makers, he immediately presents us with the wonderful and awful realities that we need to understand in order to make proper sense of who we are and what life is really all about.

The opening chapters of Genesis have three foundational themes.

1. *In the center of all that is, there is a God of incalculable glory.* The first four words of Genesis say it all: “In the beginning, God.” Here is the ultimate fact through which every other fact of life is properly understood. There is a God. He is the Creator of everything that exists. He is glorious in power, authority, wisdom, sovereignty, and love. Since we are his creatures, knowing him, loving him, worshiping him, and obeying him define our identity, meaning, and purpose as human beings.

2. *Sin is the ultimate human tragedy. Its legacy is destruction and death.* Genesis 3 is the most horrible, saddest chapter ever written. In an act of outrageous rebellion, Adam and Eve stepped over God's wise and holy boundaries, ushering in a horrible plague of iniquity that would infect every human heart. Because sin is a matter of the heart, we are confronted in this narrative with the fact that our greatest problem in life is us, and because it is, we have no power to escape it on our own.

3. *A Savior will come, crush the power of evil, and provide redemption for his people.* The first three chapters of the Bible end with glorious hope. We are encouraged to understand that sin is not ultimate—God is. And he had already set a plan in motion to do for us, through the Son to come, what we could not do for ourselves. A second Adam would come, defeat temptation, crush the evil one, and restore us to God. As soon as sin rears its ugly face, redemption is promised. What grace!

¹ Eve sounds like the Hebrew for *life-giver* and resembles the word for *living*

It really is true that three themes course through God's amazing Word: *creation, fall, and redemption*. They form the lens through which we can look at and understand everything in our lives. What a sweet grace it is that immediately in his Word God makes himself known, alerts us to the tragedy of sin, and welcomes us into the hope of the saving grace to be found in the seed of the woman, his Son, the Lord Jesus. We are left with the riches of a single truth that is the core of everything the Bible has to say: because God is a God of grace, mercy really will triumph over judgment.

Creator God, I praise you for the glory and beauty of this world that you have made. And I praise you for the glory and beauty of your Son, who has come to rescue us from our sin, which has so marred this world. Thank you that he has accomplished all that the first Adam could not. In Jesus' name, amen.

For further study and encouragement: Revelation 21:1–8



DAY 2

GENESIS 4–7

Cain and Abel

4 Now Adam knew Eve his wife, and she conceived and bore Cain, saying, "I have gotten¹ a man with the help of the LORD." ²And again, she bore his brother Abel. Now Abel was a keeper of sheep, and Cain a worker of the ground. ³In the course of time Cain brought to the LORD an offering of the fruit of the ground, ⁴and Abel also brought of the firstborn of his flock and of their fat portions. And the LORD had regard for Abel and his offering, ⁵but for Cain and his offering he had no regard. So Cain was very angry, and his face fell. ⁶The LORD said to Cain, "Why are you angry, and why has your face fallen? ⁷If you do well, will you not be accepted? ² And if you do not do well, sin is crouching at the door. Its desire is contrary to³ you, but you must rule over it."

⁸Cain spoke to Abel his brother. ⁴ And when they were in the field, Cain rose up against his brother Abel and killed him. ⁹Then the LORD said to Cain, "Where is Abel your brother?" He said, "I do not know; am I my brother's keeper?" ¹⁰And the LORD said, "What have you done? The voice of your brother's blood is crying to me from the ground. ¹¹And 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." ¹³Cain said to the LORD, "My punishment is greater than I can bear. ⁵ ¹⁴Behold, you have driven me today away from the ground, and from your face I shall be hidden. 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, ⁶ east of Eden.

¹⁷Cain 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.

²³Lamech said to his wives:

¹ Cain sounds like the Hebrew for gotten ² Hebrew will there not be a lifting up [of your face]? ³ Or is toward ⁴ Hebrew; Samaritan, Septuagint, Syriac, Vulgate add Let us go out to the field ⁵ Or My guilt is too great to bear ⁶ Nod means wandering

“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 appointed¹ 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.

Adam’s Descendants to Noah

5 This is the book of the generations of Adam. When God created man, he made him in the likeness of God. ²Male and female he created them, and he blessed them and named them Man² when they were created. ³When Adam had lived 130 years, he fathered a son in his own likeness, after his image, and named him Seth. ⁴The days of Adam after he fathered Seth were 800 years; and he had other sons and daughters. ⁵Thus all the days that Adam lived were 930 years, and he died.

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

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

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

¹⁵When Mahalalel had lived 65 years, he fathered Jared. ¹⁶Mahalalel lived after he fathered Jared 830 years and had other sons and daughters. ¹⁷Thus all the days of Mahalalel were 895 years, and he died.

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

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

²¹When Enoch had lived 65 years, he fathered Methuselah. ²²Enoch walked with God³ after he fathered Methuselah 300 years and had other sons and daughters. ²³Thus all the days of Enoch were 365 years. ²⁴Enoch walked with God, and he was not,⁴ for God took him.

²⁵When Methuselah had lived 187 years, he fathered Lamech. ²⁶Methuselah lived after he fathered Lamech 782 years and had other sons and daughters. ²⁷Thus all the days of Methuselah were 969 years, and he died.

²⁸When Lamech had lived 182 years, he fathered a son ²⁹and called his name Noah, saying, “Out of the ground that the LORD has cursed, this one shall bring us relief⁵ from our work and from the painful toil of our hands.” ³⁰Lamech lived after he fathered Noah 595 years and had other sons and daughters. ³¹Thus all the days of Lamech were 777 years, and he died.

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

Increasing Corruption on Earth

6 When man began to multiply on the face of the land and daughters were born to them, ²the sons of God saw that the daughters of man were attractive. And they took as their wives any they chose. ³Then the LORD said, “My Spirit shall not abide in⁶ man forever, for he is flesh: his days shall be 120 years.” ⁴The Nephilim⁷ 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.

⁵The 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. ⁶And the LORD regretted that he had made man on the earth, and it grieved him to his heart. ⁷So 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.” ⁸But Noah found favor in the eyes of the LORD.

Noah and the Flood

⁹These are the generations of Noah. Noah was a righteous man, blameless in his generation.

¹Seth sounds like the Hebrew for he appointed ²Hebrew adam ³Septuagint pleased God; also verse 24 ⁴Septuagint was not found ⁵Noah sounds like the Hebrew for rest ⁶Or My Spirit shall not contend with ⁷Or giants

Noah walked with God. ¹⁰And Noah had three sons, Shem, Ham, and Japheth.

¹¹Now the earth was corrupt in God's sight, and the earth was filled with violence. ¹²And God saw the earth, and behold, it was corrupt, for all flesh had corrupted their way on the earth. ¹³And God said to Noah, "I have determined to make an end of all flesh,¹ for the earth is filled with violence through them. Behold, I will destroy them with the earth. ¹⁴Make yourself an ark of gopher wood.² Make rooms in the ark, and cover it inside and out with pitch. ¹⁵This is how you are to make it: the length of the ark 300 cubits,³ its breadth 50 cubits, and its height 30 cubits. ¹⁶Make a roof⁴ for the ark, and finish it to a cubit above, and set the door of the ark in its side. Make it with lower, second, and third decks. ¹⁷For 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. ¹⁸But 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. ¹⁹And 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. ²⁰Of 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. ²¹Also take with you every sort of food that is eaten, and store it up. It shall serve as food for you and for them." ²²Noah did this; he did all that God commanded him.

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. ²Take with you seven pairs of all clean animals,⁵ the male and his mate, and a pair of the animals that are not clean, the male and his mate, ³and seven pairs⁶ of the birds of the heavens also, male and female, to keep their offspring alive on the face of all the earth. ⁴For in seven days I will send rain on the earth forty days and forty nights, and every living thing⁷ that I have made I will blot out from the face of the ground." ⁵And Noah did all that the LORD had commanded him.

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

¹¹In 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. ¹²And rain fell upon the earth forty days and forty nights. ¹³On 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, ¹⁴they 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. ¹⁵They went into the ark with Noah, two and two of all flesh in which there was the breath of life. ¹⁶And those that entered, male and female of all flesh, went in as God had commanded him. And the LORD shut him in.

¹⁷The flood continued forty days on the earth. The waters increased and bore up the ark, and it rose high above the earth. ¹⁸The waters prevailed and increased greatly on the earth, and the ark floated on the face of the waters. ¹⁹And the waters prevailed so mightily on the earth that all the high mountains under the whole heaven were covered. ²⁰The waters prevailed above the mountains, covering them fifteen cubits⁸ deep. ²¹And all flesh died that moved on the earth, birds, livestock, beasts, all swarming creatures that swarm on the earth, and all mankind. ²²Everything on the dry land in whose nostrils was the breath of life died. ²³He 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. ²⁴And the waters prevailed on the earth 150 days.

¹Hebrew *The end of all flesh has come before me* ²An unknown kind of tree; transliterated from Hebrew ³A cubit was about 18 inches or 45 centimeters ⁴Or *skylight* ⁵Or *seven of each kind of clean animal* ⁶Or *seven of each kind* ⁷Hebrew *all existence*; also verse 23 ⁸A cubit was about 18 inches or 45 centimeters

*Redemption is where God's anger with sin
and his grace toward the sinner embrace.*

It is so easy for us to minimize our sin. It's so easy for us to be more concerned about or irritated by the sin of others than we are our own. It is so easy to argue for our own righteousness while being judgmental and condemning toward the sin of others. But if you minimize your sin, then you will no longer value, seek, or celebrate the forgiving, reconciling, transforming, and delivering grace of God. If you defend yourself in the face of conviction, you are defending yourself from the best gift that has ever or will ever be given: redeeming grace.

One particular passage powerfully depicts the sinfulness of sin. These are the words of a Creator who is grieved by what sin has done to his world and to the people he made in his own image.

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. And the LORD regretted that he had made man on the earth, and it grieved him to his heart. 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." (Gen. 6:5-7)

What a devastating explanation of the horrible nature of sin: "Every intention of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually." Since the heart is the control center of one's personhood, for every intention of the heart to be constantly evil meant that the control of sin over people's lives was both total and inescapable. How bad is sin? It is an inescapable evil that lives in the heart of every person who has ever taken a breath. Stop now and permit yourself to mourn. Let yourself shudder at the power of the anger of God with sin, an anger so deep that he decides to wipe out humanity from the face of the earth. Today, remember how sinful sin is in the eyes of the one perfectly holy person — Jesus — who has ever existed.

It would be terribly sad if the biblical story ended here. The very first word that follows Genesis 6:7 is *but*. Judgment would not be the end of the story. God would not minimize sin. He would not turn his back on iniquity. Through Noah he would extend his mercy and gather a covenant people, and through them he would raise up a Redeemer.

In the story of Noah, the anger of God with sin and the mercy of God toward sinners embrace. Here we get a hint of the cross that is to come. It is the anger of God with sin that drives Jesus to the cross. It is the grace of God toward sinners that leads Jesus to the cross. On the cross of Jesus Christ God's anger with sin and his grace toward sinners embrace, and still today that is the best of news.

Lord, help me not to minimize my sin. Show me the ways in which I have broken your law and transgressed your boundaries. I praise you that you have sent a Redeemer to save me and all those who place their faith and trust in him. In Jesus' name, amen.

For further study and encouragement: Luke 18:9-14



The Flood Subsides

8 But God remembered Noah and all the beasts and all the livestock that were with him in the ark. And God made a wind blow over the earth, and the waters subsided. ²The fountains of the deep and the windows of the heavens were closed, the rain from the heavens was restrained, ³and the waters receded from the earth continually. At the end of 150 days the waters had abated, ⁴and in the seventh month, on the seventeenth day of the month, the ark came to rest on the mountains of Ararat. ⁵And the waters continued to abate until the tenth month; in the tenth month, on the first day of the month, the tops of the mountains were seen.

⁶At the end of forty days Noah opened the window of the ark that he had made ⁷and sent forth a raven. It went to and fro until the waters were dried up from the earth. ⁸Then he sent forth a dove from him, to see if the waters had subsided from the face of the ground. ⁹But the dove found no place to set her foot, and she returned to him to the ark, for the waters were still on the face of the whole earth. So he put out his hand and took her and brought her into the ark with him. ¹⁰He waited another seven days, and again he sent forth the dove out of the ark. ¹¹And the dove came back to him in the evening, and behold, in her mouth was a freshly plucked olive leaf. So Noah knew that the waters had subsided from the earth. ¹²Then he waited another seven days and sent forth the dove, and she did not return to him anymore.

¹³In the six hundred and first year, in the first month, the first day of the month, the waters were dried from off the earth. And Noah removed the covering of the ark and looked, and behold, the face of the ground was dry. ¹⁴In the second month, on the twenty-seventh day of the month, the earth had dried out. ¹⁵Then God said to Noah, ¹⁶“Go out from the ark, you and your wife, and your sons and your sons’ wives with you. ¹⁷Bring out with you every living thing that is with you of all flesh—birds and animals and every creeping thing that creeps on the earth—that they may swarm on the earth, and be fruitful and multiply on the earth.” ¹⁸So Noah went out, and

his sons and his wife and his sons’ wives with him. ¹⁹Every beast, every creeping thing, and every bird, everything that moves on the earth, went out by families from the ark.

God’s Covenant with Noah

²⁰Then Noah built an altar to the LORD and took some of every clean animal and some of every clean bird and offered burnt offerings on the altar. ²¹And when the LORD smelled the pleasing aroma, the LORD said in his heart, “I will never again curse¹ the ground because of man, for the intention of man’s heart is evil from his youth. Neither will I ever again strike down every living creature as I have done. ²²While the earth remains, seedtime and harvest, cold and heat, summer and winter, day and night, shall not cease.”

9 And God blessed Noah and his sons and said to them, “Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth. ²The fear of you and the dread of you shall be upon every beast of the earth and upon every bird of the heavens, upon everything that creeps on the ground and all the fish of the sea. Into your hand they are delivered. ³Every moving thing that lives shall be food for you. And as I gave you the green plants, I give you everything. ⁴But you shall not eat flesh with its life, that is, its blood. ⁵And for your lifeblood I will require a reckoning: from every beast I will require it and from man. From his fellow man I will require a reckoning for the life of man.

⁶ “Whoever sheds the blood of man,
by man shall his blood be shed,
for God made man in his own image.

⁷And you,² be fruitful and multiply, increase greatly on the earth and multiply in it.”

⁸Then God said to Noah and to his sons with him, ⁹“Behold, I establish my covenant with you and your offspring after you, ¹⁰and with every living creature that is with you, the birds, the livestock, and every beast of the earth with you, as many as came out of the ark; it is for every beast of the earth. ¹¹I establish my covenant with you, that never again shall all flesh be cut off by the waters of the flood, and

¹Or *dishonor* ²In Hebrew *you* is plural

never again shall there be a flood to destroy the earth.”¹² And God said, “This is the sign of the covenant that I make between me and you and every living creature that is with you, for all future generations:¹³ I have set my bow in the cloud, and it shall be a sign of the covenant between me and the earth. ¹⁴When I bring clouds over the earth and the bow is seen in the clouds, ¹⁵I will remember my covenant that is between me and you and every living creature of all flesh. And the waters shall never again become a flood to destroy all flesh. ¹⁶When the bow is in the clouds, I will see it and remember the everlasting covenant between God and every living creature of all flesh that is on the earth.”¹⁷ God said to Noah, “This is the sign of the covenant that I have established between me and all flesh that is on the earth.”

Noah's Descendants

¹⁸The sons of Noah who went forth from the ark were Shem, Ham, and Japheth. (Ham was the father of Canaan.)¹⁹ These three were the sons of Noah, and from these the people of the whole earth were dispersed.¹

²⁰Noah began to be a man of the soil, and he planted a vineyard.² ²¹He drank of the wine and became drunk and lay uncovered in his tent. ²²And Ham, the father of Canaan, saw the nakedness of his father and told his two brothers outside. ²³Then Shem and Japheth took a garment, laid it on both their shoulders, and walked backward and covered the nakedness of their father. Their faces were turned backward, and they did not see their father's nakedness. ²⁴When Noah awoke from his wine and knew what his youngest son had done to him, ²⁵he said,

“Cursed be Canaan;
a servant of servants shall he be to his
brothers.”

²⁶He also said,

“Blessed be the LORD, the God of Shem;
and let Canaan be his servant.

²⁷ May God enlarge Japheth,³
and let him dwell in the tents of Shem,
and let Canaan be his servant.”

²⁸After the flood Noah lived 350 years. ²⁹All the days of Noah were 950 years, and he died.

Nations Descended from Noah

10 These are the generations of the sons of Noah, Shem, Ham, and Japheth. Sons were born to them after the flood.

²The sons of Japheth: Gomer, Magog, Madai, Javan, Tubal, Meshech, and Tiras. ³The sons of Gomer: Ashkenaz, Riphath, and Togarmah. ⁴The sons of Javan: Elishah, Tarshish, Kittim, and Dodanim. ⁵From these the coastland peoples spread in their lands, each with his own language, by their clans, in their nations.

⁶The sons of Ham: Cush, Egypt, Put, and Canaan. ⁷The sons of Cush: Seba, Havilah, Sabtah, Raamah, and Sabteca. The sons of Raamah: Sheba and Dedan. ⁸Cush fathered Nimrod; he was the first on earth to be a mighty man.⁴ ⁹He was a mighty hunter before the LORD. Therefore it is said, “Like Nimrod a mighty hunter before the LORD.” ¹⁰The beginning of his kingdom was Babel, Erech, Accad, and Calneh, in the land of Shinar. ¹¹From that land he went into Assyria and built Nineveh, Rehoboth-Ir, Calah, and ¹²Resen between Nineveh and Calah; that is the great city. ¹³Egypt fathered Ludim, Anamim, Lehabim, Naphtuhim, ¹⁴Pathrusim, Casluhim (from whom⁵ the Philistines came), and Caphtorim.

¹⁵Canaan fathered Sidon his firstborn and Heth, ¹⁶and the Jebusites, the Amorites, the Girgashites, ¹⁷the Hivites, the Arkites, the Sinites, ¹⁸the Arvadites, the Zemarites, and the Hamathites. Afterward the clans of the Canaanites dispersed. ¹⁹And the territory of the Canaanites extended from Sidon in the direction of Gerar as far as Gaza, and in the direction of Sodom, Gomorrah, Admah, and Zeboiim, as far as Lasha. ²⁰These are the sons of Ham, by their clans, their languages, their lands, and their nations.

²¹To Shem also, the father of all the children of Eber, the elder brother of Japheth, children were born. ²²The sons of Shem: Elam, Asshur, Arpachshad, Lud, and Aram. ²³The sons of Aram: Uz, Hul, Gether, and Mash. ²⁴Arpachshad fathered Shelah; and Shelah fathered Eber. ²⁵To Eber were born two sons: the name of the one was Peleg,⁶ for in his days the earth was divided, and his brother's name was Joktan. ²⁶Joktan fathered Almodad, Sheleph, Hazarmaveth, Jerah, ²⁷Hadoram, Uzal, Diklah, ²⁸Obal, Abimael, Sheba, ²⁹Ophir, Havilah, and Jobab; all these were the sons

¹Or from these the whole earth was populated ²Or Noah, a man of the soil, was the first to plant a vineyard ³Japheth sounds like the Hebrew for enlarge ⁴Or he began to be a mighty man on the earth ⁵Or from where ⁶Peleg means division

of Joktan. ³⁰The territory in which they lived extended from Mesha in the direction of Sephar to the hill country of the east. ³¹These are the sons of Shem, by their clans, their languages, their lands, and their nations.

³²These are the clans of the sons of Noah, according to their genealogies, in their nations, and from these the nations spread abroad on the earth after the flood.

The Tower of Babel

11 Now the whole earth had one language and the same words. ²And as people migrated from the east, they found a plain in the land of Shinar and settled there. ³And they said to one another, “Come, let us make bricks, and burn them thoroughly.” And they had brick for stone, and bitumen for mortar. ⁴Then they said, “Come, let us build ourselves a city and a tower with its top in the heavens, and let us make a name for ourselves, lest we be dispersed over the face of the whole earth.” ⁵And the LORD came down to see the city and the tower, which the children of man had built. ⁶And the LORD said, “Behold, they are one people, and they have all one language, and this is only the beginning of what they will do. And nothing that they propose to do will now be impossible for them. ⁷Come, let us go down and there confuse their language, so that they may not understand one another’s speech.” ⁸So the LORD dispersed them from there over the face of all the earth, and they left off building the city. ⁹Therefore its name was called Babel, because there the LORD confused¹ the language of all the earth. And from there the LORD dispersed them over the face of all the earth.

Shem’s Descendants

¹⁰These are the generations of Shem. When Shem was 100 years old, he fathered Arpachshad two years after the flood. ¹¹And Shem lived after he fathered Arpachshad 500 years and had other sons and daughters.

¹²When Arpachshad had lived 35 years, he fathered Shelah. ¹³And Arpachshad lived after he fathered Shelah 403 years and had other sons and daughters.

¹⁴When Shelah had lived 30 years, he fathered Eber. ¹⁵And Shelah lived after he fathered Eber 403 years and had other sons and daughters.

¹⁶When Eber had lived 34 years, he fathered Peleg. ¹⁷And Eber lived after he fathered Peleg 430 years and had other sons and daughters.

¹⁸When Peleg had lived 30 years, he fathered Reu. ¹⁹And Peleg lived after he fathered Reu 209 years and had other sons and daughters.

²⁰When Reu had lived 32 years, he fathered Serug. ²¹And Reu lived after he fathered Serug 207 years and had other sons and daughters.

²²When Serug had lived 30 years, he fathered Nahor. ²³And Serug lived after he fathered Nahor 200 years and had other sons and daughters.

²⁴When Nahor had lived 29 years, he fathered Terah. ²⁵And Nahor lived after he fathered Terah 119 years and had other sons and daughters.

²⁶When Terah had lived 70 years, he fathered Abram, Nahor, and Haran.

Terah’s Descendants

²⁷Now these are the generations of Terah. Terah fathered Abram, Nahor, and Haran; and Haran fathered Lot. ²⁸Haran died in the presence of his father Terah in the land of his kindred, in Ur of the Chaldeans. ²⁹And Abram and Nahor took wives. The name of Abram’s wife was Sarai, and the name of Nahor’s wife, Milcah, the daughter of Haran the father of Milcah and Iscah. ³⁰Now Sarai was barren; she had no child.

³¹Terah took Abram his son and Lot the son of Haran, his grandson, and Sarai his daughter-in-law, his son Abram’s wife, and they went forth together from Ur of the Chaldeans to go into the land of Canaan, but when they came to Haran, they settled there. ³²The days of Terah were 205 years, and Terah died in Haran.

The idol of idols is the idol of self. Human pride always stands in opposition to the glory and plan of God.

The Tower of Babel is both one of the strangest and one of the best-known biblical stories. “Then they said, ‘Come, let us build ourselves a city and a tower with its top in the heavens, and let us make a name for ourselves, lest we be

¹ Babel sounds like the Hebrew for *confused*

dispersed over the face of the whole earth'” (Gen. 11:4). Most people will tell you they've heard of the Tower of Babel. But few really understand the significance of this moment in the biblical story and its importance for every one of us today.

The will of the Creator was that the people he made in his image would live in humble, obedient, and dependent community with him and be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth. The problem is that sin causes human beings to hunger for independence and self-sufficiency, to quest more for their own glory than the glory of God, and to live according to their own will rather than for the plan and purposes of God. It is these three things that initiated and motivated the building of a tower to the heavens. It was built as a monument to human glory, as a declaration of independence from God, and as a replacement plan for God's “be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth.” Human pride is an enemy of the glory and plan of God. God therefore acted to confuse the languages of these people so they could not communicate with one another but would scatter. This is the Lord of lords saying, “I am the Lord. I alone reign and my will will be done.”

Upon reading this story, here is what you and I should confess: we still build towers to our glory and our independent wisdom, righteousness, and strength. “How?” you may ask. Any time we take credit for what only God could have done or produced, we have built a tower to our glory. Any time we step over one of God's moral boundaries, telling ourselves we're smarter than God, we've built a tower to our glory. Any time we act like grace-graduates, no longer in need of God's rescuing, forgiving, and transforming grace, we've built a tower to our glory. Any time we act as if our life, our gifts, and our resources belong to us to use as we wish, we've built a tower to our own glory. Could it be that there are ways in which we are more like the people in Genesis 11 than unlike them?

The story of Babel is one of rescuing grace. The pride that erected this tower is the same pride that necessitated the erection of the cross on which Jesus died. Sinners need to be rescued from themselves and transformed by grace from those who crave their own glory to those who humbly and joyfully live for the glory of God. This rescue is still needed by each of us as much as it was in that dark moment in Genesis 11.

Lord, I confess that I have often relied upon my own so-called wisdom, righteousness, and strength, instead of that which you have provided in your Son, Jesus. Help me to rely solely on him for all good things. In his name I pray, amen.

For further study and encouragement: Psalm 53:1–6

DAY 4

GENESIS 12–15

The Call of Abram

12 Now the LORD said¹ to Abram, “Go from your country² and your kindred and your father's house to the land that I will show you. ²And I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless you and make your

name great, so that you will be a blessing.

³I will bless those who bless you, and him who dishonors you I will curse, and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed.”³

⁴So Abram went, as the LORD had told him, and Lot went with him. Abram was seventy-five

¹Or had said ²Or land ³Or by you all the families of the earth shall bless themselves